

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Tuesday, 12 December 2017

(Extract from book 17)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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

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The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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(to 15 October 2017)

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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
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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

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(to 12 September 2017)

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Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
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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

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn ²	Polwarth	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent ³	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio ⁴	Melton	Ind
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Ms Roma ¹	South-West Coast	LP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John ⁵	Morwell	Ind
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁶	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 ⁷	Northcote	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Riordan, Mr Richard ⁸	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 ⁹	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	Prahan	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 ¹⁰	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

¹ Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ ALP until 7 March 2017

⁵ Nats until 28 August 2017

⁶ Elected 14 March 2015

⁷ Died 23 August 2017

⁸ Elected 31 October 2015

⁹ Resigned 2 February 2015

¹⁰ 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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Tuesday, 12 December 2017

The Acting Clerk reported that the Speaker is unavoidably absent from this week's sitting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Edwards) took the chair at 12.02 p.m. and read the prayer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (12:03) — We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to them, their culture, their elders past, present and future, and elders from other communities who may be here.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Port security

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (12:03) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, does the maritime security identification card scheme have the support of the Victorian government as a protection against terrorism and other criminal activity mechanism right across Victoria's ports?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:03) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. In terms of all matters to do with counterterrorism and the safety of our community, we take advice from the Chief Commissioner of Police, we take advice from other experts and those who are deployed in an operational sense — those who are actually putting their lives on the line to keep us safe —

An honourable member interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The Premier to continue.

Mr ANDREWS — I would have thought this was a serious matter. Surprise, surprise, the member for Warrandyte is interjecting and lecturing people on what they do or do not know — of all people.

We take our advice on these matters from the chief commissioner, and given arrangements that occur and operate on a national basis there are well-understood national forums where these matters are discussed and debated and agreed.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I respect the fact the Premier is saying that he takes advice from law enforcement officials. I understand that, but I am asking whether or not the government

supports the maritime security identification card scheme and, given that advice, which he is obviously saying that he takes, what then is the government's position about whether or not they support that scheme.

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

Mr ANDREWS — Having dealt with the issue in a broad sense — that we take advice on these matters from both Victoria Police and that those national affairs that are matters of national security are rightly the province of national decision-making bodies where Victoria plays an active role — if I am being asked: does the state government propose a state-based scheme for one that is a national —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Then the Victorian government supports national arrangements as they operate now. We have no intention to replicate those and no intention to put in place a state-based scheme. Those arrangements operate at a national level, and we support all current arrangements to keep our community safe and to maintain the integrity of the manifest and the integrity of that important supply chain and to deal with what could be a potential vulnerability through our ports system. What we do not, of course, support are some of the cuts to customs — some of the cuts that have been brought in by your mates in Canberra.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (12:06) — Given the Premier's answer, particularly about potential vulnerabilities, why has his government done nothing to uphold the security of our ports and to protect Victoria's international container terminal from being subject to an illegal blockade simply because the company has sought to uphold the law and protect Victoria's ports from terrorist and other criminal activity?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:07) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I think he asserts that the government has not had an active role in this matter. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Laughing and interjecting when you are asking questions about security does not quite work. Either it is a serious matter or it is not. Five separate occasions is my advice; on five separate occasions the government has, through its officials in Industrial Relations Victoria, offered to get directly

involved and to facilitate talks to resolve this matter. The company is unwilling to accept that offer. That is their prerogative. But the advice I have is that we have —

Mr R. Smith — Just enforce the law.

Mr ANDREWS — Police enforce the law, member for Warrandyte, not politicians. We have offered on numerous occasions to facilitate and to be directly involved in bringing the parties together towards a resolution, and the company has rejected that offer. These matters are before the Supreme Court and Fair Work Australia.

Ministers statements: West Gate tunnel project

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:08) — I am delighted to rise to update the house on the West Gate tunnel project. It is a long overdue second river crossing —

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I would like to hear the Premier's ministers statement.

Mr ANDREWS — contributing 6000 jobs. No wonder those opposite are guffawing and are uncertain about their positions. They would know nothing about 6000 jobs, a vital second river crossing, getting 9500 trucks out of inner western suburbs streets — streets that were never designed to carry those types of vehicles or that volume of traffic.

Mr R. Smith interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte is warned.

Mr ANDREWS — This has been talked about even by some who are expert at talking about infrastructure for a long time, but it is this government that is delivering it and all the jobs and all the opportunities and all the prosperity and the enhanced safety that are central to this important project. There is no doubt that it might have been cheaper if it were built decades ago. There is no doubt — regardless of the views of some who are opposed to this project, whether it is agreed to by the Parliament or not — this will either be paid for by motorists or all Victorian taxpayers. But for those opposite, I have got for news for you: work is starting in two weeks time. Because the time for talk is over. We will leave the talking to those who are best at doing nothing and the building to those who get things done.

Port security

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:10) — My question is to the Premier. Last week Christian Bombig from your office rang the terminal operator at Webb Dock to try and bully them into re-employing a worker who did not have proper security clearances. Why did your office directly intervene in port security matters and in doing so place the security of all Victorians at risk?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:10) — I thoroughly reject the ridiculous assertions put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I assumed you talked before question time. You were just asking me to get directly involved. Now apparently if you offer mediation, it is a bad thing. You need to get your story straight: either you want us involved or not. We have offered to get involved to bring the parties together. The company have said they are not interested in that. That offer remains, and it is entirely up to the company whether they want to come back to the table, facilitated by the government, to resolve these matters.

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the question was about the Premier's office intervening to bully the operator into re-employing a person who does not have proper port security clearances. Can you bring the Premier back to answering the question?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The Premier has concluded his answer.

Supplementary question

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:12) — Premier, isn't it a fact that as well as bullying the terminal operator your office has been working with the Victorian Trades Hall Council to help organise this illegal picket and last Friday's rally at the port of Melbourne?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:12) — The answer to your ridiculous question is no.

Ministers statements: West Gate tunnel project

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (12:12) — What a marvellous day! I want to update the house on the contract we signed this morning. What we signed was a contract to get infrastructure moving, not to sit still for another four years but to actually deal with the issues in the west. Whether it be the congestion or the like, we are promising to actually do something, not sit still. We know that for those people, whether they be in

Pakenham or Geelong, this project will deliver better outcomes and more reliable tunnel journeys.

If you look at the number of jobs we are going to be getting out of it, 6000 people will be employed, 500 people will be entering the workforce and there will even be jobs in country Victoria, so we will be delivering across the state. We will take 9300 trucks off the local streets and 8000 trucks off the West Gate Bridge. But we know what the other lot would do. We know they would let the west rot — absolutely rot. But we will not, because we know we need an alternative to the West Gate Bridge. What we have done with this project has been an extensive and a deep, deep engagement with the community — two and a half years of engagement and 8000 direct contacts. What we have done along the way is we have listened to the community.

We have delivered a longer tunnel. We have delivered 14 kilometres of bike and pedestrian paths and an elevated veloway. We have lowered Wurundjeri Way, which people had concerns about, in the City of Melbourne and provided 9 hectares of open space, with noise walls in that open space and noise mitigation measures across the board. We know that if you are in the outer west and you want to get into the city, you want reliable journeys and you want to make sure that you get there with a 20-minute travel time saving. So next time there is an accident on the West Gate Bridge, you can remember that someone is going to deliver an outcome and the other lot are going to let you rot in hell.

Port security

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:14) — My question is to the Minister for Ports. Two weeks ago you told the house that the picket at the port of Melbourne was ‘an enterprise bargaining agreement negotiation’, when in fact it is about the security of our port. Minister, given the serious nature of this dispute, why have you not demanded that the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and the CFMEU call off this illegal blockade?

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I had hoped I would not have to stand on my feet today, but obviously I was wrong. The Minister for Ports, without assistance, please.

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Ports) (12:15) — I really would have thought the member, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, would remember his history lessons, because in 1996 his mob took away the legislative capacity that we used to have to actually deal with this issue.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DONNELLAN — So you might want to look at yourself, lower your head —

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the minister is debating the question, and I ask you to bring him back to answering the question that was asked.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The Minister for Ports to come back to answering the question. The Minister for Ports has concluded his answer.

Supplementary question

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:16) — This illegal picket is currently holding up pharmaceuticals, tuna, pears, cotton, timber, lead, hay, wheat —

An honourable member — How do you know?

Mr HODGETT — Oh we know, we know — cheese and hundreds of tonnes of building supplies and Christmas goods. Minister, do you have any intention of intervening to help resolve this dispute, or are you too weak and gutless to take on the CFMEU and the MUA as they hold Victorians to ransom just before Christmas?

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Ports) (12:16) — Let us be very clear: we have offered the services of Industrial Relations Victoria on multiple occasions to try and get this dispute sorted out. But as I indicated previously, the member seems to have forgotten that they took away the capacity of the Minister for Ports or anyone else to actually directly intervene.

I want the dispute to end so we can get those goods through, and I do note that upper house member Mary Wooldridge is going around with a great myth she is perpetrating, that there is a whole stack of EpiPens on the port. Let us have a little look. We spoke to the company directly, and guess what they told us?

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I realise it is close to Christmas and the minister is keen to get back to the village, but can you please ask him to answer the question, which was about him having any intention of intervening to resolve this dispute?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Minister for Ports, can you please address the question that was asked?

Mr DONNELLAN — I love Christmas time. I think Christmas time is a great time to get together with families, and I love a big fat lobster — always love a

big fat lobster — which is what we know Uncle Frank and others really love to share with me.

Mr Hodgett — I renew the point of order, Deputy Speaker. Can you bring the minister back to answering the question?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The minister has concluded his answer.

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I suggest the minister was non-responsive, and I ask you to require him to provide a written answer to the question under sessional order 9.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — I will review the answer of the Minister for Ports and I will reply to the member tomorrow.

Ministers statements: West Gate tunnel project

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) (12:19) — It gives me great pleasure to inform the house about the successful conclusion of the negotiations for the West Gate tunnel. This morning we announced that contracts have been signed and work will begin within weeks on this vital project.

For decades people have been saying that we need an alternative to the West Gate Bridge. This government is getting on with it and getting it done. Over two and a half years we have secured the best possible deal for Victorians through the *Market-led Proposals Guideline*. We have listened to community feedback. We have secured not only an increase in the length of the tunnel, but we have also been able to ensure that when the community has spoken, when they have asked us to make sure that we do not compulsorily acquire homes, we do just that. Not one home is being compulsorily acquired.

We are getting trucks out of the inner west and we are providing them with direct access to the port. With an \$11 billion boost to the Victorian economy, it will create 6000 jobs. Those opposite have been critical of nearly every single transport project that we have undertaken. On this side we are about creating jobs, we are about fixing our health and education systems and we are also about building quality infrastructure for the future. That is how you do it: with a business case that stacks up and a level of transparency that those opposite would only have nightmares about. No dodgy side letters —

Mr M. O'Brien — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, if the Treasurer wants to talk about transparency, why doesn't he tell the Parliament about the secret meetings he had with Transurban —

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

Mr M. O'Brien — before the election to discuss —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The member for Malvern will remove himself from the chamber for a period of 1 hour because he refused to sit down when I was on my feet. I ask the member for Malvern to remove himself from the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Malvern withdrew from chamber.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte!

Mr R. Smith interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The member for Warrandyte will remove himself from the chamber for a period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, that decision of yours is a complete disgrace on both counts, a complete disgrace. Every one of these members was talking when you were on your feet and one person on this side. You kick out one, not 42. This side thinks that that decision, on record, was a disgrace.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order. Has the Treasurer concluded his answer?

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I know you are all really sad that there are only three question times left until the end of the year, but I do ask you to control your emotions for the remainder of question time.

West Gate tunnel project

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (12:23) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, you signed the West Gate tunnel contract before knowing how it will be paid for. In fact it would appear that the 10-year toll extension will not be introduced until the next term of Parliament. Premier, why didn't you introduce the amendments to the concession deed before the West Gate tunnel contracts were signed?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:23) — I thought I might have gotten a question from the opposition about this project before the Greens, but apparently not. Thank you, member for Prahran, for your question. The legislation and the instruments to deliver the funding for the project are in fact a function of the contract as signed. We could have a debate about sequencing, but the way in which we have done this, we believe, is the appropriate way. The most complete way to answer your question is that this road, this vital piece of infrastructure and the 6000 jobs that come with it, will either be paid for by motorists or paid for by all Victorian taxpayers. That is the decision that will be before the Parliament at an appropriate time. Regardless of that decision, member for Prahran and all honourable members, work will begin in a couple of weeks time.

Supplementary question

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (12:25) — Premier, you seem to be threatening that the state will foot the entire \$6.7 billion bill for the West Gate tunnel if the 10-year toll extension is not passed by Parliament. Isn't this threat as dodgy as the Liberals' east-west link side letter?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:25) — Some members opposite have surmised that I might have helped the member for Prahran in drafting that piercing question, but no, I did not — and I would reject any comparison because I think it is very difficult to compare a project that stacks up with one that does not.

Ministers statements: infrastructure projects

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Major Projects) (12:25) — What a day it is to update the house on the government's massive pipeline of major projects that it is delivering. Whether it is in schools, in hospitals, in public transport or, in today's case, in roads, we are investing in improving the lives of each and every Victorian. And we have not wasted one single day in doing so because frankly there is no alternative with a growing population — a population that is growing at rates not seen since the gold rush. People are moving here. They are choosing to live here, to raise their family here, because of the opportunities that our great state has to offer.

Of course this does not happen by chance, and hard work needs to be done by a hardworking government to plan, fund and deliver these sorts of projects. Unfortunately we know that those opposite did the exact opposite for their four wasted years: no investment, no project jobs. We cannot reverse what has happened but we can most certainly get on with it

now, and that is exactly what we are doing. Whether it is the Metro Tunnel and the 7000 jobs created there, the level crossing removals and the 4500 jobs, the north-east link and the 10 000 jobs or now the West Gate tunnel with its 6000 jobs, this is job-creating infrastructure that is needed and supported by the Victorian community.

But those blockers and knockers opposite keep on trying to stop this government from delivering. Just look at the record: they tried to stop the removal of the nine level crossings on the Dandenong line, they tried to stop the Metro Tunnel, they tried to stop more trains running on the Frankston line and now they want to try and stop the West Gate tunnel as well. We reject that approach. We understand the need to invest in infrastructure to support jobs growth and to support the livability of Victoria. We will get on with it, and we will not be deterred by the blockers and knockers opposite who did nothing in government and will try and stop everything in opposition.

Port of Melbourne

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (12:28) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to the illegal picket at the port of Melbourne being run by the Premier's mates in the Maritime Union of Australia and the CFMEU, which is doing enormous damage to Victoria's international reputation. I ask: with vital medical, agricultural and perishable goods being held up for weeks by this dispute, what is it going to take for the Premier to pick up the phone to his mate John Setka and tell him to call off this unlawful and damaging picket?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:28) — I thank the member for Box Hill for his question. I will repeat again, as I have said a couple of times today, that the government has made repeated offers to be directly involved — if that is what the opposition is seeking at this time. They were against us being involved a minute ago; now they would like us to be more involved. Ultimately we stand ready through Industrial Relations Victoria to facilitate discussions, to bring the parties together, to resolve this in the interests of all involved, including consumers and businesses right across our state. I want to be very clear about that.

But in terms of some of the commentary about what is or is not in these containers, I would caution against some who have run a pretty loose commentary. It could potentially scare people and could potentially be very unhelpful if it was not accurate. My honourable friend the Minister for Ports made mention of this a moment ago. We have seen some coverage that EpiPens, which

are life-saving pieces of medical equipment, are somehow caught up in the —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, you spoke about medical —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the Premier may wish to run a commentary on what has been on a 3AW program, but it is not relevant to my question, which is about what it is going to take for him to get onto John Setka and tell him to end this illegal blockade. I ask you to bring him back to answering that question.

Mr ANDREWS — On the point of order, the question asked me about my involvement. I have already spoken to that issue. It also then directly referenced medical equipment and supplies, and I am answering in the context of the question as asked. If the member for Box Hill mentions a subject matter in his question, he can hardly get upset if I address that very subject matter in a completely relevant answer.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The question related to hold-up of goods at the port. The Premier is being relevant. The Premier to continue.

Mr ANDREWS — As I said, there has been some commentary, including that life-saving EpiPens have been caught up in this industrial dispute. No-one is diminishing the seriousness of this dispute, but the issue of EpiPens is something that the Leader of the Opposition in the other place has only been too happy to take to Twitter to talk up in the most dramatic of terms — ‘life or death’, those are the terms she uses. While the department of human services — directly on getting involved, member for Box Hill — has had a discussion with Mylan, who distribute and sponsor these EpiPen products across Australia, they have advised that these EpiPens are in fact not in containers at the port of Melbourne, or any other port for that matter, because they come in via an airport. I would advise those who would seek to scare the community against doing just that. We stand ready —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the Premier should not be using question time as an opportunity to attack morning radio broadcasters. My specific question was about what he was going to do about John Setka and the CFMEU, and again I ask you to bring him back to answering that question.

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

Mr ANDREWS — As I was saying, I was asked about getting involved. The government stands absolutely ready any time and any place to bring the parties together — an offer that has been made consistently. Sadly, it has been rejected. I would encourage the company to rethink that, and officers of Industrial Relations Victoria and any other bureaucrat or other member stand ready to get involved.

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the question was asked when the Premier would pick up the phone to his mate John Setka and intervene to end this unlawful, illegal and damaging picket. In the last 35 seconds, perhaps you could get the Premier to actually answer the question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The Premier has concluded his answer.

Supplementary question

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (12:32) — Given it is clear from the Premier’s answer that he does not have the ticker to stand up to John Setka and the CFMEU, exactly what is the Premier going to do to force his mates to end this picket and the bullying that is going on on this picket line to get vital cargo moving before Christmas? Or is he simply going to keep on telling the company to give in to this illegal picket?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:33) — I thank the member for Box Hill for his lecture on ticker. A hard man of the opposition over there lecturing me on ticker — or anybody for that matter! It is not about ticker. It is about offering the company to get involved. We have made that offer. I reiterate that offer today. That is not what the member for Box Hill wants to hear. It is not what he wants to hear. You want to continue that terribly successful campaign of union bashing that constituted your effort back in 2014, which sees you over there and us getting on with it.

Ministers statements: West Gate tunnel project

Mr CARROLL (Minister for Industry and Employment) (12:34) — I rise to update the house on the positive impacts the Andrews Labor government’s West Gate tunnel project will have on young people — it is great to see so many young people in the gallery here today — but also disadvantaged Victorians and ex-auto workers. As the Premier said, 6000 new jobs will be created, but 500 jobs will be dedicated to people entering the workforce. That is potentially 500 apprenticeships, traineeship or engineering cadets. Locals living in Melbourne’s western suburbs will get their start on the West Gate tunnel project.

But more than that, Western Chances is an organisation very close to members on this side of the house — the member for Footscray, the member for Altona and the member for Tarneit. Through this project, several scholarships will be provided to young people living in Melbourne's western suburbs to assist them with an education to get a vital start in life and to live a life of purpose.

The Andrews Labor government has stood with auto workers every step of the way since those opposite turned their backs. One hundred and fifty ex-auto workers will be employed as part of the West Gate tunnel project — something we should be very proud of. Someone once said we should take the politics out of infrastructure. Who said that, we wonder?

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CARROLL — Yes, I did a bit of night-time reading last night. Their number one candidate in the west, Mr Finn in the other place, took to Facebook, as he sometimes does. Last time he took to Facebook he had a few choice words for the state Liberal Party director. This time some locals decided to give him some of his own medicine.

An honourable member — What did they say?

Mr CARROLL — A Mr Turnbull wrote the following on Mr Finn's Facebook page:

The Libs should allow it.

What about Kylie Spencer, who wrote:

What about the jobs it will create?

Mr Feng Li wrote:

Not just talking, we need action. What's your plan and action to fix —

the West Gate?

One of the ones I liked was:

Remember, Bernie, your beloved patriarch, Jeff, established Transurban to build the two tunnels.

The Andrews Labor government will deliver the West Gate tunnel, this vital infrastructure project.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Before I call members for constituency questions, I would like to say that on behalf of the Parliament I extend our sincere condolences to the Speaker on his recent family bereavement.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Rowville electorate

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (12:36) — (13 782) The question I wish to raise is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Minister, what assurances can you provide Knox drivers that the Eastern Freeway will not be tolled to pay for new road projects such as Labor's north-east link? Labor have already blown out the north-east link budget by \$9.5 billion in six months without lifting a shovel.

Without the east-west link, the north-east link will cause more chaos, dumping extra traffic from the northern suburbs onto the Eastern Freeway. The Premier wants to make Knox drivers pay an extra 12 years of tolls on the Monash Freeway by extending CityLink tolls to pay for the West Gate tunnel. Even Labor's infrastructure experts say the best solution for traffic is to hit drivers heading into Melbourne with a congestion tax. Without the east-west link, Labor have no plan to deal with inner city congestion other than taxing or tolling. Labor need to come clean on their plans to toll the Eastern Freeway.

Williamstown electorate

Mr NOONAN (Williamstown) (12:37) — (13 783) My question today is for the Minister for Public Transport and relates to the removal of the Kororoit Creek Road level crossing in Williamstown North, which includes the partial duplication of the Altona Loop. The project includes construction of a new rail bridge and duplication of 800 metres of track in the Altona Loop. This will mean more reliable trains, reducing the likelihood of cancellations and delays.

With works now underway to remove the crossing, can the minister advise how many jobs are being created from this important project and whether any local businesses in Melbourne's west have been engaged to help complete the crossing works?

Ovens Valley electorate

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (12:38) — (13 784) My question is to the Minister for Training and Skills, and it comes from Wangaratta resident Kevin Kurle who, like many others, is frustrated by this government's cutting of funds and course opportunities to GOTAFE. Mr Kurle has highlighted the critical shortage of skilled equine staff on farms and stables, and he seeks clarification as to whether the minister will continue to cut funding to this important sector in our region.

The Wangaratta National Centre for Equine Education is an outstanding facility. We continue to have horse trainers and breeders calling for more skilled industry personnel. I see that the cuts to funding to GOTAFE in my region has reduced 126 positions. This is outrageous as the growing nature of all equine jobs at a world's best practice facility in Wangaratta should be better utilised.

Essendon electorate

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (12:39) — (13 785) I direct my constituency question to the Minister for Water, and I ask: what is the latest information about improving water quality in the lower reaches of the Maribyrnong River?

Ripon electorate

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:39) — (13 786) My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: will he direct VicRoads to compulsorily acquire Tony Wardley's property on compassionate grounds? Tony Wardley suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of repeated sexual abuse as a child at Ballarat Catholic schools. He is one of the survivors of child sexual abuse who travelled to Rome when Cardinal Pell gave evidence to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. His property is adjacent to all options for the Beaufort bypass, and the uncertainty over this project is causing him significant distress. He was advised by VicRoads to get legal representation, but once he did this it was used against him in correspondence from the minister's office to me. He has no legal representation now.

Carrum electorate

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (12:40) — (13 787) My constituency question is for the Minister for Education. I am delighted that Skye Primary School in my electorate will receive funds to help them build a new school fence along busy Ballarto Road to improve safety for students and staff. Principal Jane Briffa and the Skye Primary School council have been instrumental in advocating for the funds, and I thank them for their work. Minister, I know the school community is very keen to see this work get underway. Now that they know that they will be getting the funding, when can Skye Primary School expect to get this wonderful project started?

Morwell electorate

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) (12:40) — (13 788) My constituency question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Minister, what is the latest information with respect to financial incentives being offered to businesses, and specifically Latrobe Valley-related businesses, to shut down or partially shut down their operations to ensure security of energy supply is not threatened over the 2017–18 summer period in Victoria? We know the current government taxed Latrobe Valley generators an extra \$252 million, we know it was Labor's policy to see Hazelwood power station close its doors and we know the results have been the loss of hundreds of jobs, electricity prices rising substantially, security of supply under threat and diesel generators being installed in the Latrobe Valley, and now businesses are being offered incentives to shut down or partially shut down during these peak periods. Workers and our local community deserve confirmation of what businesses in the Latrobe Valley are being offered these financial incentives to shut down during these peak periods and, if so, will workers of these businesses be disadvantaged as a consequence?

Pascoe Vale electorate

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) (12:41) — (13 789) My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I ask the minister: what benefits will Pascoe Vale motorists enjoy when the CityLink-Tullamarine Freeway widening project is completed? I understand that elements of the project have progressed faster than what was originally expected and, as the minister is aware, many Pascoe Vale constituents are eagerly awaiting the completion of this project. They have obviously endured the disruption in its construction, but they are certainly looking forward to it being a more efficient way of getting to their loved ones, connecting with major service hubs such as Melbourne Airport and getting to places such as Essendon Fields. I ask the minister: what benefits will Pascoe Vale motorists enjoy on its completion?

South-West Coast electorate

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (12:42) — (13 790) My question is to the Minister for Families and Children and Minister for Youth Affairs in the other place. I ask: when will the government follow through with its pre-election commitment and increase support to neighbourhood houses? Labor's election platform said it would invest in community infrastructure such as community centres and neighbourhood houses and support the expansion of the neighbourhood house network, but to date nothing has

happened. Figures show that for every dollar invested in neighbourhood houses, the return is somewhere in the line of \$5 to \$6. But there has not been a whole of sector funding boost since 2006, and indexation is not keeping up with CPI, meaning about \$1.3 million of costs are not being covered. Neighbourhood houses provide a huge range of programs and services to the community and help people feel included and supported. Their role would have to be picked up by the government if the houses did not exist, thus increasing costs to taxpayers. Minister, when will Labor follow through with its election platform and increase support to this worthy and valuable service?

Frankston electorate

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (12:43) — (13 791)
My constituency question is for the minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation. Frankston is home to hundreds of young families wishing to find a safe, stable and affordable place to live. What is the Labor government doing to help tip the scales of Victoria's property market back in favour of tenants and people looking to buy their first home?

AUDIT AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Introduction and first reading

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to re-enact with amendments certain provisions of the Audit Act 1994 and to extend and modernise the duties, powers and functions of the Auditor-General and the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, to clarify the rights and obligations of entities audited by the Auditor-General, to consequentially amend certain other acts and for other purposes.

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

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — The bill will improve the Audit Act 1994 to ensure that the Auditor-General can effectively audit the expenditure of public funds and the performance of public sector activities while setting out clear, effective rights and obligations for audited entities. It also acquits the government's public commitment to the former Auditor-General to rewrite the Audit Act and addresses concerns about the Audit Act raised by the Auditor-General and others, such as the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, including in response to a discussion paper about the role of the Auditor-General released by the government last year.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (VICTIMS) BILL 2017

Introduction and first reading

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) introduced a bill for an act to amend the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, the Crimes Act 1958, the Criminal Procedure Act 2009, the Family Violence Protection Act 2008, the Judicial Proceedings Reports Act 1958, the Jury Directions Act 2015, the Sentencing Act 1991, the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009, the Summary Offences Act 1966, the Victims' Charter Act 2006 and the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996 and for other purposes.

Read first time.

BAIL AMENDMENT (STAGE TWO) BILL 2017

Introduction and first reading

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to make further amendments to the Bail Act 1977 in relation to the grant or refusal of bail, to empower police officers to remand in custody certain persons who have been refused bail by a police officer, to amend the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, to make amendments to certain acts related to the Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017 and for other purposes.

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

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I am happy to advise the manager of opposition business that the bill implements some other elements of the recommendations of former Justice Paul Coghlan, including introducing a system of police remand, retaining bail justices for certain purposes and clarifying the interaction between the unacceptable risk test and the reverse onus tests which are contained in the Bail Act 1977.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

MARINE AND COASTAL BILL 2017*Introduction and first reading*

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to provide for the integrated and coordinated planning and management of the marine and coastal environment of Victoria, to repeal and partially re-enact the Coastal Management Act 1995 and to amend various other acts and for other purposes.

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

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — In summary, the bill will improve management and oversight arrangements for the marine and coastal environment. It will provide for integrated and coordinated policy planning, management, decision-making and reporting across catchment, coastal and marine areas.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

CHILDREN LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INFORMATION SHARING) BILL 2017*Introduction and first reading*

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 to provide for specified entities to share information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children, to create a register of children born or resident in Victoria to improve child wellbeing and safety outcomes for those children and to monitor and support their participation in government-funded programs and services, to make consequential amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

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

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing) — This is a bill that amends the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 to establish an information-sharing scheme to enable prescribed entities to share confidential information in order to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. The bill will also establish a register of all children born or participating in specified services in Victoria to improve child wellbeing and safety outcomes for those children and, as I referred to earlier, to monitor and support their participation in government-funded programs and services.

Further, the bill will make consequential and a range of amendments to the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, the Health Records Act 2001, the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014, the Health Services Act 1988, the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 and the Freedom of Information Act 1982 to support the operation of the new information-sharing scheme.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

VICTORIAN INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL AND IMPROVING PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS BILL 2017*Introduction and first reading*

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

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to reform the current system relating to salaries, allowances and standards for members of Parliament by establishing the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and making amendments to the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968 and the Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978, and to make related amendments to the Public Administration Act 2004 and consequential amendments to certain other acts and for other purposes.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — Appreciating that it is not the minister's bill, I nonetheless ask her for a brief explanation of the bill further to the long title.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — Over recent months the government has made some announcements about its intention to introduce a new regime regarding the areas of members of parliaments' salaries and the Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978, and this bill gives effect to those previous public statements.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

PETITIONS**Following petitions presented to house:****Safe Schools program**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents in the Euroa electorate draws to the attention of the house their concerns that the Andrews Labor government is compelling all Victorian government secondary schools to have to implement the Safe Schools program. Furthermore, the petitioners are concerned that

Victorian parents will be prevented from deciding whether their children should participate in the Safe Schools program.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria call on the Andrews Labor government to stop compelling all Victorian secondary schools to have to implement the Safe Schools program. Furthermore, the petitioners request that Victorian parents should be allowed to determine if their children will participate in the Safe Schools program.

By Ms RYAN (Euroa) (53 signatures).

Lakes Entrance police resources

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house and requests that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria ensure the Andrews government acts immediately to provide adequate numbers of police to Lakes Entrance over all of the upcoming Christmas holiday period until Monday, 29 January 2018.

By Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) (361 signatures).

Horsham rail services

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the lack of passenger rail services to Horsham, Victoria.

We note that the Andrews Labor government has recently increased travel times and cut services to western Victoria, making public transport less accessible for our local people.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria ensure an appropriate level of investment is made to ensure that passenger rail services are returned to Horsham in western Victoria.

By Ms KEALY (Lowan) (580 signatures).

Small-scale farm planning controls

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (the petitioner) and the residents of Victoria (the petitioners) draws to the attention of the house that the recently proposed planning controls for Victoria's animal industries treat small-scale livestock farmers the same as industrial producers. Small-scale farmers will be required to deal with unnecessary, prohibitive and expensive red tape, which may put many farmers out of business. Access to genuine free-range meat will be even harder as small-scale pastured livestock farmers fold under the pressures of an unfair planning scheme.

The petitioners therefore request the Legislative Assembly of Victoria to pay attention to the following demand:

We demand that small-scale pastured pig and poultry farms be treated under the farming zone like other low-risk grazing

systems that rely on supplemental feed such as the majority of Victorian beef and dairy cattle.

By Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (753 signatures).

Rural crime and drug use

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of constituents in the rural communities of Gunbower and district draws the attention of the house to the spiralling crime rate and drug use in rural communities which has resulted in residents living in fear.

The petitioners therefore request the Andrews Labor government to:

increase police presence and numbers in rural communities;

improve response times to 000 calls;

harsher penalties for crime to reflect community values in sentencing criminals;

increase rehabilitation and support resources for drug users in rural settings who have committed crimes.

By Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (117 signatures).

Cohuna District Hospital

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

Residents in Cohuna and district draw to the attention of the house that the community of Cohuna and district expresses its anger that the Andrews Labor government had suspended maternity services at the Cohuna District Hospital.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria ensure that the Andrews government guarantees the continuation of full maternity care at the Cohuna District Hospital and that the Cohuna District Hospital remains a standalone health service.

By Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (1338 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Gippsland East be considered next day on motion of Mr BULL (Gippsland East)

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Macedon be considered next day on motion of Ms THOMAS (Macedon)

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Lowan be considered next day on motion of Ms KEALY (Lowan)

**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Alert Digest No. 18

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 18 of 2017* on:

**Financial Management and Constitution Acts
Amendment Bill 2017**

**Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket
Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017**

**Primary Industries Legislation Amendment
Bill 2017**

**Transport Legislation Amendment (Road Safety,
Rail and Other Matters) Bill 2017**

together with appendices.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

**ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

**Sustainability and operational challenges of
Victoria's rural and regional councils**

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) presented interim report.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Acting Clerk:

Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012 — Report 2016–17 under s 133

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 — Order under s 17D granting a lease over Red Cliffs Court House

Financial Management Act 1994:

Reports from the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change that she had received the reports 2016–17 of the:

Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board

Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission — Operation Lansdowne: An investigation into allegations of serious corruption involving Victorian vocational education and training, and public transport sectors — Ordered to be published

Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 — Government response to the IBAC Committee's Report on Improving Victoria's whistleblowing regime: a review of the *Protected Disclosure Act 2012*

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

Ballarat — C208

Glenelg — C75

Greater Bendigo — C233

Latrobe — C107

Melbourne — C316

Stonnington — C271, C273

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 — SR 122

Fisheries Act 1995 — SR 118

Improving Cancer Outcomes Act 2014 — SR 121

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — SR 119

Supreme Court Act 1986 — SRs 124, 125, 126, 127

Transport Accident Act 1986 — SR 120

Water Act 1989 — SR 123

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127

Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003 — Report 2016–17 under ss 13, 13ZR and 21M

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001 — Government response to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Statewide Assessment of Public Land Final Report.

**COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VEHICLE
INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (FURTHER
REFORMS) BILL 2017**

Council's amendments

Returned from Council with message relating to amendments.

Ordered to be considered later this day.

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent to:

5 December

Fines Reform Amendment Bill 2017

Victorian Data Sharing Bill 2017
Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017

12 December

**Gambling Regulation Amendment (Gaming
 Machine Arrangements) Bill 2017.**

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

Messages read recommending appropriations for:

**Financial Management and Constitution Acts
 Amendment Bill 2017**

**Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket
 Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017**

**Primary Industries Legislation Amendment
 Bill 2017.**

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Program

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport)
 (12:58) — I move:

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 5.00 p.m. on Thursday, 14 December 2017:

Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017

Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017

Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2017.

It is beginning to look a lot like Christmas; it is less than two weeks away, and this is our last sitting week for the year. I am sure we are all filled with festive cheer and festive spirit, and it is with that level of engagement that I am optimistic that once again the Legislative Assembly will endorse with acclamation and with unanimity the program that is being put before the house this afternoon. As I have just outlined to the house, there are four bills for our consideration, four bills that go to a range of different policy areas that I am certain will engage a high level of interest across the chamber.

I do note that the Liberal-Nationals coalition opposition have sought for the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017 to be taken into consideration in detail. My response to that request, as is usually the way, is that if time permits towards the end of the week, we will look at how we can accommodate that in the government

business program, noting that — again, being filled with the spirit of this time of year — we are much more generous than those opposite were when they were in government about the amount of bills that are taken into consideration in detail. My friend the Attorney-General might remind me of the number of bills that were taken into consideration in detail in this chamber under the former government.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms ALLAN — I am hearing that it was perhaps two — two bills that were taken into consideration in detail.

Mr Clark interjected.

Ms ALLAN — I am happy to be corrected to three, manager of opposition business — very happy to have the record be corrected to three — but it certainly was not many. We have established a different practice in this place of course. We are happy to consider each request on its merits, not in a partisan way, and we are happy, when time permits in a busy parliamentary schedule, for the opportunity for consideration in detail to be provided. But this is a very long way of saying that we will see if there is time available towards the end of the sitting week.

As we have just heard, the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Amendment (Further Reforms) Bill 2017 has been returned from the Legislative Council with amendments, and I indicate that it is the government's intention to deal with that matter during the course of the afternoon today. There is also another bill that has come back from our friends in the upper house — the Corrections Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2017 — and at this stage it is the government's intent to have that one considered in this place over the course of tomorrow.

With those observations and commentary I commend the government business program to the house and remain optimistic that the manager of opposition business will rise to his feet in great support of a strong program with strong pieces of legislation that deliver a strong government agenda and provide an appropriate amount of scrutiny and revision on the way through. I commend the motion to the house.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (13:02) — There is one aspect of the Leader of the House's remarks with which the opposition agrees — namely, Christmas is drawing close. That is evident by the fact that the government is already in wind-down mode with a relatively modest program this week. We have bills that have a degree of complexity about some of their detail — and as we well

know detail is one amongst many areas in which the government is not strong — and there are aspects of this program that will need very careful examination if this Parliament is to do its job and make sure that legislation is going to work effectively to achieve what it is supposed to do, as well as assessing the policy merits of what is put forward.

I do vehemently disagree with the Leader of the House's assertions about consideration in detail. I again remind the house that the election promise of the current government was that consideration in detail of bills would become standard practice, whereas what the government has now defaulted to is that one bill a week will be considered in detail if the government feels like it and if it is able to get itself organised accordingly. We saw last week that the government was not itself able to fulfil those conditions, and the bill relating to puppy farms that would have greatly benefitted from consideration in detail in this house was not able to be considered in detail.

However, as is often the case, it is as much what is missing from the government business program as what is on it that concerns the opposition. The government continues to run a mile from accountability in any shape or form. As I have pointed out to this house on numerous previous occasions we do still have hanging over our heads the allegations about the rorting and abuse of office by the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker, the members for Tarneit and Melton, and again the government persistently refuses to allow those matters to be dealt with. That has now been added to by a motion on notice by the member for South Barwon, seeking to have an issue concerning the member for Geelong considered by the Privileges Committee, which again ought to be brought on and dealt with by this house.

Alongside those matters of lack of transparency and accountability by the government we have got continuing issues around the Deputy President in the other house, which has seen him 'stood down', as the term goes, but still continuing formally to hold his office and to draw his pay, notwithstanding the very serious allegations surrounding misuse of his electoral allowances, as well as a range of other very serious allegations about apparently illegal activities. And of course we have the longstanding rorts through the red shirts scam that the government is yet to be held to account for.

On top of that when it comes to transparency, for all of the rhetoric about it, we still have at item six on the notice paper today the Transparency in Government Bill 2015, on which the government still has not got

itself organised or willing to face up to the amendments of the Legislative Council about a bill that it talked about long and loudly when elected — and indeed before it was elected as one of its policies to ensure transparency. It has comprehensively failed to progress with that legislation when the Legislative Council said, 'If we're going to be on about transparency, let's make it a genuine transparency and prohibit misuse of public funds for political purposes'.

So there are huge shortfalls in the government business program as usual, and for that reason it will be opposed by the opposition. However, do let me conclude where I began. We are in the final week before Christmas and I take this opportunity, in case no other opportunity arises, to express my appreciation, the opposition's appreciation — and I expect the appreciation of all members of this house — for the fantastic support and services that we have received from the officers of the Parliament during the spring sittings, including officers at the table who have been forced to sit through the night and go through other major upheavals. To all the Parliament's staff I express our appreciation for the support they have given to us.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (13:07) — Deputy Speaker, I am delighted to make a contribution on the last government business program of the year. It is always a joy to be afforded the opportunity to rise in this place to talk about the exciting agenda of the Andrews Labor government. I would dispute, as you would expect, Deputy Speaker, the characterisation made by the manager of opposition business in his contribution. This is a very solid program that is before the house.

As the Leader of the House indicated in her contribution, I believe there will be the opportunity for two bills to be considered in detail this week. This is I think one fewer than what was considered in detail in the entirety of the 57th Parliament. This is a very solid business program that is before the house today. I think it demonstrates, as did the announcement today by the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, who is at the table, that this is about the government getting on with honouring its election commitments and providing good government to the people of Victoria.

I note that in the manager of opposition business's contribution he traversed a wide range of matters about allegations of behaviour of members. The manager of opposition business, though, did not talk about the fact that his leader has had dinner with the alleged head of the Calabrian Mafia. He seemed to gloss over that particular point, but I think it is a point that is well worth making because it was of course the Leader of

the Opposition that sat down with the alleged head of the Calabrian Mafia for lobster and Grange. I think it is worth making that point.

In a contribution on a previous government business program the manager of opposition business indicated that he thought I was drawing a comparison between Publius Clodius Pulcher and the Premier. Instead I was referring to Publius Clodius Pulcher's superior legislative vision that he brought to his term as tribune. Indeed on his first day as tribune in 58 BC Clodius promulgated four bills, one of which was the grain dole for the urban poor in Rome that lasted for 500 years.

It is a pretty impressive record when on your first day in power you introduce a piece of legislation that stands the test of time for 500 years. This has often led others to argue that Clodius was one of the most innovative urban politicians in western history. Bear in mind that Clodius of course did not have access to our outstanding clerks, nor did he have access to *Erskine May*, but he was able to introduce far-reaching legislation because he brought to his chamber, in his role as tribune, a clear vision for what he wanted to achieve. That is a really important point to make.

The manager of opposition business also partially quoted Pliny the Elder, who always ended every speech in the Roman Senate with the phrase, 'Ceterum censeo Carthaginem delendam esse', which translates to, 'Furthermore, I consider that Carthage must be destroyed'. I think that was a worthy way to end every contribution that Pliny the Elder made. I would like to end my contribution by saying, 'Ceterum existimo enim quod est per se bonum et progressivum imperium', which translates to, 'Furthermore, I consider that good and progressive government is essential'.

When we have got a government business program like that which is before the house, we are delivering good and progressive government. We are getting on with honouring our election commitments. We are providing good, competent and stable administration in this place. We are ensuring that the economy is growing. We are ensuring that we are creating a fairer and more just Victoria. That is exactly what this government business program does. We are delivering on what we have committed to for the third year running, and I absolutely commend the government business program to the house.

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (13:11) — Yes, Christmas is close, but it was getting further and further away every second that I had to keep listening to that speech. But hopefully we will get through this week, and Christmas will be just around the corner. As usual, the

Greens will not be supporting this government business program because of the complete failure of the government —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr HIBBINS — I have got to say, in taking up the interjection, there is no bigger sellout to progressive values in this place than the member for Essendon, who wants to sell off public housing, who wants to sell off and privatise public housing —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The member for Prahran will address the government business program and will not respond to interjections.

Mr HIBBINS — Thank you. I appreciate that, Deputy Speaker.

Mr Pearson interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The member for Essendon!

Mr HIBBINS — I will not go on for too long, like the member for Essendon did.

We will not be supporting this motion. The government has failed all year to refer the member for Melton and the member for Taree to the Privileges Committee. It was clear to everyone that that was the appropriate course of action, and the Privileges Committee could then decide what they were going through with that referral, whether they wanted to take it up or whether they wanted to defer it because of any other investigations from any other bodies. They would then decide whether there was a sanction or anything appropriate to bring back to the house, and the house would then vote on that. That is the appropriate course of action. That is the course of action this government seems to be refusing to take. It is very disappointing. We will not be supporting the government business program until that referral has been put on the program for this week.

It is coming to the end of a long year, but I will say that I am so pleased that there are now three Greens MPs in this place. It is an absolutely fantastic achievement that we have now got three Greens in this place. With those comments, the Greens will not be supporting the government business program.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (13:13) — The final government business program for 2017 brings a series of reforms to address energy, gaming, primary industries and ticket scalping. It fits into the bigger picture that this government has painted right through

the year in delivering Victoria's biggest infrastructure project on record, the Melbourne Metro; changes to the face of the world's most livable city to adapt to population growth; and a whole series of other reforms that drive our AAA-rated economy. That is why I want to pick up on the manager of opposition business having said that the government was in 'wind-down mode'. That is just not factually accurate. It goes against all of the available evidence and the facts that we have. Victoria's economy is booming. State final demand growth is the strongest in the nation at 4.7 per cent. 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 really what the Andrews government is about, and I do have to put it in context. The former coalition government, which was in for one term, did not wind up. That was the problem, not winding down. It was a do-little government that ended up being written off and voted out. That is really where we stand on what this government has been about. Then on the specific bills to be discussed and debated, the opposition says it wants to go into consideration in detail on the scalping legislation. The manager of government business has said that that is an option depending on the time. Of course this is a bill that proposes changes to expand the current ticket scalping provisions to create major event ticketing declarations that will apply to more events than just sporting events. This has to do with the changes in technology and extending what ticket scalping can mean. With online secondary ticketing markets ticket scalping has become an increasing issue, not just in the state and in the country but internationally as well because of how this can now happen.

The Victorian government is committed to enabling genuine sports and music lovers to have access to tickets for more events on the Victorian events calendar without having to pay inflated prices for events due to ticket scalpers. That is an important one, and that goes to our whole calendar of major events that has been crafted over a long period of time now, largely in a bipartisan way, to bring these events to Melbourne. So what we are trying to do is give the people of Victoria another chance to actually see these events, from sport, to arts and all parts of our different cultures.

The Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 inserts an amendment into the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 so that wagering service providers must not display static betting advertising within 150 metres of a school, on public transport infrastructure and on roads

or road infrastructure. The bill gives the minister the power to ban betting on a contingency offered by a wagering service provider where the minister forms the view that betting on the contingency is not in the public interest. I look forward to that debate and the potential to consider the bill in detail.

Then we have to repeal the quaintly named Broiler Chicken Industry Act 1978 to get rid of red tape, to respond to emergency meat industry and fisheries management issues and to improve the efficiency and administration of Victoria's fisheries management act. Then there is the energy bill as well.

In summing up, in the spirit of Christmas, I do want to pass on my regards to the officials as well. I will be handing around some baklava to Hansard, the library and others today. I think I have resolved that age-old issue of who makes the best baklava. Is it the Turks, the Greeks or the Lebanese? The answer is: it is their descendants in Broadmeadows.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (13:18) — It is with some disappointment that I rise to oppose the government business program, and that is because of the outstanding issue that just remains with us through and through. While the program itself, in terms of the bills that are to be debated, is entirely acceptable and I look forward to participating in those debates, there does remain the outstanding issue of a referral to the Privileges Committee. It is disappointing that this is just going to go on and on and not be addressed. Time after time we are locked into a position of, in my case, needing to oppose the government business program for that particular reason.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the parliamentary staff for the fantastic support they give to me as the Independent member for Shepparton. It is often much needed and it is certainly much appreciated.

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) (13:19) (*By leave*) — Thank you, Leader of the House, for the opportunity to speak on the government business program. Unfortunately I cannot speak Latin, so I will say merry Christmas to all staff and everyone in the house, and Kala Christougenna to everyone as well in Greek.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr KATOS — Well, I can't speak Latin, member for Essendon.

There are four bills on the program this week: gambling, major events, offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas storage, and primary industries legislation. As the manager of opposition business said,

the opposition will not be supporting the government business program primarily because of the failure to deal with the roting members from Melton and Tarneit, and also the motion that I have now put on the notice paper with regard to referring the member for Geelong to the Privileges Committee for her comments during the debate on the drug injecting room bill. That is a serious matter. I believe she has misled the house and that should be dealt with. I have put a substantive motion on the notice paper to that effect.

It is a reasonably light program. We have said that we wish to have the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017 go into consideration-in-detail stage on Thursday, and given the fact that there are only four bills on the notice paper I do not see why that should be a problem. If there were six or seven bills, I could see that time would be an issue, but given that there are only four bills on the program I think there is more than enough time for that bill to be considered in detail on Thursday. As I said, the opposition will not be supporting the government business program.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 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

Noes, 39

Angus, Mr	O'Brien, Mr M.
Asher, Ms	Paynter, Mr
Battin, Mr	Pesutto, Mr
Blackwood, Mr	Ryall, Ms
Britnell, Ms	Ryan, Ms
Bull, Mr T.	Sandell, Ms
Clark, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Crisp, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Fyffe, Mrs	Smith, Mr T.
Gidley, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Guy, Mr	Staley, Ms
Hibbins, Mr	Thompson, Mr

Hodgett, Mr
Katos, Mr
Kealy, Ms
McCurdy, Mr
McLeish, Ms
Morris, Mr
Northe, Mr
O'Brien, Mr D.

Thorpe, Ms
Tilley, Mr
Victoria, Ms
Wakeling, Mr
Walsh, Mr
Watt, Mr
Wells, Mr

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Cheshunt Drive, Hallam

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (13:28) — I would like to highlight a road safety concern in Cheshunt Drive in Hallam which has been raised with me by local constituents. Since the welcome installation — and I very much welcome that — of speed humps on Hinrichsen Drive in Hallam, a significant number of motorists are now using Cheshunt Drive to avoid these traffic calming measures. Residents living in Cheshunt Drive in Hallam are concerned about the considerable amount of traffic taking a shortcut through their quiet residential street to get to Hallam South Road or to access the industrial area across Hallam South Road. The amount of traffic and its speed in travelling through Cheshunt Drive pose a real risk to the safety and amenity of the community.

Cheshunt Drive is locally managed by the City of Casey and residents have presented a petition to council asking for traffic calming measures to be installed on the road to improve road safety. To date the council has refused to take action on this very important local safety issue. I have assisted local residents in preparing a second petition which I am going to send to their local ward councillors, Cr Rosario and Cr Smith.

This is just one of a number of local concerns I have raised with the City of Casey to date, and I have outstanding correspondence since March of this year. So in other words, I am still waiting for responses from the CEO. Obviously the focus of this council seems to be far too much on building themselves a brand-new office and getting excited about that, and far too little on actually getting on with the job of basically representing their local constituents and ratepayers.

Trevor White

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (13:29) — First of all can I put on record my thanks to Trevor White, Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) chief officer, operations, who will be resigning and stepping down shortly. I know he has done a fantastic job in the SES, and I want to wish him all the best in the future.

Emerald Secondary College

Mr BATTIN — On another topic, I want to speak about Emerald Secondary College. I recently visited Emerald Secondary College with the shadow Minister for Education and Jodie Dobell, and we had a look at some of the issues at that school, including a septic tank that is open underneath one of the classrooms, mould on the walls, classrooms that are shut due to the smell of mould in classrooms, floorboards that are coming up and the issues with those. The actual issue is —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BATTIN — I know the other side is yelling out, ‘Why didn’t you do something about that?’. The Minister for Education’s own constituents attend that school. They have written to him, and guess what? He has not replied. He will not speak with the principal there; he will not discuss it.

These are classrooms that closed two weeks ago, not three years ago. The mould in there is dangerous to students. Whilst you yell across the chamber, students in Emerald that live in my and the Minister for Education’s and my electorates deserve a safe environment. There are teachers that have to lock off classrooms now for safety. There is a facility holding chemicals, and if water mixes with those chemicals it could cause an explosion. That facility has rusted through and now has leaks. It is not a joke, and the Minister for Education should walk across the border and visit that school.

Western suburbs employment

Mr NOONAN (Williamstown) (13:31) — Last week I attended an event organised by the West of Melbourne Economic Development Alliance (WOMEDA) at Victoria University’s Sunshine campus. At the event the Minister for Industry and Employment officially launched an economic development strategy for the west of Melbourne. This groundbreaking strategy makes a series of recommendations about the economic development priorities for the west and recognises that the region faces multiple challenges, including rapid population growth, declining industries, the need for a more highly skilled workforce, persistent shortfalls in health service provision and community amenity, and lower social outcomes.

WOMEDA’s modelling suggests that 100 000 more people will be looking for jobs in the west by 2030 and the challenge will be to ensure jobs growth matches population growth. The report recommends the development of three major employment hubs in

Footscray, Werribee and Sunshine. The report also identifies the need to catch up on jobs growth with a particular focus on health and education, and an exciting proposal to co-locate a new Footscray Hospital with an expanded Victoria University campus at Footscray Park. The challenge now is to bring this strategy to life, and I look forward to doing what I can to advance the recommendations in the report.

I congratulate the chair of WOMEDA, the Honourable Steve Bracks, for continuing to advance the interests of the west, together with the deputy chair, Victoria University vice-chancellor Professor Peter Dawkins, for driving this initiative. I also recognise the contributions of LeadWest, Western Melbourne Regional Development Australia and all of the stakeholders, including the six local councils in the region.

Euroa floods

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (13:32) — I would like to pay tribute today to all of the volunteers across my electorate who helped out with the recent floods in Euroa. As many members of the house would be aware, we had some significant flooding in Euroa, with eight houses experiencing inundation over floors and impacts on the local caravan park as well as a number of businesses. The response to the floods was managed almost entirely by local volunteers, and I would particularly like to recognise the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) divisional commander, Annie Kubeil, her husband, Tony, and the other volunteers at the SES, many of whom worked for more than 24 hours through that flood event.

It is really important that we get funding for roads so the shire can fix roads in coming weeks, particularly in areas like the Weibye Track where it joins Longwood-Gobur Road. There is peeled bitumen on Longwood-Pranjip Road, Geodetic Road at Molka has been closed and Galls Gap Road has also been a problem. I would urge the government to do that.

Wire rope barriers

Ms RYAN — I also wish to raise the issue of wire rope barriers. I ask the government to halt their rollout in my area to allow time for further investigation and consultation with the community so that the barriers fulfil their purpose of heightened safety as opposed to heightened risk, which a number of community members in my area currently feel they are presenting.

Narre Warren South electorate student achievements

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (13:34) — ‘The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others’, said Mahatma Gandhi. I most admire people who put their hands up, especially in challenging times, to support others and make the community a better place for everyone. I try to encourage our schoolchildren, as future leaders, to do just that. That is why I ask local schools to nominate students for my community, spirit and leadership awards, the Joan Kirner AC Memorial Education Award and the Denese Bartlett Memorial Scholarship.

This year’s recipients of my community, spirit and leadership awards were Georgie Radley from Berwick Fields Primary School; Paru Niranyana from Brentwood Park Primary School; Kiarah Taing-Sun from Hillsmeade Primary School; Mujgan Hakimi from Narre Warren South P-12 College, who burst into tears of joy; Judi Seleman from Coral Park Primary School; and Elizabeth Acha from Hampton Park Primary School. Each of these young award winners displayed consideration for others, participated in a wide range of activities within the school and demonstrated a keen interest in community issues. My thanks to their parents too for raising such great children.

Anusha Sharma, a student from Hampton Park Secondary College, is this year’s very worthy recipient of the Joan Kirner AC Memorial Education Award. Anusha has been an outstanding leader and role model throughout 2017, introducing new initiatives in her role on the year 11 formal committee. I know she will continue to excel as one of the college captains for 2018.

New challenges will also be on the horizon for Narre Warren South P-12 student Reanne D’Mello, who received the prestigious Denese Bartlett Memorial Scholarship. Reanne has been enthusiastic in her commitment to her school and has established excellent leadership skills, all while achieving outstanding academic results throughout the year. It has been a great honour to present these awards for over a decade, and I congratulate this year’s award winners on their fantastic work and commitment.

Jerusalem business office

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (13:35) — As a proud member of the Jewish community and representative of a seat that has one of the largest Jewish communities in Australia, I welcome any announcement about advancing relationships between Victoria and Israel. I am also proud that the Victorian

Liberal Party is prepared to stand up for Israel and recognise Jerusalem as its capital where many others duck for cover. The policy announcement by the Leader of the Opposition to open a business office in Jerusalem to promote business innovation and collaboration with Israel is a great announcement for many reasons. Jerusalem is fast becoming its own start-up powerhouse. Mayor Nir Bakat built an innovation ecosystem, particularly with the establishment of the high-tech industrial park Har Hotzvim, attracting companies like Intel, Cisco and Novartis pharmaceuticals to name a few. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem’s commercialisation research centre includes Yissum, which has spun off many successful start-ups including Mobileye.

Victoria would have a unique first-mover advantage as one of the first jurisdictions globally to locate a trade office in Jerusalem should we win the election next year. The Australian government already has a strong presence in Tel Aviv with the Landing Pad. A Victorian trade office in Jerusalem would operate as a satellite office to build on trade opportunities for Victorian businesses. Jerusalem is where the Israeli Parliament and government offices are located, and we respect the right of Israel to determine its own capital. We believe that the Leader of the Opposition’s plan for a trade office in Jerusalem will get great results for businesses in Victoria and enable collaboration with one of the most successful start-up nations in the world.

Steve Hutchins

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (13:37) — On Friday, 24 November, Stephen Patrick Hutchins passed away in his beloved Blue Mountains after a two-and-a-half-year battle with stomach and oesophageal cancer that saw him undergo over 30 weeks of chemotherapy and radiation treatment. He battled many painful side effects from both the treatment and the cancer, such as advanced neuropathy, feeding through a tube in his nose for two months and extreme back pain and fatigue. But Steve never complained and fought every symptom in his own silent way. He never gave up fighting for his life, right up to his last breath.

Special thanks to oncologist Dr Rowan Doig, his private office staff, Linda and Peter, and the oncology nursing team at Epworth Richmond, particularly Nurse Kale.

Dr Rowan Doig is an extraordinary professional who gives his patients hope and support even on the darkest of days. Despite some awful test results, there was never a bad day with Dr Doig. Natalie and Steve both

believed that his professional advice and his supportive manner led to the extra time Steve had with his family — Natalie, Lauren, Julia, Michael, Georgia, Madeleine and Xavier — his sister, Linda, and his many friends.

Milo Yiannopoulos

Mr PEARSON — Today I condemn the recent irresponsible actions of Milo Yiannopoulos, his promoter and the venue which hosted his visit, which triggered a riot on the doorstep of the Flemington public housing estate. In the past decade Victoria Police have worked extremely closely with residents of the Flemington public housing estate, in particular the Horn of Africa community. The bigotry and hatred that Mr Yiannopoulos has brought into my community has damaged that relationship and shaken my community's sense of belonging. While people proclaim Mr Yiannopoulos's right to free speech, neither he nor his supporters have the right to denigrate and vilify the people of my community based on their race, religion or gender.

A week after the riots concluded it falls to members of Victoria Police, the community and me to sit down and find a way to clean up the mess that this zealot has created. Flemington is home to a vibrant African-Australian community. On their behalf I say to Mr Yiannopoulos: go back to where you came from, because you and your hate are not welcome here.

Brighton electorate planning

Ms ASHER (Brighton) (13:38) — I wish to draw the house's attention to the 2016–17 annual report of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. In doing so I would like to advise the house, if they are not already aware, that planning is one of the most important issues in the Brighton electorate. If I turn to page 54 on the planning and environment list of VCAT, the report refers to the fact that in terms of the number of disputes, the planning and environment list increased by 7 per cent on the previous year. Indeed the report makes reference to the fact that most of the cases that come before VCAT are about disputes — generally multidwelling developments on suburban lots and how many apartments should or should not be in a particular area.

I note on page 56 that in terms of the top 20 applications by council for the period, Bayside council is yet again on this list. There were 114 applications in 2016–17, and whilst that number was down, the suburb of Brighton is yet again featured in the top 20. We have had an increase in the number of cases in Brighton that have been referred to VCAT. My

constituents do not like the fact that VCAT is determining what our suburb looks like, and I find these figures most alarming.

Ilim College, Doveton campus

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) (13:40) — I recently had the pleasure of visiting the Doveton campus of Ilim College, which is coming to the end of its first year of operation. Ilim College is an Islamic P–12 college which operates four campuses across the north-western suburbs, and Doveton is their first campus in the south-east. Ilim is located at the old Doveton North Primary School site, which for a long time sat derelict and unused — a rubbish dumping ground and a vandalism haven. The site is now home to this thriving new school, another important contributor to the Education State. I am proud to be a member of a government wholly committed to providing every student with every chance to succeed. We are equipping schools to provide students with the knowledge, capabilities and attributes to allow them to thrive with excellence and equity in equal measure.

Dandenong is the most multicultural electorate in Victoria. We are home to 158 different nationalities, a place where people from every corner of the world live, work and learn side by side. That is why schools like Ilim play such an important role in our community. They become more than just schools; they are community hubs where many local families engage and participate. They offer a sense of belonging for some local families and allay feelings of isolation. This is particularly important for communities like the community in Doveton, which the incoming principal tells me now comprises over 20 per cent of people of Islamic faith. I thank the leadership team at Ilim College for hosting me last week. It was an amazing tour. There is lots to come, and I look forward to watching this school grow into the future.

Melton Botanic Garden

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) (13:41) — On Thursday, 7 December, the Melton Botanic Trail was officially opened by Cesar Melhem, MLC, and the mayor of Melton, Cr Bob Turner. I am very proud to see the progress of the Melton Botanic Garden since the genesis of the project, which began in my office with parliamentary intern Megan Barnett undertaking a feasibility study in 2003 and intern Isobel Keecher completing a further study in 2004. Melton City Council received \$190 000 in funding from the Andrews Labor government, and the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden, led by Mr John Bentley, provided in-kind support towards the completion of the

\$800 000 project. The funding was provided under the government's Growing Suburbs Fund.

Since those early days, from the concept undertaken in my office, the gardens have become an invaluable asset to the community and attract visitors from interstate and overseas. The walking trail has a bridge and a shared path connecting Melton Botanic Garden to the Toolern Creek, with a walking track around the botanic lake. The mayor, Cr Turner, in opening the botanic trail said:

The Melton Botanic Garden is a great asset to the City of Melton, providing environmental, health and wellbeing benefits to residents and visitors alike ...

I congratulate the many Friends of Melton Botanic Garden — over 200 — on their vision and hard work in the continuing development of this valuable community asset. It is just terrific to see people using the Melton Botanic Garden and the activity around it.

Macedon electorate neighbourhood houses

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (13:43) — Neighbourhood houses really are at the heart of our communities. Last week it was my pleasure to meet with coordinators from neighbourhood houses across the Macedon Ranges. It was great to hear about the breadth of their work but also the challenges they face. It struck me again just how vital the services that they provide to our community are — from community lunches, the famous Lancefield op shop, barista training and town festivals, to the many fabulous programs to engage both the young and the old, and especially new arrivals in our towns.

Neighbourhood houses are an open door. They build community resilience and connectedness, and they weave the fabric of our communities together. So today on behalf of the communities across the Macedon Ranges, I say thank you to our coordinators for your service: Vivien Philpotts from Lancefield Neighbourhood House, Mary Hogarth from the Kyneton Community & Learning Centre, Angela Van Dam from Woodend Neighbourhood House, Michelle Balthazar from Romsey Neighbourhood House and Nicole Garbutt from Riddells Creek Neighbourhood House. A very special thankyou to Carol Franceschi for her 28 years of service as Macedon Ranges Further Education Centre neighbourhood house coordinator. It is an outstanding commitment to the people of Gisborne and the Macedon Ranges, but now it is time for you to spend some time with your family.

International Day of People with Disability

Ms THOMAS — The International Day of People with Disability was celebrated in the Macedon Ranges shire with a two-course meal and a live band at the bowls club in Kyneton supported by Windarring, Anglicare, Haven, Homesafe and Cobaw Community Health. The event was organised by Macedon Ranges Shire Council. Congratulations, Sonya Leonello, rural access worker, for your work bringing access and inclusion to people with disabilities in the Macedon Ranges. The Elvis theme and the brilliant music of the Bombastics meant a terrific night was had by all, including some of the most vulnerable members in our community.

Ovens Valley electorate floods

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (13:44) — Congratulations to all involved in preparing our communities for the major rain events recently. The Victoria State Emergency Service, the Country Fire Authority and all volunteers worked together to ensure Cobram, Yarrawonga, Wangaratta, Myrtleford and Bright were all well prepared. Myrtleford came the closest to a major event with 125 millimetres on the Friday night. An expected further 100 millimetres on the Saturday night galvanised the town into action, with sandbags filled and distributed throughout the town. Thankfully the 100 millimetres turned into 25 millimetres, and a major event was averted. However, you can only admire the teamwork of those communities to prepare for the worst-case scenario. A huge thankyou to all service clubs, including the Myrtleford Lions Club, which responded late Saturday night. To all the volunteers: I simply do not know where we would be without you.

Victoria State Emergency Service Cobram unit

Mr McCURDY — Thanks to the member for Gembrook, who visited the Ovens Valley electorate last week. He met with the Cobram unit of the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES), which I am supporting to achieve their goal of an SES headquarters in Cobram. Currently they house their vehicles in private sheds, rented sheds and in the Tocumwal, New South Wales, SES facilities across the river. The Cobram SES do an outstanding job; in particular, having a major river in town adds another dimension to search and rescue in our region. I have a petition to table later this week with over 1900 names supporting a home for the Cobram SES.

We also visited many of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigades throughout the region to hear their

needs. As you can imagine, morale is at an all-time low in the CFA throughout Victoria, but my CFAs were delighted to know that they can still be heard. They spoke about all issues, including enterprise bargaining agreements, the lack of training opportunities and the upgrade to facilities and equipment that is required. The best thing we can do sometimes is to listen and show respect to our volunteers — something this government should consider.

Creating Opportunity: Postcodes of Hope

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (13:46) — This has been a landmark year for the people of the Broadmeadows electorate, one that defines why Labor matters. I am grateful to the Premier for responding to my calls for a new deal for postcodes of disadvantage, outlined last year in the strategy *Creating Opportunity: Postcodes of Hope*; establishing the portfolio of suburban development; and appointing me chair of the Broadmeadows Revitalisation Board, which helps coordinate the three tiers of government, business and civil society to deliver new industries, investment and jobs in struggling communities. Results for Broadmeadows this year have been important.

The jewel in Australia's medical research crown, CSL, last week unveiled the extension to its manufacturing plant predicted to create 200 new full-time local jobs. CSL and the Victorian government co-invested \$230 million in lifesaving blood products for Australia, which are also expected to be exported to the US and Europe, with an annual market value of \$850 million.

The Andrews government also delivered on a generational aspiration by opening the Broadmeadows hospital, where pain-relieving elective surgery can be delivered faster and locally. It also committed \$162 million to build the vital next stage of the Northern Hospital, saving lives and improving health in one of Victoria's fastest growing regions.

North-east link

Mr McGUIRE — Trains will run under Camp Road for the first time tomorrow, following the safe and record-breaking removal of the level crossing in Campbellfield, which has proved fatal and caused delays for its 30 000 daily users, causing a loss of productivity at work and time with families at home. The Andrews government's commitment to the missing link in Melbourne's road network will also increase safety and create more than 5000 jobs, a crucial infrastructure project.

Broadmeadows town hall redevelopment

Mr McGUIRE — I was delighted to open the Broadmeadows town hall development strategy —

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

West Gate tunnel project

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (13:47) — This statement welcomes the announcement by the Leader of the Opposition that the Liberal-Nationals will stand up for Knox drivers and vote against Labor's outrageous deal to extend CityLink tolls to pay for Labor's West Gate tunnel. Knox drivers did not vote for the Premier's West Gate tunnel project, and they definitely did not vote for a 12-year extension of tolls on the Monash Freeway. There is nothing fair about Labor's plan to make drivers across Melbourne pay an extra \$12 billion in tolls for a tunnel project they did not vote for and may never use.

The Liberal-Nationals will protect Knox drivers and vote against any Andrews Labor government proposal to amend the CityLink concession deed to extend CityLink tolls in order to fund the West Gate tunnel. Knox drivers already pay every day for Labor's broken promise to not toll the Scoresby freeway. Labor claim they will not toll the Eastern Freeway, but there are genuine fears that the Premier will try to tax his way out of the \$9.5 billion cost blowout on the north-east link and slug motorists on the Eastern Freeway with a new toll.

Whether the Premier comes clean on his toll plans or not, history shows that Labor cannot be trusted to look after Knox drivers.

Yuroke electorate fire brigades

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (13:49) — Our firefighters do an outstanding job protecting and serving our state. It was terrific to recently read about some extra special rescues our firefighters have been instrumental in involving some creatures great and small, including a dog being rescued from a concrete shaft and a cat being rescued from a drain in Roxburgh Park.

C shift at Craigieburn answered a telephone call from a concerned local resident about some ducklings stuck in a drain. My understanding is that the firefighters went above and beyond to entice the ducklings out of the tiny drain they were stuck in and then reunited them with their very concerned mother. Well done in particular to firefighters Rob and Dave, who were supported by station officer Graeme and leading firefighter Luke.

These are just a few of the recent cases I have heard about. The reality is that our fine men and women of both the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade do outstanding acts like this every single day. In Yuroke we have three outstanding brigades — Craigieburn, Greenvale and Kalkallo. With the commencement of the fire season, I know they are training hard to be prepared. I wish them all well.

Fred Hollows Humanity Award

Ms SPENCE — On another matter, I would like to congratulate two Yuroke grade 6 students on being awarded the Fred Hollows Humanitarian Award — Kristabelle and Raffaella from Our Lady's Primary School in Craigieburn. These humanitarian awards acknowledge students who follow in Fred Hollows's footsteps by making a positive difference in their local community.

Kristabelle and Raffaella were specifically acknowledged for their compassion, integrity and kindness. They raised more than \$1000 for the Bahay Tuluyan charity, which prevents and responds to the abuse and exploitation of children in the Philippines, and more than \$1000 for the Project Compassion charity, which supports impoverished communities across the world.

A special thanks to teacher Ms Mary McCormack for nominating these students. I was so proud to read of their wonderful work, and I know the whole Yuroke community shares this pride. Well done, and I look forward to seeing more of your achievements in the future.

Kelvin Duke

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) (13:50) — On Sunday I took great pride in celebrating the life membership and renaming of the Chiltern rodeo arena in honour of Kelvin Duke. It was Kelvin and Michael 'Pickles' Phibbs, his great mate, who reinstated the rodeo back in 1997, more than 40 years after what was thought to be the last Chiltern rodeo. Today it is the biggest little rodeo in the country, and both Kelvin and Pickles, along with a tireless committee, are still at the helm. It is also a great credit to the people of Chiltern. More than 200 locals turned up on Sunday night, and it was a terrific celebration. But the great thing about it was that they all kept it secret, and Kelvin's emotions showed just how much it meant to him.

I love rodeo and, Acting Speaker, can I tell you that I especially love the Chiltern rodeo. It is quintessentially Australian, a classic example of the

fusion between working on the land and the respect between man and beast.

Falls Creek

Mr TILLEY — At the other end of the scale, quite literally, I had the chance to be in Falls Creek on Friday, where what was once a snow-only destination is rapidly becoming a year-round attraction. There were schools competing on the mountain bike trails that we helped fund as a coalition government. Elite athletes from the Victorian Institute of Sport rowing program arrived at Rocky Valley Storage for a week-long training block. At 1600 metres, Rocky Valley Storage is the highest significant body of water in Australia. It reminded me that Falls Creek is the perfect location for a high-altitude training centre.

Bonshaw Early Learning Centre

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) (13:52) — Recently I visited the new prefabricated building modules now at the greenfield site of the Bonshaw Early Learning Centre. These will provide two kindergarten rooms catering for 66 three-year-old and four-year-old children. Fully funded by the Andrews government, local families will be excited about this \$1.6 million kindergarten, with its modern spaces and play areas due to open at the start of next year.

Ballan District Health and Care

Mr HOWARD — Last Wednesday I visited the new kitchen at Ballan District Health and Care, which was provided with funding from the Andrews government. The kitchen currently prepares more than 2000 meals a week, catering for patients, aged-care residents, Meals on Wheels and all the children attending the Ballan Childcare Centre. The new kitchen will double its cooking capacity to 4000 meals per week and offer more food choices to aged-care residents, patients and staff.

Mount Pleasant Kindergarten

Mr HOWARD — Last Thursday I turned the first sod for the \$750 000 upgrade of Mount Pleasant Kindergarten. Fully funded by the Andrews government, the project includes the addition of a second kindergarten room, which will double the number of kindergarten places from 33 to 66. Construction is expected to finish late next year and is great news for local families in Mount Pleasant.

Country Fire Authority Lucas brigade

Mr HOWARD — Last Thursday I also visited the temporary home of the new Lucas fire brigade. The fire brigade is now fully operational and will be housed on the temporary site until the permanent \$5.8 million fire station opens in 12 months. The station will be equipped for emergency medical response and operated by 25 career staff — great news for this area.

RACV Energy Breakthrough

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (13:53) — Last Friday I returned to Avoca Primary School to join in their RACV Energy Breakthrough celebrations. Avoca Primary School, a country school with about 100 students, won the human powered vehicle (HPV) A1 event again. I am very pleased to have been able to sponsor the HPV team since 2015. This year's HPV A1 team, Avoca Spark, also won design and construction for their section. Avoca's pushcart team, Pyrenees Evolution, were the winners for display and presentation. Special mention must be made of teacher Tom Elliott and HPV designer and mentor Daryl Stewart. Tom and Daryl are integral to the team's success, and their dedication has continued over many years. The school spirit at Avoca is what drives these outstanding results. It is one of many fabulous schools to participate in the RACV Energy Breakthrough.

Other Ripon results include HPV A2 winner, Maryborough Education Centre (MEC), for *Mecificent 2.0* and HPV B1, Maryborough Education Centre, which came first; third was Highview College at Maryborough. For HPV B2, second was Highview College and third was the MEC; for HPV C, first was Highview College and second was the MEC; for 2017 Pushcart section 2, third was St Augustine's Primary School Maryborough. Carisbrook also won, and many others.

Victorian Schools Garden Awards

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (13:55) — Congratulations, Bonbeach Primary School, on being awarded the grand prize in the Victorian Schools Garden Awards recently. The Victorian Schools Garden Awards recognise the importance and value of gardens and outdoor spaces in progressive, modern education. Held annually, the awards program recognises new and existing gardens, and rewards the achievements of students and school communities in school gardening.

This year Bonbeach primary received the regional award, the state award and the highest Victorian

schools garden award — the Kevin Heinze Perpetual Award — for its creative garden, which includes an imagination garden, food forests, frog bogs, a giant worm farm, a chicken coop and outdoor classrooms. All of this has been built voluntarily by the wonderful school community at Bonbeach primary.

As well as the teachers, staff, Principal Ken Jones and students at Bonbeach, I would especially like to mention the incredible dedication and commitment shown by two amazing women, Jade Cavanagh and Amy Dowling. Amy and Jade, through Bonbeach Green Thumbs, have created and brought alive a remarkable garden oasis at Bonbeach Primary School, sharing their enthusiasm for organic gardening, sensory gardens and a sustainable environment with literally hundreds of students and school families. Amy and Jade are just so passionate about connecting children to nature and teaching them how to grow and enjoy real food.

The Bonbeach Green Thumbs garden is a wonderful way Bonbeach primary can use the outdoors as a classroom and teach personal, social and communal responsibility to students. Congratulations to Bonbeach Primary School on this extraordinary achievement.

South-West Coast electorate roads

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (13:56) — I once again direct these comments to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and once again it is in relation to the state of the roads in South-West Coast.

Over the last few weeks I have been speaking with transport companies in my electorate that are the backbone of the local economy and state economy — the people who take goods to market. They are all reporting to me huge increases in repairs and maintenance on their vehicles, all due to the shocking state of our roads. One company has reported product being broken and damaged during transport. We are not talking glasses or something fragile here — we are actually talking about bluestone.

Another company, Kelly Logistics, does the run from the port of Portland to the woodchip mill and back again. Their repairs and maintenance bill normally sits at around \$28 000 to \$30 000 a month, but over the past 12 months that figure has increased by about \$45 000 per month, and is now sitting at around \$70 000. The company's owner, Tony Noske, has been involved in the transport industry since 1956 and told me he has not seen roads in this bad a condition — ever.

He also said the main problem is drainage — water sitting there, not draining away and in turn soaking the

road sub-base. When crews come to fix a surface failure they do it well, but because they do not fix the underlying problem with the wet sub-base the surface fails again within a matter of weeks. Mr Noske says the simplest way to stop the cycle happening is to fix the road sub-base and then fix the drains and culverts and keep them maintained.

MAJOR EVENTS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (TICKET SCALPING AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 28 November; motion of Mr EREN (Minister for Tourism and Major Events).

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) (13:59) — I rise to speak on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. This bill changes the name of the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 to the Major Events Act 2009 so that we can extend the categories of events from just sporting to other events. It then amends the act to provide for controlling the secondary ticket market for major sporting and cultural events, which most of us would call scalping. Previously, as I said, it was just for sporting events.

It creates the position of an authorised ticketing officer, which is a very similar role to what police do as far as monitoring and catching scalpers, but is obviously a separate category of identification and qualification. The bill also repeals the Tourism Victoria Act 1992 in light of the creation of Visit Victoria after the abolition of Tourism Victoria with the change of government.

One of the first jurisdictions to have a Major Sporting Event Act was us here in Victoria. Obviously we have a lot of very big events like, for example, the AFL Grand Final, and that is why it was brought in. These events have always been protected, since that was brought in back in 2009, and one of the provisions for protecting against scalping was that any ticket resold could not be sold above its face value. That is changing, and I will get into that in a moment. The act came into effect on nominated sporting events and, as I said, you would not be able to onsell tickets for anything above their original sale price — under of course, but not over.

The bill extends that same protection to other major events as selected by the minister, and I will go into the criteria in a moment. It could apply to concerts, theatre productions or large cultural events. There are no specifics; it is quite open and needs to be. Because there

is such a broad range of options for people to attend here in Victoria it needs to be fairly broad, so I am okay with that.

To appoint authorised ticketing officers to monitor websites of course is a good thing. People might use things like Gumtree or eBay or one of those sorts of websites, and scalpers have been known to put tickets up at exorbitant prices and get them. Some people have come to me and said, 'As much as we want consumer protection, isn't their worth whatever the market will pay?' — the same as with almost anything in the world. But of course — and I notice that this is one omission from the bill — there is no provision there to ban what they call 'bots', which is the software that is used for automatic purchasing of tickets once they go on sale. If you take a person like me, one of the kids might ask for tickets to a particular concert. You go online or stand in a queue in good faith, but you find that you are buying C reserve tickets or worse even though you were first in line, and that is because a lot of automated dialling and automated purchasing happens. There is no provision in this bill to counteract that, and I think that is a real omission.

There are people who will buy tickets in bulk and resell them for a profit, but we also have to remember that there are legitimate registered resellers in the market. These people do it for a living. There are a lot of people who are time poor. I might give the example of a person who is very busy and whose child says, 'All I want' — I keep going back to the children; they seem to be very demanding — 'for Christmas is a front row ticket to a Pink concert. I don't want anything else'. The dad or mum says, 'I haven't got time to go to the Ticketek or Ticketmaster websites. I certainly can't wait and queue at the shopping centre. If this is all my child wants for Christmas, I'll pay whatever it takes'. I am making up figures here, but say, for example, as a round number, the ticket costs \$100. According to this new legislation an authorised reseller — somebody who goes out and as part of their business actually purchases on behalf of somebody else, they do them a favour and a service — cannot sell a ticket for more than \$110 to the person who requires that ticket. It is barely worth their effort, and then that person and their child is going to miss out on a Pink ticket.

Traditionally what would happen is that they might say, 'Okay, the ticket is worth \$100 and it is going to cost \$150, but I have not had to stand in line or go on the internet'. That person then says, 'Do you know what? It's a steep price, but I'm okay, I will pay that'. That will no longer be allowed, and certainly the authorised ticket resellers, the registered and legitimate resellers, are up in arms about this legislation for that reason.

There are other things that people have brought up with me, but I will get onto some of the provisions in the bill and discuss them.

Clause 4 renames the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 the Major Events Act 2009. Several clauses change the word 'printed' to 'displayed' in reference to the prices that are on a ticket. That has had to be done because not all tickets are printed by the promoter anymore. It used to be that you ordered your tickets and you went and picked them up or they were sent to you. Now of course people can print them out at home, or they might even have them on their smartphones and take them with them as a digital display, which can be scanned at the entry to a venue.

Clause 10 changes the illegal activity of selling five or less tickets above face value to selling them for a price that exceeds its face value purchase price by more than 10 per cent. Clause 11 is very similar to clause 10, but it deals with trying to resell or scalp six or more tickets in any one go.

There are several clauses that insert 'or an authorised ticketing officer' after 'a police officer', so we have the use of both, and the bill makes similar changes to give authorised ticketing officers powers.

Clause 16 inserts new part 9A headed 'Major event ticketing'. This is a very significant addition to the act, some 12 pages or so. It outlines the processes, offences, penalties, notices and review as they relate to major events rather than to sporting events.

Clause 19 talks about the identification required for an authorised officer and an authorised ticketing officer. They need to be able to identify themselves if they approach a person, either a scalper or a purchaser, and want to take further action. I will get onto what those actions will be in just a little while. But of course they have to carry identification, otherwise anybody could say that they were an authorised officer, perhaps say they were confiscating tickets and then go in and enjoy a concert.

Clause 22 provides authorised ticketing officers with powers particularly relating to their request for the names and addresses of scalpers, and that is something that I will come back to because I brought it up with the department and I do not know that I am 100 per cent happy with their response.

Clauses 25 and 26 repeal the Tourism Victoria Act 1992 and abolish Tourism Victoria. As I said before, Tourism Victoria is the name of the body that does everything to do with tourism in Victoria, and that is being abolished.

I want to bring up some of the concerns raised in correspondence from interested parties. For declared sporting events scalping is already banned. As I mentioned previously, if you wanted to on-sell or resell a ticket because you could not make it to an event or whatever, you had to sell the product at face value or less. Now of course there is a 10 per cent premium. Somebody might say, 'Well, if you're selling enough of them, you could actually make a tidy sum out of it'. When I asked why the 10 per cent was there it was explained to me that obviously it costs to list a ticket on a reselling website, and then there is also the cost of posting the ticket or transmitting it to the next person. That is why the 10 per cent has been included. That is fairly standard in other jurisdictions around Australia, so I understand the reason for that.

One of the things that does trouble me is that the bill does not mention time frames for a declaration. It says that the minister has to declare an event before tickets are printed, but it does not say anything about the minister having to act in advance of a series going on sale. I will give an example of that. I will go back to Pink; she seemed to get a bit of a hurrah from the rest of the house. I have seen her in concert; she is fantastic. When tickets were sold for her concerts in Melbourne, they went at a phenomenal rate. Of course they saw it coming because they had the venue booked. The first few concerts went on sale, but what would happen if, say, the first three concerts that went on sale were not declared as a major event? The promoter would go to the minister and say, 'This is selling like hot cakes; I want the rest of the series declared so the tickets cannot be scalped'. Say, for example, 20 concerts eventually went on sale, then concerts four through 20 might be declared events. So the first three concerts are not protected against resale, but certainly the other ones are.

The problem with this, of course, as one of the resellers explained to me, was what happens at, say, the MCG for the AFL Grand Final. We know from the AFL how many tickets go on sale to Melbourne Cricket Club members, we know how many tickets go on sale to the opposing team's club members, we know how many go on sale to the general public, and we know the different types of seating and the different price levels, so it is very open and transparent.

A lot of the resellers have said to me the problem they find with this is if a promoter — and we have got to remember the promoter is not the bad guy — takes the risk, brings the act out and if it bombs loses money as well, but what happens if something goes on sale and all of a sudden it is selling like hot cakes? Do they go to the minister and say, 'Can we go ahead and declare this a major event?'. And if the minister says, 'Yes, that's

fine', from then on the promoter can decide whether it is one event or an entire series, and has to declare at the time what that is. The promoter or the person who is selling the tickets does not actually have to declare how many of each level of ticket is on sale. All of a sudden the promoter might say, 'Right, it is selling like hot cakes', so a \$100 ticket in concert one might now be a \$300 ticket in concert four because it has been declared a major event. What happens here is it is actually the consumer who is potentially losing out. The resellers are having real problems with that concept, as do I as shadow minister for consumer affairs. I look at that and say, is there perhaps something in there that could have been tweaked?

If we have a look at current section 167B, which was another thing that I have brought up and recurs in a couple of sections, and pick on section 167B(1) for a start, it provides that if a police officer 'believes on reasonable grounds that the person has committed, is committing or is about to commit an offence' action may be taken. Now, apart from adding 'authorised ticketing officer' after police officer, the clause has not changed from the old act, but it is this whole notion of 'about to commit' — I understand if they are 'committing' or have reasonable grounds to think that they have 'committed', but to look into a crystal ball and say 'about to commit' when the offence has not actually happened yet I think is highly questionable. I think the wording around this is very soft, and it may well need fixing in the future by other governments.

If we look at changes to section 167B(4) it says that officers are not required to follow ticket seizure procedures if the authorised ticketing officer or police officer believes on reasonable grounds — again, on reasonable grounds — 'that it is impracticable to do so'. I think this is very open to interpretation.

There is another section, 182J(4), where there is similar wording that is open to interpretation. I did get something back from the department on that section just this morning. I asked the department where things were 'impracticable', which was to do with asking for a person's name or asking for a response from the person they are talking to. I was talking to the department about section 182J(4) of the bill, which says:

A police officer or an authorised ticketing officer is not required to comply with subsection (3) if the police officer or the authorised ticketing officer believes on reasonable grounds that it is impracticable to do so.

So subsection (3) relates to a police officer informing a person of their name, their rank and their place of duty; I alluded to this before. The authorised officer is required to provide their name and produce identification — that

was one of the sections that we talked about before. A request was made by me to the department to provide an example of an instance where it would be 'impracticable'. They have come back and said:

For scenarios where it would be impracticable for police (or an authorised ticketing officer) to provide a person with their name, rank, station etc., rather than provide narrative scenarios specific to s 182J(4), I provide the following basic reasons it might be impractical to inform any person when required to by statute.

They could be alcohol or drug affected, they could be impaired by mental illness, they could be in a hazardous location such as a busy road or a volatile crowd, they could be a violent offender or it could be to do with counterterrorism, so it could be VIP-type matters where there is an urgent need to separate the person from the incident.

Now I understand that that very loosely is the intent of the bill. It is funny; every time I go to a briefing with various different departments on various bills, I keep hearing about the intent of the bill, but as lawmakers we cannot really rely on the intent, because there are people out there who will interpret it differently and act differently to what we are intending for them to do. So I find that a little challenging to say the least, and I think we just have to sit back and wait and see whether or not there are instances when that becomes a situation of abuse, and time will tell on that. So again it comes down to whether or not we can predict what people can do, which of course we cannot.

I want to talk about declaring an event 'major'. If we look at new section 182C(2) it says:

In making a decision under subsection (1), the minister—

- (a) may consider the ticketed event organiser's submission (if any) ...

So in other words it does not have to be the event organiser who makes the submission; it can in fact be the minister who makes the call on this him or herself. It continues to say that the minister:

- (b) may consider the ticketed event organiser's request (if any); and
- (c) must consider whether the ticketed event is major, having regard to the likely number of attendees for the event ...

It is written in paragraph (c) that the minister:

... must consider whether the ticketed event is major, having regard to the likely number of attendees for the event —

that is not an option, that is in there —

- (i) on a particular occasion only; or
- (ii) over the duration of the event ...

which then goes back to the series of 20 concerts that I was talking about before. It ends by saying:

- (d) may consider any other matters the Minister considers appropriate.

If we look at crowd size, I would say that one of the things that has not been taken into consideration is the capacity of, for example, the stadium. If, for example, 50 000 tickets are sold for an event at Etihad Stadium, that is fantastic — that is near capacity — and that may be declared a major event. But is it still a major event if — a promoter might call it a failure — only 50 000 tickets are sold at the MCG, which of course has double the capacity at 100 000 seats? I am not sure whether we can talk purely in terms of ticket sale numbers; it has to be comparative to the capacity as far as I am concerned.

If we just go through the criteria, in the second-reading speech the minister said:

The criteria that I will use to determine whether an event should be considered as a major event under the act will be similar to what is contained in section 9(1) and 2(a–g) of the Major Sporting Events Act. This includes such factors as:

the size of the event —

again —

likely demand for tickets;

exclusive global content;

the likely media coverage of the event;

the contribution to Victoria’s international profile as a host of major events; and

where requested by promoter or event organiser.

Please note these are not exhaustive categories.

There is an awful lot in here.

One of the things I also had a question about was new part 9A. There are various subsections under that, but if we look at new section 182K(2), it refers to the purchaser surrendering a ticket so an officer can arrange for a photograph of the ticket. We are taking the scenario that a ticket has been scalped and money has changed hands. Obviously the scalper has done the wrong thing, but the purchaser, we have established — and I established this with the departmental people — has done nothing wrong. They have done nothing illegal. We need to keep that in mind. What the officer can do is take or request the ticket to be taken from the people who have purchased it, record the details of the

ticket upon its surrender and photograph it, which of course is great for evidence to try to get the scalpers when they go through legal proceedings later. But this section also says the officer ‘may ask for the purchaser’s name and address’ and ‘must return the ticket to the purchaser’ as soon as these requirements have been met. I think these provisions are directly contradictory.

The department has sent me an answer, which I will read out. It says they may ask for the purchaser’s name and address and must return the ticket to the purchaser as soon as these requirements have been met. What happens if the police officer or the authorised ticketing officer in fact has asked the purchaser for their name and address but they refused to give it, bearing in mind they have not broken the law at all? The bill says the ticket must be returned to the purchaser as soon as the requirements have been met. But if the officer has asked for the purchaser’s name and address and the purchaser refuses to give it, they have not met the request. If the purchaser has declined — and as I said, they have not committed a crime — then obviously what the police officer or authorised ticketing officer might interpret that as meaning and what the bill actually says are at odds.

If I go to the department’s explanation of this in relation to new section 182G(1) — the same sort of thing — it says:

... a police officer ... may request that a person who has just purchased or is about to purchase a ticket from a person who allegedly has committed or is about to commit an offence against section 182F may surrender the ticket for inspection.

It is important to note that the purchaser is under no obligation to surrender the ticket.

That is fine, but:

If they choose to give the authorised ticketing officer (ATO) or police officer (PO) the ticket, the ATO or PO must record the details of the ticket and its surrender.

I am fine with that. It continues:

The ATO or PO may arrange for a photo or recording of the ticket to be made.

That is fine. Most people carry a mobile phone with them; I assume that these officers will. They will take a snapshot. The response continues:

They may also ask for the purchaser’s name and address.

Please note that the purchaser is under no obligation to give their name and address to the ATO or PO. Although, as they have voluntarily handed in the ticket to begin with, it would be most likely they would also give their name and address.

I do not think we can predict that; I do not think it is our job to predict that. Certainly if, for example, I had just purchased a scalped ticket, I may well say, 'Sure, you can do that and you can pursue the scalper', but it does not mean I am going to hand over my name and address. We should not assume that that is something people will be comfortable doing. I go back to the section where it says that once I have complied I can have my ticket back. If I have not complied — if you have asked me for my name and address and I have not complied, even though I have done nothing wrong — do I get my ticket back? It is a big question, and it was not really an answer that was given.

The response says:

... if the surrender takes place on the day of the event at the venue, the ATO or PO would record the details and take a photo of the ticket on the spot. They would then return the ticket to the purchaser.

If it was some time before the event —

and I do not understand the distinction here —

they may take the tickets elsewhere to make a copy of them.

No, because we have already established that they are probably going to take a photo of them on their phone. It continues:

It would be difficult to return the tickets without the person giving their name or contact details.

So again, purchasers will be forced into doing this, but they have done nothing wrong. I do not know why we are going for the jugular of the person who has purchased these. It does not seem right.

I want to add to my contribution some of the submissions I have received from various registered ticket resellers. We need to note that most of the trouble with resale happens on very, very dodgy websites like Viagogo. They are very clever in their marketing. They are based in Switzerland. Nobody has been able to prosecute them because they do not even have a street address, so every time you try to track them down, they are not able to be found. They are so clever in their marketing that if you punch in, for example, *Dream Lover: The Bobby Darin Musical* — I am really looking forward to seeing it; it opens here in Melbourne on New Year's Eve — the first thing that might come up might actually look like an official ticketing website but might be Viagogo. You would think, 'Wow, it's New Year's Eve — that's why the ticket is \$500. I'll buy it'. You then find out that in fact you bought with Viagogo but you could have gone to the normal ticketing outlet and bought the same ticket for \$150.

It is the theatres that are coping grief from websites like this that are doing the reselling. This legislation does nothing to address that. These internationals, which are the ones that are the real problems, are not being addressed in this.

I want to read to you quickly from a submission from Her Majesty's Theatre. They said:

Our concern is with the matters of ticket reselling, unauthorised ticketing and ticket scalping.

While Her Majesty's Theatre and the other East End theatres welcome the government's intention to confront these issues, we believe that they have, frankly (and despite detailed submissions from us) missed the point.

Other jurisdictions, notably the UK and, recently, NSW, have correctly treated the problem as one of consumer affairs. For whatever reason, the government of Victoria has placed it under Minister Eren's umbrella.

The crux of the matter is the fact that protections now applying to 'major sporting events' will be strengthened and extended to 'events' that may be declared to be major events. This declaration may (or may not be) upon application by the 'organiser of the event'.

We are troubled by:

1. The vagueness of the definition of the term 'organiser of the event' — if it is the producer/promoter/presenter, it overlooks the fact that some of these are less scrupulous than others, and they are beneficiaries, not victims of egregious ticket reselling.

One of the other points they sent through noted:

3. The fact that at no stage, in several exchanges of communication with DEDJTR, did I gain the impression that they recognised unauthorised and fraudulent ticket reselling of live theatre shows was even a problem.

Knowing that we are one of the largest music theatre capitals in the world, I would have thought that was fairly important. I spoke to people from the Ticket Brokers Association of Australia. I spoke to people from Crown Casino. I spoke to people from Ticketmaster. I spoke to a whole lot of people, and there are a lot of things in there that, as I have said, are not quite right. Obviously for the general consumer who just wants to buy tickets this is a good thing and may stop the unscrupulous reselling of many events on places like eBay or even out the front of a venue, but it does not totally protect the consumer, and the consumer needs to know that.

There are some things in there that are not good for the industry. There are some things in there that do not fully protect the consumer. Aside from that I think to be able to extend in the right circumstances is a good idea.

We are certainly not going to block this bill by any means, because it is good for most consumers, but I think there are some glaring holes that need to be filled.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (14:27) — I am very pleased to rise to contribute today on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. The bill before us will change the name of the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 to the Major Events Act 2009. It will amend the Major Events Act to provide for controlling the second ticketing market for major sporting and cultural events, and it will repeal the Tourism Victoria Act 1992 and make transitional arrangements.

This is a great bill, and I would like to commend the Minister for Sport for bringing it before the house. This is a bill about making things fairer for Victorians, and that is what the Andrews Labor government is doing: it is making things fair. The bill before us will crack down on ticket scalping and give fans and people wanting to go to concerts, cultural events and theatres a fair go. With the internet we have seen a huge increase in online ticket resale marketplaces, and many scalpers are either circumventing the consumer law or they are snubbing it. This is hurting ordinary Victorians.

We know in Australia that there is actually no national anti-scalping legislation and that consumers are of course always protected by the Australian Consumer Law, which prohibits misleading and deceptive conduct. It sometimes works, and of course earlier this year we saw the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) commence federal court proceedings against ticket reseller Viagogo, alleging that it breached the Australian Consumer Law when reselling entertainment, music and live sports tickets between May and June 2017. We know that the ACCC has received hundreds and hundreds of complaints from consumers in relation to this organisation. Viagogo also operates in the US, Europe and New Zealand, and it describes itself as an online ticket marketplace that allows consumers to buy and sell tickets to sporting events, concerts and plays.

In the federal court proceedings the ACCC has alleged that Viagogo made false or misleading representations and engaged in misleading or deceptive conduct regarding the price of tickets on its online platform by failing to disclose substantial fees — for example, if we just take the Ashes 2017–18 tickets, the price increased by 29 per cent from the advertised total price of \$330 to \$427 when Viagogo's fees were included. For some people this does put tickets completely out of range for those wanting to go and see the Ashes or for those

wanting to go and see whatever concert or theatre show they might be interested in.

The other thing of course is that Viagogo is located in Switzerland, so the ACCC had to make arrangements for service out of the jurisdiction on a company in a foreign country. There are other complaints that those who buy via these online providers actually end up buying fake tickets and only find that out when they get to the gate or the door of the concert or venue for the event that they are going to see and realise the ticket is worthless and they cannot get in.

The other thing we know is that these online resellers sometimes use robots or bots to secure or harvest massive numbers of tickets as soon as they go on sale and then resell them in the secondary ticket market. It is a massive industry, and it is not good enough to simply declare that we let the buyer beware. The buyer, the ordinary Victorian, cannot possibly ever compete with these organisations or with these robots, and the power imbalance between the ordinary Victorian consumer and these organisations is just colossal.

Something needs to be done, and certainly at a state level we are doing all that we can to address this power imbalance and make things fairer for the ordinary Victorian. But of course, as we know, to an economist the fact that secondary markets for tickets exist is a sign that the tickets have somehow been undersupplied or underpriced or a combination of the two. They might argue that there is a real role for ticket scalping, that they enhance the eternal welfare of concertgoers and sports fans and that they increase the allocative efficiency of the market, but as we have seen, scalpers and online scalpers buy up these big bundles of tickets in order to maximise their own profits. They are not worrying about the ordinary Victorian, so in reality any gain in allocative efficiency is diminished if not completely eliminated and ticket prices essentially just become out of reach of the ordinary fan. Unfortunately, such is the free market for reselling.

We know that Victorians are frustrated with this system. They are frustrated with the ticket resale industry. We know they are frustrated because they tell us, and it is unfair. So this bill will protect more fans, protect more Victorians from being ripped off and from paying wildly exorbitant prices for tickets on the secondary market. Under the amendments in this bill the resale of any tickets will be illegal above 10 per cent of the face value of the ticket price. Under the changes the Minister for Sport will be able to declare events like theatres, shows and concerts as well as major sporting events, and where the minister makes such a declaration in relation to a major event significant penalties of between \$790 and

\$475 000 may apply for anyone who sells tickets at more than 10 per cent above the face value.

Authorised ticketing officers will be brought in. They will be available at venues to monitor for scalping and, together with police officers, will be able to issue on-the-spot infringement notices in instances where less than five tickets are involved. That is a very significant step. It is getting right in there at the coalface. It is about regulating this. It is about addressing this problem and identifying those scalpers at the venues.

For ticket scalpers or resellers who are caught advertising or trying to sell a larger number of tickets — that is, six or more — court proceedings may be instituted where potential fines are heaviest. These are indictable offences with serious penalties, so the penalty should be serious.

This bill is intended to increase access and transparency for Victorian consumers. As I have said, we are trying to make things much fairer. There are going to be those who lament the legislative interference in the free market system. They may see nothing wrong with scalpers and the secondary ticketing markets. They will champion the vital role that scalpers may play in the allocation and distribution of resources. I note that Tom Elliott penned a piece published in the *Herald Sun* about ticket scalping at the AFL Grand Final. While he says that were he a Richmond supporter, he would pay plenty for the privilege, unfortunately not all of us are so privileged. He further says, and I quote:

Footy is nothing more than a big game of supply and demand.

...

And when finals tickets are in limited supply, they too should flow to those willing to pay the maximum price.

He goes on:

We live in a free enterprise society where adults are permitted to trade goods at a price each deems appropriate.

Why should either the AFL or the Victorian government come between willing sellers and buyers of finals tickets?

Sadly, some people will never understand that sometimes life is more than the economics of supply and demand. It is more than futures markets, it is more than put and call options, it is more than stock options and it is more than the exchange of bearer instruments. Sometimes you just cannot put a price on these things, and sometimes we just need to step in and make things fairer. That is exactly what we are doing with this bill — helping to make things fairer for the ordinary Victorian consumer. I commend the Minister for Sport, and I commend the bill to the house.

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (14:37) — I am delighted to rise and make a contribution to the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. As we have heard from other speakers, the bill changes the name of the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 to the Major Events Act 2009. It then amends the act to provide for controlling of the secondary ticket market for major sporting and cultural events or, as we know it, ticket scalping. Previously the legislation was just for selected sporting events. The bill creates the position of authorised ticketing officer, with a virtually identical role to police in monitoring and certainly catching those scalpers. The bill also repeals the Tourism Victoria Act 1992 in light of the creation of Visit Victoria in place of Tourism Victoria.

As a brief background, Victoria was one of the first jurisdictions to have a Major Sporting Events Act. It protected our events in various ways, including providing protection from ticket scalping. The act said that for a range of nominated sporting events it would be illegal to onsell tickets for a value above the original sale price, which at the time seemed perfectly okay. The bill now extends that protection to other major events as selected by the minister. It might apply to a concert, a large cultural event or a theatre production. This bill will also assist by appointing authorised ticketing officers to monitor websites — for example, eBay — for scalpers or for people trying to profit from the resale of purchases, and by having them in attendance at events, which frees up police to do other duties. I think that is a commonsense approach.

I will touch on some of the main provisions. Clause 4 changes the name, as I said, from the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 to the Major Events Act 2009. Several of the clauses also change the word ‘printed’ to ‘displayed’. That is in reference to the price on the ticket given that tickets are not always printed by the promoter. Sometimes they are just used on a smartphone rather than actually being printed and people will scan their smartphone as they walk through the turnstile, as we know. Clause 10 changes the illegal activity from selling five or less tickets above face value to selling a ticket for a price that exceeds its face value purchase price by more than 10 per cent. Again I think that is a commonsense approach to ensure that those who have gone to the effort to get a ticket — there is sometimes a small cost involved, whether it is time or money — can get a particular ticket and they can certainly afford that ticket or onsell that ticket for up to 110 per cent. Again I think that is a fair price. Clause 11 is similar to clause 10 but applies to sales of six tickets or more.

As shadow Minister for Sport I believe that this portfolio has a major stake in this bill, and it is important that we see it through. The current legislation is too restrictive and lacks flexibility. Certainly in the sporting sector, whether we are talking about the Commonwealth Games, the Olympic Games, major events like the AFL or even the Boxing Day test — it is just around the corner — there are areas in this sporting field and these sporting events that we need to protect to ensure that people are not unfairly ripped off. Sometimes people buy a ticket with the intention of using that ticket and then cannot go for various reasons. But the bill is obviously trying to prevent those who have time on their side, who will sit around all day and do what they can to get a ticket from then onselling it at a much higher, inflated price.

South Australia certainly had that flexibility in their legislation. We saw earlier this year that they could declare the AFL finals as a major event. Again this offered protection from ticket scalping. I know the game on 6 August between the Adelaide Crows and Port Adelaide — the local derby — and the finals are a great opportunity to use this legislation to ensure that ticket scalping is kept to a minimum so that genuine people can buy the tickets at genuine prices rather than just ridiculous prices because of ticket scalping. This legislation will change the rules and regulations to allow for an event to be declared before the tickets go on sale, and this will go some way in assisting in the reduction of ticket scalping.

There are a couple of areas of concern. Scalping was already banned for declared sporting events and tickets had to be resold at face value or less. Now they can be resold with a 10 per cent premium. But the bill does not mention time frames for declaration. It says the minister must declare an event before the tickets are printed; it does not say anything about the minister having to act in advance of a series of events going on sale. Again, on the whole I think the bill is taking significant steps forward, but I will certainly watch with interest to see whether what the concept is, what the plan is, for this bill actually plays out that way and whether any changes will be required down the track.

Other areas of concern include current section 167B of the principal act, and that provides that if a police officer believes on reasonable grounds that a person has committed, is committing or is about to commit an offence, action may be taken. Aside from inserting 'authorised ticketing officer' after 'officer' this provision is not changed from the old act; and 'is about to commit an offence' is trying to predict the future, and I wonder how that will pan out in a legal sense as well down the track.

Similarly, changes to section 167B(4) mean officers are not required to follow ticket seizure procedures if the authorised ticketing officer or police officer believes on reasonable grounds that it is impractical to do so. So again it is open to interpretation. We will watch with interest, but on the whole I think there are significant changes for the better in this bill.

I reiterate in regard to these improvements to the current system — and they are improvements — that I still have concerns about whether we can get it right the first time around, but my understanding is that major ticket sellers support the view that this legislation will improve current practice. I understand Ticketmaster, Crown Casino and others support the legislation and see what this legislation sets out to do as an improvement, and that is why we are not opposing the bill. It is in the best interests of Victorians to ensure that a fair system for purchasing tickets is available for them. No system is ever perfect. We certainly need to look for continuous improvement. Victoria is certainly the home of some major sporting events and cultural events. We have the Spring Racing Carnival and the Melbourne Cup. We have events like those the shadow minister mentioned, Katy Perry, Pink and AFL blockbusters like the Anzac Day clash. We need to make sure that the bill facilitates the right changes in this area.

Australia has a clean, green image as a food producer, and similarly I think Melbourne needs to continue as the non-scalping capital of Australia. We have so many events — sporting, cultural, theatre, all sorts of events — that people flock to Melbourne for. We need to do what we can to try and protect our image and to make sure that people know that when they are coming to Melbourne they are getting a fair deal. We will continue to get those visitors from regional Victoria, interstate and even internationally; I know we get a lot coming across the ditch from New Zealand when we have events on that they do not have access to.

It is important that we keep that clean image in regard to scalping, and I think this bill goes a long way towards doing that. Of course we do not want to give to those who prey on others the opportunity to purchase tickets purely because they have time on their side or they are located close to a ticket outlet, when many people have a job to get to, families to feed and children to pick up from school and cannot always get to where they need to go to obtain those tickets. This bill goes a long way in supporting that.

We also have an obligation to see that people are not ripped off. It is important that we continue to preserve the image that we have, and that will keep us in good stead as the sporting capital and the events capital of

Australia. It is important that we do our best, and this bill goes some way to doing that. I will leave my comments there.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) (14:46) — It is my pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. As we have heard, this bill will amend the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 to expand the act to cover non-sporting major events in relation to the ticket scalping provisions and empower the Minister for Tourism and Major Events to make a major event ticketing declaration which will apply new ticket and scalping offences to both major sporting events and other major events. It will also expand the current ticket scalping provisions in the act, creating a new major event ticketing declaration, as I have outlined, that will apply to major events other than sporting events, as well as make changes to what constitutes scalping and simplify the processes required for event organisers, making it more streamlined and less administratively burdensome.

As it stands, current legislation around scalping only covers sporting events, but we know there is a demand for this to be expanded to cover other major events as well, of which there are many here in Melbourne and across Victoria. As we know, Victoria is the major events capital of Australia, and Melbourne is without doubt the cultural capital of our nation, and proudly so.

We know these events are also critical to our tourism industry, drawing people in from out of state but also from overseas. Major events generate economic benefits of around \$1.8 billion to Victoria's economy, I am well informed. I am sure the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, who is sitting at the table at the moment, will tell me if I am wrong, but I believe the economic benefits to Victoria's economy are around \$1.8 billion. I know the minister is particularly proud of the fact that this figure has increased significantly from the previous government's term, where it sat at about \$1.4 billion. In the year ending June 2017, 1.3 million international guests visited Australia for events; and almost half of those, some 44.5 per cent, came to Victoria.

Sport is one part of that success story, as we know. But we also know about the importance of other events on the calendar. We boast an impressive array of theatre performances, concerts, gallery exhibitions and festivals each and every year. These events also bring people to Victoria, as we know. Just last week I attended the Paul McCartney concert at AAMI Park. I was chatting to some people around us and overheard a conversation between those behind me, including a large group of people who had travelled from Adelaide, South Australia, to Melbourne to watch the concert. It

struck me that that is probably pretty standard, not just for major sporting events like the Australian Open or the Spring Racing Carnival, which we know people come here for, but for those situations where a major artist may not be performing in every major city, so people come to a city where they are performing. That was certainly the case for Paul McCartney. In fact at one point he actually asked people in the crowd to identify whether they were local or they had come from elsewhere, and there was quite a cheer from those who had come from elsewhere, which also demonstrates that we are a destination point for cultural experiences and arts and entertainment experiences.

Here in Victoria we pride ourselves on the fact that cultural experiences should be inclusive of all Victorians and open and available to all Victorians, which is why undesirable practices like scalping need to be dealt with, because as we know they often serve to essentially price people out of the ability to pay for a ticket or have people paying ludicrously high prices for tickets. At the most severe end, people have often paid exorbitant rates for tickets and those tickets have turned out to be fakes. I know previous speakers have touched on that. That is particularly shameful, given that you have a situation where somebody is both without cash and without the experience that they were so much looking forward to.

Ticket scalping is certainly not a new phenomenon, but web-based secondary ticket markets have led to the problem gaining prominence and certainly also visibility to consumers, and the internet itself has led to it becoming a significantly larger problem, arguably, than it has been previously.

Under the legislation before us, tickets will not be able to be resold or advertised for sale at more than 10 per cent above the ticket face value. Significant penalties apply to those who infringe these provisions. Penalties for scalping can range from \$790 to \$475 000 depending on the nature and severity of the offence. I note that purchasing tickets from a scalper is not an offence, which is appropriate given that most people who do purchase tickets from a scalper are usually just keen fans of an artist or team and are certainly not profiting from the exercise. So to penalise the purchaser would be to act contrary to the very principle of inclusion which we are seeking to give life to through these scalping provisions.

As part of the bill before us today a new category of authorised ticketing officers will be created to deal with existing and new scalping provisions. These authorised officers will be involved in monitoring websites, and they will be granted enforcement powers, which will

include the seizure of tickets where necessary. They will also be able to commence proceedings for any offences against this bill, and of course they will be doing that on behalf of the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

In terms of these event ticketing declarations, the AFL Grand Final is currently the only declared event under the act for ticket scalping purposes, but historically there have been others, including the Commonwealth Games, the Australian Masters golf in 2009, the 2011 Presidents Cup golf and the 2015 Cricket World Cup. I am still a bit confused as to how golf is a spectator sport, but I will leave that to the fans, of whom I know the Premier is one.

Mr Eren interjected.

Ms WILLIAMS — The Minister for Sport has just expressed his shock that I would dare utter any such phrase about golf, but I stick to it. It is a great sport; it is just not a great spectator sport, in my opinion.

Under these changes it is envisaged that there will still only be a few events per year that are subject to such a declaration, but it is important that these provisions are opened up to all major events to ensure the protections afforded by these declarations are attached for all eligible events. Where a major event ticketing declaration is made, event organisers will be required to ensure that the ticket price is displayed on the face of the ticket itself. As I mentioned, there will be a significant streamlining of this process of declaration. Previously, if declared — and let us use the AFL example — the event organiser, the AFL, would need to submit a proposed ticketing scheme to the minister which would detail the allocation of tickets, including how many tickets are allocated to clubs, to Melbourne Cricket Club members, to AFL members and as part of their contractual obligations. But under the new legislation, event organisers will not be required to do this, which will reduce the administrative burden and make the process of declaring an event far more efficient. However, existing major sporting event declarations — that is, the great AFL Grand Final — will remain, and they will still have to fulfil those requirements.

Under the new regime the minister will give written notice to an event organiser with the intention to make a declaration, or the event organiser may also request the minister make the declaration. The event organiser has 14 days to respond to a notice from the minister and similarly the minister has 14 days to make the major event ticketing declaration. In making the decision as to whether an event qualifies for a declaration, various

factors will be assessed. These may include, for example, the size of the event, the likely demand for tickets, the likely media coverage, the contribution to Victoria's international profile from the event and a range of other factors as well. As other speakers have said, this bill is a sensible step toward eradicating a practice that effectively works to exclude people from indulging in the many major events that make our state so vibrant and so desirable to both interstate and international visitors. We truly are blessed here in Melbourne to have a relatively affordable arts and entertainment scene, and I think that is something that we should fiercely protect. We know that to be truly inclusive we need to ensure that we are protecting consumers from gouging practices, which of course include scalping.

I do not attend as many major events as I used to and certainly not as many as I would like to, but on the occasions I do I am always reminded of the role that they play in community and in bringing people together at a time when we are doing less of that because so often our heads are buried in screens and work and we do not always get that personal interaction. My most recent experience at the Paul McCartney concert where I saw people chatting to the people next to them, actually making conversations and making new friends, was something that highlighted to me how important those sorts of social interactions were and how much we share with each other despite our differences. It was quite evident in the row that I was sitting in that there were people from a range of different ethnic backgrounds, religious backgrounds — you name it — all united in their love of the Beatles, which really made my heart sing. I commend the bill to the house. It does go a significant way to making ticket purchasing fairer.

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (14:56) — I rise to speak on behalf of the Greens to the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. This bill has been introduced to expand ticket scalping controls to non-sporting events such as the theatre, concerts and festivals, although I do understand that it will also be used for other sporting events such as AFL finals and the Anzac Day match between Essendon and Collingwood. It does this by creating a new declaration called a major event ticketing declaration which will differ from the current sports ticketing event declaration, which I understand will be retained. The existing sports ticketing event declaration requires the minister to declare a sports ticketing event some nine months before the actual event and then requires the organiser to lodge a ticket scheme which contains conditions of the sale of those tickets and disclosure of the ticket allocation among other things, and obviously the minister then approves that ticket scheme.

My understanding is the new major events ticketing declaration will apply to not just sporting events but of course those other events, and would remove those time frames and the requirement for the lodgement of a ticket scheme. The bill also creates a new authorised ticket officer to enforce these new anti-scalping laws. The reasons behind this bill are pretty clear. There has been a lot of outrage over ticket scalping and the use of ticket onselling. Tickets for —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr HIBBINS — I will get to that. Tickets for concerts, shows, football matches go on sale, sell out and hours later they are on sale on second-hand ticket sites for massively inflated prices. This year's footy finals were a pretty clear example of this. The Greens did put out there, with the support of the AFL Fans Association, that if the government did not act to include these sellout footy matches under anti-scalping laws, we would introduce our own bill, so it is good to see some action in this regard. We have also had some very dodgy practices by ticket onsellors, most notably Viagogo, which clearly have a business model based on deceiving consumers about who is the primary ticket seller. They are basically a business model based on deceiving consumers about who the real ticket seller is, the availability of tickets, and then trying to attract the highest price from the consumer. Whilst they are probably an outlier in terms of behaviour of ticket sellers — I believe they have been taken to court by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission — it is really clear that there are people who are profiteering from sellout events through onselling tickets and ticket scalping. It is really important that sellout events are protected from ticket scalping and footy fans and event goers are not ripped off.

Whilst there might be a place for some onselling — for example, for those people who have bought tickets but cannot go and need to onsell their tickets — there is a need to protect sellout events, regulate the secondary ticket market and protect consumers.

The protection of consumers is the reason I have some issues with this bill. I am concerned about the failure of the bill to require event organisers, the primary ticket sellers, to disclose their distribution of tickets. While there are serious issues with ticket onselling and the effects that has on consumers, event organisers are not off the hook when it comes to practices that limit the availability of tickets to the regular punter and force consumers to purchase tickets at a price that is higher than they should be. I am concerned that while the bill extends protections for event organisers from ticket

scalping, it does not require them to be transparent about their own ticket allocation.

Under the sports ticket event declaration there is a requirement to lodge with the minister for approval a ticket scheme which outlines how those tickets are distributed. It requires them to say where the tickets went, along with other conditions. I think this is entirely reasonable, because of course the ticket practices of the primary sellers can actually contribute to ticket scalping itself. We have a ticket distribution that — for example, tickets for the AFL Grand Final — limits the amount of tickets available to the regular punter but then forces them to purchase the higher priced tickets or is not clear about where the tickets are going.

The government has included reasons for not requiring organisers to prepare a ticket scheme. What the minister stated in the second-reading speech is:

It will not be necessary for an event organiser to prepare a ticket scheme. This is preferable for cultural events which often do not have a regular fixed venue, date or event organiser. Often a significant cultural major event such as a concert, theatre event, gallery exhibition or festival will be secured a few weeks or months before staging, which does not provide sufficient time to undertake the existing process under the act. In addition, ticket scheme proposals can be difficult to prepare for such events as staging or seating requirements are often modified quite close to the event.

We are also given the reason that this would be an administrative burden for event organisers. I am not entirely sure that is actually the case. I am pretty sure that in many events the ticketing arrangements, what the tickets would be priced at and the profits that would go into it would be pretty well canvassed within the organisation itself. I would suggest that getting that information out to the public might not be as great an administrative burden as has been suggested.

In the case of the other reasons given, it might be true for some events but not necessarily the case for others. Whilst there is a difference between events like the grand final, which is played every year, and other events or shows that occur as part of a tour or a season, with the potential short time between the declaration and the actual event I think it would be reasonable that if an event and the event organiser had the protection of the law and the state was enforcing that law with authorised ticket sellers, of course with all the benefits that go along with that to the organiser, we could come to some sort of arrangement with some sort of compromise which would require organisers at some level to disclose their ticket allocation — how many are in each category, corporate sales, given sponsors and the like. That would be of much more benefit and give much more protection to consumers by giving them the full picture. The Greens

will be supporting this bill. However, we will be looking very closely at potential amendments that will improve transparency of ticket allocations.

I am also very concerned that the new major events ticketing declaration without the ticket requirement will be substituted for events that should be covered by a sports ticketing declaration. I would be very concerned if there were sporting events that should actually fit under the sports ticketing event declaration being then put under the major events declaration. As I said, we will be looking very closely at the amendments to this bill to ensure that this bill puts the protection of consumers and event-goers first and requires the transparency of ticketing allocations.

I want to touch on a few other ticketing issues that arose. Of course what I have been interested in is grand final ticketing. My concern is that the current allocation of tickets to the grand final is not fair and that the ticket scheme submitted by the AFL only provides for around 34 per cent of tickets to go to competing club members. The Greens put forward a bill in the other place that would lift that allocation to at least 50 per cent. We have got a ticket allocation in the grand final that essentially creates an environment for ticket scalping to flourish, where those fans who pay up year in, year out miss out on tickets and are forced to buy expensive tickets, go onto the black market or seek tickets by other means. The minister has the power within the act to modify that ticket scheme and to go back to the AFL and say, 'Look, we don't think this is a fair ticket allocation; we believe you should actually change it'. The minister certainly does have that power, and that is why the Greens introduced a bill in the other place. I was very disappointed that neither the government, the opposition nor other members of the crossbench supported that bill.

The other ticketing issue I would like to raise is that of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix. I guess the question I would like to put is, when are we going to find out how many people actually go to the grand prix? We know it is costing the state \$60 million a year, but the government refuses to publish how many people actually attend each year. At Etihad Stadium they provide a running tally of the crowd number up on a screen, yet it seems to be completely beyond the Australian Grand Prix Corporation to accurately count and then publish how many people actually attend the grand prix. I would suggest there is a bit of scope for improvement within the ticketing practices of both the grand prix and the grand final.

As I said, the Greens will be supporting the bill in this place, but we are going to look very closely in the other

place to see if there is any potential for amendments that would go to further protecting consumers.

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (15:07) — I rise to speak on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. I will begin by congratulating the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, who is at the table, on the work that he has done on this bill. It is great for Victoria, but it is also great for my constituents in Geelong. The purpose of the bill, which amends the Major Sporting Events Act 2009, is to expand that act to cover non-sporting major events such as cultural events, including theatre events, concerts, gallery exhibitions and festivals, in relation to ticket scalping provisions; and to empower the minister to make a major event ticketing declaration, which will apply new ticket scalping offences to both major sporting events and other major events.

The bill proposes changes which will expand the current ticket scalping provisions in the act, creating a new major event ticketing declaration that may apply to major events other than sporting events. There will also be changes as to what constitutes ticket scalping and a simplification of the processes required for event organisers, making it more streamlined, less administratively burdensome and quicker to obtain.

The bill will also repeal the Tourism Victoria Act 1992. Visit Victoria, which was created on 1 July 2016 as a company limited by guarantee, brought together the functions of Tourism Victoria's marketing division, the Victorian Major Events Company and the Melbourne Convention Bureau into a single organisation. There is now no longer a need for the Tourism Victoria Act 1992.

We know that major sporting events also bring tourism and significant tourism dollars into our state. We know it is a major boost for local businesses in creating jobs. This is particularly important for areas right around Victoria but also inner Melbourne and of course cities like Geelong.

There have been allegations that tickets for this year's AFL and National Rugby League finals matches were being resold for up to three times their initial price. Tickets are easy to sell online, and a resale market of price gouging has emerged. The bill will make it illegal to sell or advertise for resale tickets to any declared event for more than 10 per cent above face value. This will protect fans from being ripped off and paying exorbitant amounts to ticket scalpers.

I know that my community in Geelong have concerns about what has happened with scalping in the past. Many constituents from my electorate travel to Melbourne for

major events, but Geelong is also a growing major events region — thanks very much to the Minister for Sport — which creates many jobs in our tourism sector. The recent figures for regional tourism are up by 18.6 per cent, and that is largely due to the work of our Minister for Sport in getting those major events not only to Melbourne but also into the regions.

With the establishment of the Kardinia Park Stadium Trust, for example, in Geelong, more and more major events are being attracted into Geelong. We have not only AFL football but the Big Bash — we have another event coming up in January. Soccer events — we have another one coming up in January in Geelong. We have soccer, concerts, the Geelong Cup and of course the Australian International Airshow, which will again be on in 2019. We will need the West Gate tunnel for our tourism visitors to come to Geelong and experience those major events but also for those in the community of Geelong to be able to travel to Melbourne without the congestion that we have seen. The West Gate tunnel will be a significant thing for Geelong residents who are travelling up and down the highway.

I know people in Geelong are also sick of being ripped off by ticket scalpers. I have often heard or had people come and see me about these sorts of issues. I think all of the measures contained in this bill will encourage more event organisers to seek stronger ticketing protections to guard against scalping, and that is really what we do need to see. The major events that we have on in Victoria are widely attended not just by Victorians, of course, but by interstate and international visitors. It is pretty sad when we have scalpers selling tickets for up to three times more than what their face value is and that it is allowed to happen. This legislation will prevent that from continuing.

There will also be an additional offence requiring an event organiser, where a major event ticketing declaration has been made, to make sure that the ticket prices are displayed on the face of the ticket. That will alert people, I suppose, when they go on eBay or whatever internet facility they are using to buy tickets. They will actually see the price of the ticket, the original price, and know just how badly they are being ripped off, if that is the case, or whether it is within the allowable 10 per cent that is contained in this legislation.

Under a major ticketing declaration it will not be necessary for an event organiser to prepare a ticket scheme proposal. There will be no requirement for a major event ticketing declaration to be made nine months before the event. A declaration must be made before tickets go on sale. The concern about the nine months before the event is adequately covered. When

the tickets are going on sale, it gives the promoters an opportunity to do the right thing and get the ticket sales out. People know exactly what they are getting and when the tickets are on sale.

On the major event ticketing declaration, the current ticketing provisions in the act which apply to major sporting events have been criticised by some stakeholders as requiring too long a lead-in time for some events. Often an event is only secured within a few months of its staging rather than the current required notice period of nine months under the act.

A new category of authorised officer, an ‘authorised ticketing officer’, will be created to deal specifically with the existing and new ticket scalping provisions in the act. Authorised ticketing officers will be involved in monitoring websites and will be granted enforcement powers, including seizure, temporary surrender and retention of tickets. Authorised ticketing officers will also be able to commence proceedings on behalf of the Secretary of Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resource for any offences outlined in the bill.

The bill also outlines the penalties that any person found guilty of multiple offences in respect to a particular ticket event will incur. I think the protections are there. I know, certainly for my electorate of Geelong and I am sure for all the electorates around Victoria, people will be very pleased to see this legislation go through the house. It does protect people. It also protects our reputation in Victoria. We are a great state that provides great tourism opportunities and opportunities to attend events which are really well attended, obviously. People want to be able to buy tickets at a reasonable price. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) (15:16) — I am pleased to make a brief contribution on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. A matter which Acting Speaker Richardson and I are both familiar with is the Beaumaris Sports Club, which was opened recently. It was a great combined effort with the local Beaumaris Football Club, the Beaumaris Cricket Club and the Beaumaris Lawn Tennis Club melding into a great facility. At this stage they are selling tickets for a day out on Oak Street. I am not sure whether the legislation will actually cover their activities in the short term, but it will in the medium term, as Beaumaris forges its way forward, certainly on the football frontier under the influence of Bluey McKenna, who is a new identity around the club, and under the aegis of the great leadership of Mr Tony Mellick, Scott Eccleston and also Chris Morley, who are the prime movers behind

the redevelopment of the club facilities. Early on in relation to the club the Nicholson brothers were prime movers.

The club has a great heritage and history going back in time. Many of the early founders of the Beaumaris sporting district clubs were in fact members of the local Beaumaris RSL. I am pleased to note recent developments that will mean the memorabilia from the RSL will be located at the Beaumaris Sports Club precinct while matters pertaining to the Beaumaris RSL are worked out. The opportunity for there to be some legacy of the district's military heritage and history remaining in the district was something that was canvassed in this place by me in February 2016. It was certainly an idea that was advocated and supported by a number of people who understood the outstanding contribution made by returned service personnel as district coaches and participants in cricket, tennis and Australian Rules football.

Historically I have made comments in relation to the Beaumaris Football Club. One of its finest years was when it won an amateur premierships under the on-the-ground leadership of Brayden Haynes. Prior to the start of the season, one of the club members lost their life after a king-hit punch down at St Kilda. The team dedicated their efforts to his memory, and they won the premierships. Brayden Haynes won the best and fairest that year and was best on ground in the grand final. It is a great story of the community working together.

In speaking about the history and legacy of sport and its contribution to the life of the local community there was a tremendous article written by Martin Flanagan a number of years ago on Ruth Brain, a person who stood up when no-one else was around to serve as president of a country football club. Sadly she died prior to the end of the football season, but the team dedicated their efforts to her memory and her club that had been battling all along. She was a person who drove to the ground the person who looked after the scoreboard, I think from memory. Those club people in the life of the nation who cut up the oranges, sweep up the changing rooms, get the tape and mud off the floor and get things ready for the next week make an outstanding contribution to the life of community sport.

There is also an outstanding and very poignant article written by Martin Flanagan on the uplift around the ground when a country team in western Victoria took on the ladder leaders and won the day. It follows the narrative of Australian sport, even that of a former Beaumaris Football Club coach, who in western Victoria kicked a couple of hundred goals for the

season and led a country team to their first premierships in 60 years or thereabouts. I hope that one day will be a story that can be written and produced as a film detailing the contribution of Jason Mifsud.

Sport is part of the fabric of the Australian nation. It is the lifeblood of the nation. We regard Melbourne as the sporting capital of the world through the contributions of leading Australian athletes, Herb Elliott, Ron Clarke, Ralph Doubell, Debbie Flintoff-King and more recently Cathy Freeman and Sally Pearson, who have made a mark on the world stage. In terms of cricket there was a once-described accountancy in Allan Border's batting style by one journalist. There were also the plains of Troy battles by Pat Cash in the 1980s in the Melbourne Park precinct.

One important matter in terms of sport has been that as infrastructure has been built closer to the CBD there has been the loss of sporting arenas in inner Melbourne. Just near Richmond station and the tennis centre complex there has been the loss of three sporting ovals: the former St Stephen's running track and two amateur ovals. Those areas of land are not being fully replaced. It should be a major focus of future governments in days ahead to ensure that there are recreational lands available for sports engagement and participation.

I am pleased to have had a direct primary role in relation to the co-investment in the Beaumaris High School site by the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC), which will develop three major sporting surfaces for women's cricket, men's cricket, hockey, lacrosse and soccer. It was an important aspect of that work that was first announced in 2014 that there had to be a win for each of the stakeholders — the local school that needed reinvestment, the local sporting clubs that needed more land to play on and the Melbourne Cricket Club that used part of its philanthropic trust fund to co-invest in sporting facilities. There was the precedent of Melbourne High School and the MCC co-investing in a hockey facility there, which was managed by the Melbourne Cricket Club. That represented an outstanding precedent to move forward to try to better utilise some of the urban land of Melbourne for the purposes of sport and education. Just prior to the 2014 election the then Premier of Victoria and the then Minister for Education made the announcement of the co-investment in that site by the Melbourne Cricket Club, which would lead to new school infrastructure in the district.

In relation to the bill before the house at the moment I have one major concern, and that is in relation to the fact that for declared sporting events scalping had previously been banned and tickets had to be resold at

face value or less. Now they can be resold with a 10 per cent premium. If that sale was to take place on eBay, then that is one aspect of the arrangement where there might be commissions taken by selling agents.

However, for an enterprising person with five tickets who is standing outside a music concert at AAMI Park or outside the MCG or outside the Australian Open, they could make a handy income from the on-sale of those tickets at a 10 per cent premium. I would value commentary by the minister or other speakers on the government side as to whether the government intends to open up scalping arrangements for major events as defined under the bill, because I think there is a shortfall. I am not aware of an explanation, but I look forward to there being an explanation as to this new market for scalping that will be opened up.

I have had the privilege in yesteryear of having seen many grand finals and of moving about the Yarra Park precinct, where in addition to the sound outside the arena of 'Get your footy record! Get your footy record!' or 'Peanuts, lollies, chocolates and potato chips', the scalpers stood by and proffered tickets, either directly or indirectly. Now I think there is a new industry that the government may be opening up for entrepreneurs, who will get their tickets and make them available. It would be a handy afternoon's work if, say, a ticket was for sale for \$500 or so and there was a 10 per cent premium and they had five of them. That would mean a quick \$250 outside the MCG or outside Rod Laver Arena or outside AAMI Park. I think that matter might require some further exploration. I have heard members from the other side of the house on a number of occasions seek to make great play on the crackdown on scalping. I think there is a gap in the legislation which will open up as a consequence of the bill before the house.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (15:26) — I am delighted to make a contribution on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. This is a really important piece of legislation that is before the house. It demonstrates the fact that for those of us on this side of the house, when we identify that there is market failure, we are quite happy to use the power of the state to address that market failure. We are able to do so because we are a party of government. We are not here to make comments from the sidelines. We are not here to be like the back seat driver of Spring Street saying, 'You should go this way, you should do it that way', or 'If I was in the driver's seat, it would be much better'. We are a party of government, and when we are faced with market failure, as we have seen it with scalping, then we are duty-bound to seek a remedy to address that.

I did listen to most of the member for Prahran's contribution, and I have got to say it must have been hard to be the member for Prahran, I think, in fairness to him. Here you have a person who has made a focal point of his work in this place about trying to tackle the issue of ticket scalping. He has had a real focus on corporate tickets, he has had a focus on ordinary rank-and-file fans missing out, and he has gone out publicly. He has really come out strongly on this issue. But then he is embarrassed and he is humiliated because his own colleague the member for Melbourne takes a corporate ticket from the City of Melbourne.

Mr Foley — For whom though?

Mr PEARSON — The minister says, 'For whom?'. For herself. And we have got the evidence on social media.

Mr Dimopoulos interjected.

Mr PEARSON — Who would have thought? You have got to feel for the member for Prahran. There he is — this is his cause célèbre. He does not do much in this place — in fact if he left tomorrow he would leave no legacy here — but this is the one thing he has worked on. Yet the person who he sits next to in the chamber day in, day out did him in. She took the ticket knowing it was contrary to his views, his wishes and his desires. She took the ticket and she went to the game. I suppose the question is — and the member did not answer this in his contribution — when did he find out? Did she ring him up beforehand and say, 'Look, I know you have been pushing hard on this issue, but I am a mad Tigers fan, I have got a free ticket compliments of the City of Melbourne and I have really got to go?'. Did she not tell him? Did he only find out when she had to register her members interests? That would be a very interesting question, and I do hope the member for Melbourne speaks on this important piece of legislation, because I would like to know how these matters were dealt with and discussed. How did she come to this decision? How did she decide to do this when it would be contrary to Greens policy, as I understand it? I would have thought that you would owe an explanation, at least to your colleagues, and say, 'Well, I know this is party policy, but I diverge on this particular point because I want to enjoy an afternoon at the footy compliments of the City of Melbourne'. I would have thought that would warrant some level of explanation.

As I said, where there is evidence of market failure it is incumbent upon the state to look at intervening. This issue was brought up with me some time ago by a local Flemington resident — I think he has actually voted for the Greens in the past — David Langsam, who

expressed some concerns about the fact that he tried to get tickets for Midnight Oil and they were beyond his capacity because of scalping. He was quite concerned by the fact that he was denied this opportunity, and he raised it with me. I took up the issue and raised it internally, and I am really pleased to see now that we have got this bill before the house which will seek to address this issue.

One of the reasons why I think it is important that this issue is dealt with and addressed is that we know it goes to what makes for a fair and decent and progressive society. Thomas Piketty, who is a French economist, in his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* has talked about r being greater than g — that is, r , being the return on capital, is greater than g , the growth rate of output. This is evidenced today in an article in the *Australian Financial Review*, which reports that in the last seven years growth in real wages has averaged less than 1 per cent per annum. Relatively senior occupations like engineers, managers and doctors have had an average real wage increase of 1.4 per cent, whereas cleaners, sales assistants and labourers have basically had no wage increase at all over the past seven years.

Over the course of time what you will see with that is that if people have got an investment portfolio and if they have got accumulated assets then the rate of increase in that wealth will be greater than wages growth. So you will see a deterioration in the fairness of society, and you will see instances where wages growth will fail to meet returns on investment. So that means that people who have got money, and particularly if they have managed to acquire assets historically or they have had assets transferred to them through an intergenerational wealth transfer, will be far more able to participate in all aspects of commerce and all aspects of the economics of society, whereas people who come from a poorer background or a humble background, do not have any assets and work in a job which is just middle-of-the-road are going to be excluded.

I listened to the member for Bayswater's contribution. She talked about people having the means and the capacity to do something and said that if a child wants to go and see a Pink concert then the parent might say, 'Well, I will pay whatever I have to pay in order to participate'. That is something that parents of means and parents of wealth have thought about and have done. They have done so for generations and will do so for generations to come. But not every parent is in that position; not every parent has got the capacity or the ability to pay. So where you have instances where massive gouging is occurring, as we have seen in recent times, there is a requirement to look at trying to find ways in which we can seek to address that to restore the

balance. We want to ensure that people, regardless of where they come from, have got the capacity to be able to go to these shows or events — and we know this is a really important issue in Melbourne because we are an events precinct — without being excluded on economic grounds purely because there are no cheap seats in the show and there is no capacity for people of more modest or humble means to participate in these sorts of activities and events.

This is really important because it speaks to our values as a society and as a community. What sort of society do we want to be? What sort of community do we want to create? Do we want to have people excluded from reaching their potential simply because of what their parents do, simply because of the size of their parents' bank balance or simply because their parents rent rather than own a property? That is not a fair and just society. That is not why I joined the Labor Party. I joined the Labor Party because I wanted to create a fairer and more just society — a society where we are proud of the contributions that our citizens make, regardless of where they live, regardless of the occupation they hold and regardless of their level of education.

Bills like this are the cornerstone of a modern, progressive society. There are times when you cannot just let laissez-faire capitalism rip through a state without understanding that there are some significant downsides for the citizens. From time to time there is a need for the state to intervene to create a fairer, more just and more equitable society, and the bill before the house does that.

We can do this because we are a party of government. We did not set out on this journey to sit on the sidelines and commentate. We did not set out to write opinion pieces in the paper. We did not set out, for example, to tell the community what to do and not do it ourselves. We set out to be on this side of the house and to work as members of a government to deliver progressive policies and good, stable, responsible government. That is why I joined the party. That is why I sought to become a member of this place. When you make that decision, when you make that commitment and when you decide that this is what you want to do with your working day then you have the capacity to deliver legislation like this.

This is good legislation. It is fair and it is decent legislation. It is what the Labor Party is about. It is what we all on this side of the house aspire to do — to create a fair and just society and to ensure that people are not locked out or excluded just because of the role their parents play, the size of their parents' bank balance or

whether they are renters or property owners. It is a really important bill, and I commend it to the house.

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) (15:36) — I rise this afternoon to speak on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. I hope I am on the right bill. I am not quite sure what the member for Essendon was referring to, but I think I am on the right bill this afternoon.

This is an important bill. In Victoria we are very lucky. We are blessed to have some major sporting events. The sporting and cultural part of Victoria and Melbourne has grown strongly in recent years, and unfortunately we see people taking advantage of that. We know that at some of our major sporting events ticket scalping has become a bit of a profession. It is important that as legislators we do anything we can to stop that, and parts of the bill certainly do that.

We know that with technology these days it is much easier for scalpers and others to onsell tickets, and in some circumstances that is legitimate. There are a range of reasons a person who might have acquired a ticket or tickets is unable to attend. It might be a gift for a loved one or others. These are legitimate purposes. Somehow we have to stop ticket scalping at its heart, noting that this applies to major sporting events at the moment but that we will in the future extend the anti-scalping provisions to cover non-sporting events as well, and that is important. We have so many people who travel into this great city to attend cultural events including shows, concerts, exhibitions and other things which are critically important.

I hope from a regional perspective that in the future we have a minister who might declare a major event in a regional city. I think it would be absolutely fantastic for us to be able to host exhibitions, shows, concerts and major sporting events in our regional cities. That is vitally important. They are very well supported, and I will talk about that further on in my contribution.

This bill enables the minister to make a major event ticketing declaration, which means that tickets are not able to be advertised for sale or be resold at a price that exceeds their face value purchase price by more than 10 per cent. The bill explains that the 10 per cent fee is to cover any administration fees incurred in the purchase of the original ticket. This will allow legitimate resellers of a ticket to do so and account for their costs. The member for Sandringham raised some issues with respect to that part of the bill, and on that basis I look forward to the minister responding to the concerns. I note that this applies to major events including non-sporting events. It is a significant part of the bill.

The bill also enables a new category of authorised officers who will be known as authorised ticketing officers. They will be given some powers of enforcement to deal with the new provisions in the bill. It is really important that they are also able to engage in the monitoring of websites, which is where a lot of these transactions take place in this day and age.

As I mentioned earlier, I would love to see in the future a minister, if this bill is still in existence in its current form, declare an event, whether it be a sporting or non-sporting event, in regional Victoria. This Friday we will be lucky enough in Traralgon to have a Big Bash League cricket game between the Melbourne Stars and the Hobart Hurricanes. I am sure it will be very well attended by local sporting, particularly cricket, enthusiasts. I encourage governments of any persuasion to continue to provide those types of opportunities in our regional centres because they are well attended and they will be well attended whether they are art exhibitions, cultural exhibitions, concerts or sporting events. Regional people get behind those types of events and they are very successful.

The bill does not address some of the concerns that I have — I understand the rationale; it is more a national issue. I have had some experience with local constituents and Viagogo. In January this year there was an article in the *Latrobe Valley Express* about a local resident who came to me having secured two tickets to a Big Bash League game in Melbourne between the Renegades and the Hobart Hurricanes at Etihad Stadium. Les Hunt had jumped onto a website because he wanted to take his dear wife to this particular game, and the first website that came up selling tickets was Viagogo. With all due respect to Les, he is a little bit older and he knew no better, because he assumed that that was the authorised ticket-selling agent for the game.

When you go to the website of Viagogo and, for example, look at the 29 December game for the Melbourne Renegades versus the Perth Scorchers, it shows the capacity of the crowd and says, 'Tickets almost gone'. That is a way of getting people in. People panic and say, 'That is the game that I've earmarked that I want to go to'. A heading comes up saying, 'Tickets almost gone', so people invariably say, 'Well, I'd better get in on this very quickly'. Then you go to the heading, 'View details' and it says that there are less than 1 per cent of tickets left and the game is likely to sell out.

This is false advertising in its purest form so far as I am concerned. It appears that nobody can do anything about it at the moment, and from a consumer's perspective that is not good enough. It is clearly false

advertising when it says that there are less than 1 per cent of tickets left and that the game is likely to sell out. It is absolute garbage.

But in the case of Mr Hunt, my local resident, he secured two tickets for nearly \$160. When they arrived in the mail they showed a face value of \$20 each. Then, to cut a long story short, it was found that the tickets were not legitimate; they had been copied. So Les and his good wife were nearly \$160 out of pocket because this site is allowed to operate. As I have just demonstrated, unfortunately it is still operational today and misleading people. Again, I just cannot fathom that in this day and age that this can continue or can be allowed to continue. Surely between the state and federal governments we can do something to get rid of those despicable type of companies that mislead and rip off people in such a way.

On the bill itself, it is important that we do note non-sporting events as part of our events calendar within Melbourne and Victoria. The attendance of people, whether it be to the football grand final or coming through for art exhibitions in their hundreds of thousands, is really well recognised by people from outside Australia and outside Victoria. Indeed it is a great attraction for us to be able to say that we get 100 000 people to the AFL Grand Final — it is a spectacular event. Whenever we have concerts that are sold out, people come to Melbourne and Victoria as a destination because of the sporting and other events that we host here. I think that all governments over time should be congratulated for their ability and desire to make sure that we continue to hold and host major events within the state. The flow-on benefits to our businesses and our local economies are just profound, and long may that continue in the future.

One thing we do want to get rid of is scalpers, and the bill before us does go some way to making sure that we make it harder for scalpers in the future.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (15:46) — This bill is fundamentally about a fairer go for consumers by cracking down on scalpers. We know that we have had grand final tickets scalped for generations. Scalping is insidious and difficult to pin down, and the internet has made a resale market that provides an even easier way for price gouging. This is the issue the government is confronting and dealing with, and this bill will protect more fans from being ripped off and from paying exorbitant amounts to ticket scalpers on the secondary market — that is the key proposition here.

This is going to be done by making it illegal to sell or advertise for resale tickets to any declared event for

more than 10 per cent above face value. So that is the key proposition: to make it that anything more than 10 per cent is now outside the law, which takes the incentive away from the scalpers.

Under the new Major Events Act 2009 the Minister for Tourism and Major Events will also be able to declare ‘events’ other than sporting fixtures. The legislation will allow for cultural events like the big theatre shows and concerts to be declared and better protected, improving our capacity to bring the big events to Victoria. I just cite the reference in the *Herald Sun* when the Premier announced that we secured the exclusive Australian season for the theatre production *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. In answering questions the Premier said in the *Herald Sun* on 24 October:

We are very keen to protect the integrity of the ticketing offer. We are prepared to take the steps necessary to ensure that we don't see some of that behaviour.

That is part of the strategy so that we can attract blockbusters here. It fits within the major events calendar where we have the big sporting events first of all, then we added the cultural side to it; particularly the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces has been a great success. This is why giving people the chance not to be ripped off — basically, that is what we are trying to do — as well as by ensuring that they pay a fair price for the ticket we are also ensuring availability for the widest number of people in the community that we possibly can. This is really significant in how we build our sectors, and how we get the profile that Melbourne has as the world's most livable city.

Melbourne is the cultural capital and we are also the knowledge capital. I opened an international innovation conference yesterday at RMIT University. We are hailed around the world for what we do. A subset of that is in medical research — I am the parliamentary secretary with responsibility in that area — where we are still the national leader and we are internationally acclaimed. These are the ways that we actually help bring these sectors here, help them thrive and provide a fair go for them.

If you have a look at the value we are talking about here, tourism is Victoria's second-largest services export, second only to education. It generates around 210 000 jobs and delivers more than \$23 billion to the economy annually. The broader events industry provides about 4700 full-time equivalent jobs. This is the scale we are talking about here. We have developed this over decades to get the scheduling right, to get the tourism right and to get the branding right in order to

make offers that are not just local but of national and international significance.

Collectively major events work together over the course of the year to provide not only economic value, but also constant positioning and profiling for Victoria. This drives tourism, employment growth, industry development, business links, investment decisions and community results for the benefit of the state. It also plays into how we attract the best and brightest from overseas with fellowships, which I was able to do with Veski last night in our science sector. The winner of the major fellowship loves Melbourne, loves the sunshine and loves the offer. This is how this fits into a much bigger narrative about the state, about what we offer the world and the value proposition.

Victoria's major events calendar is one of the most successful in the world, to put it bluntly. You have seen how other states have now come up with major events corporations themselves to try to compete, and to try and get this value proposition. If you have a look at what we do offer in Melbourne, we have the Australian Open Tennis Championships, one of only four grand slams in the world. We have the AFL Grand Final week, but we know, particularly given Richmond won the flag this year, it can go for much, much more than a week. Then we have the Australian Formula One Grand Prix and the Spring Racing Carnival, which goes on and on and gives us the international spotlight and significance as well.

Likewise regional Victoria showcases the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix at Phillip Island, the classic Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race in Geelong and along the Great Ocean Road, the Bendigo International Collections series at Bendigo Art Gallery, the Rip Curl Pro at Bells Beach, the Festival of Sails at Geelong's waterfront and the *Herald Sun* cycling tour in different regions of Victoria, which has been going for decades. This is a calendar of events that has been generated over generations. This is why it is important to provide the fair-go option here on ticket prices and availability to make sure that these events are open to everyone to attend and participate in so they can enjoy the value of this long-term investment from a range of different governments.

The bill itself will allow the organisers of major sporting events and other non-sporting events, such as cultural events, including theatre, concerts, gallery exhibitions and festivals, to seek their event be declared a major event for ticketing purposes. That gives them the chance to go directly to the minister and say they want to have this protection or to be seen in this way and therefore avoid these exorbitant prices being put on

the tickets. If the Minister for Tourism and Major Events makes a major event ticketing declaration in respect of that event, it will become an offence to sell or advertise for sale a ticket for a price exceeding by more than 10 per cent the face value of the purchased ticket. The offence is split into two categories depending on whether there are five or fewer tickets or six or more. That is drilling down into the detail that I do not need to go any further but that is basically how the details of the proposal will play out.

The big-picture theme is how we can really look after these events, how we can look after our investment of more than \$1 billion from the Andrews Labor government in sport and recreation right throughout Victoria. This helps us maintain our leadership in Australia, which is constantly under threat, as the sporting capital, the cultural capital and in other ways. As I said, we are the knowledge capital and we are respected for holding that title as well. This is why I am saying that it is important to be able to still provide the opportunity of a fair go for anyone to participate to come along and see these events and be part of the value they bring to life in Victoria — not just to be a spectator but to be part of them and to get the maximum enjoyment from them without being ripped off. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) (15:56) — I am really pleased to speak on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017 before us today. If I can extend a theme from the member for Essendon — and the member for Broadmeadows touched on this as well — to me this bill, like so many other bills that the Andrews Labor government brings to this place, is fundamentally about fairness. It is about everyone having the ability to access major events, which are so important to us in our lives, and to be able to go to those events on a level playing field. I was thinking about this and remembering that when I was a much younger gal I used to love going to the Big Day Out —

Mr McGuire — Last week.

Ms KNIGHT — Last week. I loved going to the Big Day Out; it was great. You would save up, you would go, you would be with a group of people and you would hear some great music, memorable things like Rage Against the Machine, TISM and bands like that. Probably the member for Dandenong would not have a clue what I am talking about; she is a bit young. But then when I had kids of my own one of the great things that I loved doing was taking two of them when they got a bit older. We would go together and share that experience. Then quite shockingly they got to the

stage where they did not want me to go with them. I cannot imagine why! But anyway, that is what happened. So for Christmas every year they would get money to go to the Big Day Out. It was one of those fabulous, big events that was a big part of our family's lives. It taught my kids how to deal with festivals. Then they migrated to the Meredith Music Festival and the rainbow festival. Music festivals have been a significant part of their lives as they have grown up, and still are a significant part.

For me it is really not just about the price of the ticket; it is about how we live our lives and all that joy. The member for Dandenong talked about the Paul McCartney concert and the joy that that brought her and all of those thousands and thousands of people that went. I had the same experience at Alice Cooper. It was great; it was fantastic. Ace Frehley just shredded the place, and then out came Alice Cooper. I will explain to the member for Dandenong who Alice Cooper is at another time.

This is absolutely about fairness. A few weeks back the Minister for Tourism and Major Events said the new measures in this bill 'will crack down on scalpers and help keep our major events fair and accessible for everyone'. As I said, I am standing here as someone who, like so many other Victorians, loves a major event, but I am also here as a representative from a city that puts on some of the best events in regional Victoria.

I certainly support the thrust of this bill. It includes expanding ticket scalping provisions to major non-sporting events like concerts, exhibitions, theatre events and festivals; empowers the minister to apply the new ticket scalping offences to major events by making a major event ticketing declaration; and makes it an offence to sell any ticket to an event to which a major ticketing declaration applies at a price that exceeds the purchase price by more than 10 per cent. I do not want any of Victoria's major events to be an opportunity for scalpers to take advantage of consumers, and I believe this bill will protect more people from being ripped off.

Before discussing the substance of the bill I just want to touch on Ballarat's fantastic capacity and fabulous success in hosting significant sporting and cultural events. I reckon pound for pound Ballarat is the events capital of regional Victoria. We had the Bulldogs playing Port Adelaide this year in the regular season AFL game in Ballarat, and that was just a cracker. Next year we will be seeing two AFL games at Mars Stadium. This is a real demonstration of the Andrews government's commitment to Ballarat.

On the cultural front, the Archibald Prize tour came to Ballarat in 2015 and 2016 and over 100 000 people attended the Art Gallery of Ballarat specifically to view prize entries over those couple of years. Some people will go to Ballarat, they will look at the Archibalds, they will go to the footy and they will go home. But there is a great number of people who will bring the entire family, who will stay for the weekend, who will drink in our pubs and eat in our restaurants and spend some money in our shops. So the benefits to Ballarat and the benefits for jobs in regional Victoria cannot be underestimated.

And of course you cannot forget White Night Ballarat. Earlier this year 40 000 people packed the centre of Ballarat's CBD for Australia's first regional White Night. It was a huge success, and one of the really special features of this major event was the display of work by local Ballarat artists. Whether it was the Pitcha Makin Fellas, Josh Muir or Deanne Gilson, the talents in Aboriginal Australia and in Ballarat were on display. These are great examples, but in Ballarat the major events do not stop. Just to go back to White Night and what major events do, that showcasing of local talent is really, really important. I was talking about the Big Day Out before. There was a local Ballarat band that played at the Big Day Out, and that experience for them was just fantastic.

Right now the countdown is on for the Cycling Australia Road National Championships from 3 to 7 January next year. The road nats this year saw 20 000 people lining the streets of Ballarat. This event provides a huge injection to our local economy and has been locked in for the next three years thanks to the Andrews Labor government. Ballarat is again playing host to White Night from 7.00 p.m. on 17 March until 7.00 a.m. on 18 March, and I would encourage every single member of this Parliament and all the staff to get in pretty quickly. You could not get a bed for love or money in Ballarat for this year's White Night. I only have so many spare bedrooms, so you had better get in and book your accommodation toot-sweet. The return of this magnificent event is a testament to Ballarat's capacity to host a successful major event.

In Victoria we have a terrific range of events, as I have just stated. Unfortunately sporting or non-sporting scalpers can get involved in the reselling of tickets and ripping off consumers. So I am sure all members support cracking down on scalping for non-sporting events. Whether it is for a World Wrestling Entertainment exclusive blockbuster, a FIFA World Cup qualifier or a performance of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, we do not want to see anyone ripped off by scalpers, so the organisers of a sporting or

non-sporting event will be able to ask for their event to be declared a major event for ticketing purposes. The minister will consider the request by looking at factors such as the size of the event, likely ticket demand, exclusive global content, likely media coverage, and the event's contribution to Victoria's international profile. If the minister declares a major event for ticketing purposes, it becomes an offence to sell tickets for more than 10 per cent higher than their original purchase price.

Earlier I spoke of the new offences created by this bill, and I think they are central to protecting Victorians from the rip-off that comes with scalping. Under the provisions of this bill scalpers will be hit with significant fines, and we must do that to really crack down on and stop these scalpers. I mentioned before that at the Big Day Out I remember seeing Rage Against the Machine. Then as my son got older he and his mates wanted to go and see them when they made a comeback and came back to Australia. Again I was banned from going, but they went along, queued up, wanted to get the tickets but could not get the tickets because they had sold out so quickly. Then of course the inflated prices from scalpers made it impossible for those kids to go. That is just one example of what we are rightly cracking down on here — making it fair for everyone to go to the major events that they love, whether it is sports, whether it is music, whether it is theatre, whether it is regional or whether it is a Melbourne-based event. Just that fairness I think is what we are all about. It is about protecting Victorians from predatory scalpers, and it is about sending a very clear message that everyone is welcome but the scalpers are not. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) (16:06) — I am pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to debate on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. As the member for Wendouree and the member for Broadmeadows have both spoken about in their very good contributions, this bill is fundamentally about fairness and about ensuring that Victoria's world-class major events program is enhanced by sound legislation that provides those additional safeguards and those additional protections around ticket sales and purchases.

It must be noted that Victoria's events calendar is the envy of all other states and territories across our nation but also the envy of many cities right across the world. We know that literally millions of people visit our state each and every year to enjoy all that it has to offer, which is boosted of course by the outstanding events calendar which a number of honourable members have mentioned this afternoon. Of course we also have a

wonderful tourism sector. It is a tourism sector that offers so much — it is diverse, it is dynamic and it creates thousands of jobs. We are blessed to have wonderful places in this state to stay — wonderful accommodation venues — and terrific places to eat and recreate, and of course those events that draw so many in each and every year. We are indeed the best state in the nation.

I just wanted to point to some data that was released today that shows more overseas visitors are choosing to spend their time and valuable tourism dollars in Victoria, boosting local businesses and creating jobs. Victoria welcomed 2.8 million international visitors who spent \$7.6 billion in the 12 months to September. These rates were well above the national average both for spend and for nights accommodation. Importantly we know that regional Victoria is also benefiting in this space. Spending on wine, on gifts and on activities is up by 18.6 per cent compared to the national average growth of 7.2 per cent, so it is more than double. Events like the Cadel Evans road race, the Daylesford ChillOut Festival and the MotoGP at Phillip Island keep visitors in these regions, and that is important for local economies and once again important for jobs.

The member for Macedon will be very pleased to know that Daylesford and the Macedon Ranges have welcomed more overnight visitors than they did the year before, boosted by an impressive rate of 43.6 per cent. That is outstanding news for our regions and certainly is something that we want to continue. The world's most livable city recorded an international visitation with expenditure up almost 13 per cent to \$7.1 billion in the same period. These are all terrific numbers, but most importantly they continue to keep Victoria at the forefront of tourism and of a very strong visitor economy.

As tourism grows and our population grows we on this side of the house are investing in a huge program of infrastructure works to keep our state thriving. Why is this important? Because we need to be able to ensure that we get these hundreds of thousands of people to and from those events each and every year. As people move to those events on road and rail we know that important infrastructure projects that are being delivered by the Andrews Labor government — like Melbourne Metro, the five new stations, two 9-kilometre tunnels, getting rid of 50 level crossings, improving safety and congestion, building the West Gate tunnel, the CityLink Tulla widening project and the M80 Ring Road and Monash upgrades — are all critically important not just for those who live and work in the state but also for those who wish to come here to attend major sporting events and a whole range

of other events that have been mentioned by other members this afternoon.

Major events and sports are fundamentally popular in my electorate. I know that those in Sunbury, Tullamarine, Gladstone Park, Diggers Rest, Bulla and Gowanbrae enjoy and love these major events. However, what they do not enjoy is being ripped off or missing out because of a poorly managed ticket system or ticketing practices. This is fundamentally where this bill is about fairness and about making some major changes that help to address some of these practices. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 to expand it to cover non-sporting major events such as cultural events, theatre, concerts, gallery exhibitions and festivals, many of which have been mentioned, in relation to ticket scalping provisions. The bill will also, importantly, empower the minister to make a major event ticketing declaration which will apply new ticket scalping offences to both major sporting events and other major events across the state.

The bill proposes changes which will expand the current ticket scalping provisions in the act and create a new major event ticket declaration that may apply to major events other than sporting events. It will also see changes as to what constitutes ticket scalping and a simplification of the processes required for event organisers, making it more streamlined, less of an administrative burden and quicker to obtain. We know that there are a whole range of provisions that have been mentioned in strengthening the system around ticketing. As others have mentioned, the Andrews Labor government needs to ensure that its legislation matches those practices that exist today and certainly those practices that evolve.

A number of members have mentioned the evolution of the internet when it comes to ticket sales. I am not sure of the numbers off the top of my head in terms of those who buy tickets online or those who buy them in person or through other methods, but my suspicion is that the online purchasing of tickets has grown rapidly and will continue to grow rapidly as people move to smartphones, hand-held devices and a whole range of other things to be able to get their tickets quite quickly. Of course what that then presents is a whole range of problems that can arise in terms of how those tickets are managed, purchased and, more importantly, as the bill deals with, how those tickets may then be onsold. That is certainly something that is addressed in this bill.

Tickets will not be able to be resold or advertised for sale at more than 10 per cent above the face ticket value, and there are penalties for scalping which can range from \$790 to \$475 000 — a very significant fine —

depending on the nature of the offence. We know that the bill creates a new category of authorised ticketing officers to deal specifically with existing and new ticket scalping provisions in the act. Authorised officers will be involved in monitoring websites and will be granted enforcement powers including seizure, temporary surrender and retention of tickets. We also know that the officers will be able to commence proceedings on behalf of the department where it sees fit.

Where a major ticketing declaration has been made, event organisers will be required to ensure that the ticket price is displayed on the face of the tickets. Previously under the act a ticketing declaration required the event organiser to prepare a ticketing scheme. Under the proposed legislation the event organiser will not be required to do this. This is welcomed because it will reduce the administrative burden and make the process of declaring the event more efficient.

We know there are other jurisdictions that deal with ticket scalping in different ways. There were recent changes that went through the New South Wales Parliament that have seen a prohibition on reselling tickets to events for any amount above the original acquisition cost of the ticket. We know there are a range of other measures that have been put in place by other jurisdictions. In Queensland it is an offence to resell or purchase a ticket to a major sporting facility event for a price greater than 10 per cent above the face value of the ticket. There are different provisions in South Australia and the ACT. I know that many of these provisions that are in the detail of this bill, as I mentioned earlier, will certainly be welcomed by the communities in my electorate.

The Andrews Labor government stands for a fair ticketing system, one that gives everyone a fair go. We support the fantastic major events calendar that we have in this state both through investment and through the improved infrastructure that I spoke about earlier to be able to get people to and from these events and cater for increasing demand. I would like to commend the Minister for Sport, Minister for Tourism and Major Events and Minister for Veterans for his commitment to seeing sport and these major events go from strength to strength. What is important is that we as a state continue to evolve and to create legislation that deals with issues that are presented today, and I think this bill certainly does that. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (16:16) — It is a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. As other speakers have said, Melbourne certainly is the cultural and sporting event

capital of Australia. You only have to walk out the front door to see the beautiful theatres across the road from this august building, Parliament House. You see Her Majesty's Theatre and the Princess Theatre. Travel down Bourke Street and you end up at the modern arena, which is Docklands.

Ms Hennessy — Who plays there?

Ms GRALEY — That is the mighty Western Bulldogs' home ground.

Then you can travel down Swanston Street to the National Gallery of Victoria precinct and you see facilities like Hamer Hall and then across the Yarra again to the MCG precinct and of course Rod Laver Arena and AAMI stadium.

Many of those, except of course the earlier ones I mentioned — the theatres — were built by Labor governments, because we have a strong commitment not only to building infrastructure so that all Victorians can have a good quality life in the city that they call home and quite correctly are so proud of, Melbourne, but also to investing in our cultural life and in our sporting life.

I for one very much enjoy going to Docklands and the MCG. I also enjoy going down to the cultural precincts in Melbourne. I must say that whilst this bill is referring to online ticket purchasing, I am not a big fan of it. I can be a bit of a troglodyte where these issues are concerned. I have on many occasions attempted to use online booking services, and I must admit that sometimes I have been successful and other times not. More often than not I have had to defer to the Boy Wonder, my 30-year-old son, to go online for me. He has a little bit more patience and a little bit more understanding of how these matters work. I would just like to put on record my thanks to him because whilst I was overseas he actually acquired some tickets for the Anoushka Shankar concert that is going to be happening in March. All I have to do now is hand over the \$200 to him. That is my preferred way of operating. But I understand that is not the way of the world. In fact this bill will provide for greater scrutiny of the way people purchase online tickets and make sure that those online tickets are exactly that — tickets to get into venues and not actually fakes.

The bill will amend the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 to expand the ticket scalping provisions to cover non-sporting major events and empower 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. This is well and truly a timely bill for a number of reasons. The fact is that we are having some amazingly big events in Melbourne. The member for Dandenong referred to the Paul McCartney concert last week, which everybody has raved about, and I know in fact that was a ticket highly sought after in Melbourne. I suspect people paid some really big dollars to get into that probably once-in-a-lifetime experience.

I am going to refer to something that is really dear to me — that is, the matter of the scalping of overpriced tickets, especially as they surround sporting events in Melbourne. This is something that I have been wanting to put on the record for a while, and this bill provides me with an opportunity to raise an issue that has really been gnawing at my thinking for a while. As members are aware, I am a huge Western Bulldogs fan. I must admit that apart from the birth of my children, my wedding and probably my graduation, grand final week in 2016 was actually the best week of my life. Having travelled back down the road after my team won a preliminary final, after I think losing eight, I knew that because I have been a social club member at the Western Bulldogs I was guaranteed a ticket at that amazing grand final. I also know that there were many people who had been lifelong members at the club. I have been a member since I was five, so for 55 years I have been a member of the Footscray/Western Bulldogs Football Club. But I know that lots of people cannot afford social club membership, and many of them were very much wondering whether they would be able to attend the MCG and get to see a grand final.

I note for reference that in this year's grand final when the Tigers made it and they were playing Adelaide, grand final tickets were being scalped for \$3500. That is a lot of money to pay to go the grand final. I am equally aware that when we were in the grand final friends of mine who had not been members at a social club level were actually spending thousands upon thousands of dollars — what amounted to tens of thousands of dollars in some cases because they had to go and buy corporate packages — to get access to the grand final.

I know that the Greens have proposed a bill in the upper house around making the grand final more accessible for the average AFL fan. I do not know in detail what is in that bill, but I do support the idea — not necessarily the bill. I would like the AFL to listen up on this matter because I know that Gillon McLachlan, the CEO, has said he wants to have a more fan-friendly AFL. One way that can be guaranteed is to make sure that real fans can get to go to the grand final. This year they increased the amount to 34 000 fans, but Richmond has 73 000 members and Adelaide has 57 000 members.

That amounts to 130 000, so it would not matter how many tickets there were as not all members would be able to get into the MCG.

I do note that the corporates get 21 000 tickets out of the nearly 101 000 available for people to go to the MCG on grand final day. I know that the men and girls in suits might like to go to the grand final, but I have to say that when I finally got to go to the grand final — after knocking back all those corporate offers that I had had over the years that I had said no to; I said I was not going to the grand final unless the Western Bulldogs were in it anyway — there were some empty seats. There were a lot of people sitting behind glass and a lot of people standing in bars not watching it. There were lots of people who should have been at that grand final, as indeed there should have been probably at the Richmond and Adelaide grand final, who were red, white and blue through and through or black and yellow through and through. I would plead with the AFL to reconsider the number of tickets that are made available to true AFL fans who go to the game every week, week in and week out, and who barrack, buy the corporate gear, go along and buy the raffle tickets to keep their clubs going. We really need to look at making sure that at least 50 per cent are true, loyal, paid-up members of the clubs.

This is a very good bill. Scalping is wrong. Scalping is exploitative. Scalping is taking somebody down when they want to have a really good time. It is now time to make sure that those people who are actually doing the wrong thing, who are taking exorbitant amounts of money, like even in the case I outlined in reference to last year's grand final, are actually penalised and, for those who happen to be able to manage the online service and get a ticket or buy it from one of these other agencies that have bought hundreds of tickets and are selling them at exaggerated prices, that those tickets are real.

I commend the minister for bringing this bill to the house. I think we will have better events in Victoria if we can have more people able to go to them and pay the fair amount to access the terrific experiences in the sporting and cultural capital of Victoria, Melbourne. I know there are lots of events planned for coming years. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) (16:26) — I am also pleased to speak on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. It is a very important bill. As you said in your own contribution, Acting Speaker, it is a bill that addresses market failure and this is a hallmark of this government in terms of intervention, where it is necessary, in the marketplace. The bill obviously does

several things, but critically it gives a fair go to Victorians who want to access major events by cracking down on scalping and it also gives confidence to business promoters and other businesses who want to do business in Victoria. We are in a competitive market so they could go anywhere; why they choose Victoria is for a range of reasons, including having a context of clean ticket sales without scalping.

To move to the provisions of the bill: it seeks to expand the act to cover non-sporting major events such as cultural events — theatre, concerts and gallery exhibitions, of which we have had many — and of course still covers major sporting events. The bill seeks to empower the minister to make a major event ticketing declaration, which will apply to new ticket scalping offences for the events I have just described, including major sporting events and other events. The bill proposes to change the ticket scalping provisions in the current act by creating a new, powerful declaration. It changes what constitutes ticket scalping and simplifies the process around when the minister can make a major event ticketing declaration — it shortens the time line, which makes it more clear. It also eliminates or repeals the Tourism Victoria Act 1992.

The bill will allow organisers of major sporting events and major non-sporting events to seek for their specific event to be declared by the minister as a major event for ticketing purposes. The minister can make that declaration, and I will briefly explain later on what basis he will make that declaration on any given event. If he does that, it will become an offence to sell — as others have said — or to advertise for sale any ticket to the event which exceeds the face-value purchase price of the ticket by more than 10 per cent. There are a range of things, including the fact that the proposed offences are split into two categories: for five or fewer tickets scalped, or six or more — different penalties obviously will apply for those who try to sell six or more.

There will be additional offences and the current ticketing provisions of the act will provide more opportunity. I think the current provision is that the notice period required for the declaration is nine months. This has caused concern and problems within the industry as it really does not provide as much flexibility for the creation of a declaration. That will change. The bill will also seek to introduce a new category of authorised officers to deal specifically with the existing and new ticket scalping provisions in the act. So, pretty significant changes.

To go to some of the comments the minister made in his second-reading speech in terms of the new power

that he will have to make those declarations, he said in his second-reading speech the criteria include:

- the size of the event;
- likely demand for tickets;
- exclusive global content;
- the likely media coverage ...

and other criteria.

As others have also said, it is a fairly new phenomenon in terms of its scope. Ticket scalping is not new in terms of an act; it has been around for a very long time but the scope now, particularly with the online platforms we have, has meant that the resale market of tickets has thrived. It has become enough of a problem for us to act and for us to deal with, and of course it is us, it is the Andrews Labor government, that is dealing with this. It is not unusual that we are the ones who are cleaning up the mess of the past or addressing concerns that are currently present.

There has been a whole range of examples given where consumers have had to pay an exorbitant amount just to access what they are entitled to access as Victorians, which is a proud calendar of significant events — sporting and other events. I am reminded of one of the most outstanding statistics I saw recently, which was the *Van Gogh and the Seasons* exhibition. I saw the Van Gogh exhibition, held from May to June 2017. It was the most successful ticketed exhibition in the National Gallery of Victoria's 156-year history. That is extraordinary.

Ms Thomas interjected.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — The member for Macedon reminds me it is one of the top 20 visited galleries in the world, the National Gallery of Victoria, on a population base of 6 million people compared to big, global cities around the world.

Other successes in Victoria's impressive calendar of events: more than 95 000 fans attended the MCG in June 2017 to watch Argentina defeat Brazil, we had the Socceroos versus Greece match, we have had a whole bunch of events. The Presidents Cup is in 2019 and we will have a whole range of events. This government is not only known for good policy around education, health care, roads and public transport, but also for boosting the major events calendar of this state and therefore the opportunities Victorians have to access world events.

You cannot do that if you have got a growing problem with ticket scalping and that is why we are addressing that in this bill in a very significant way. We are ensuring that all Victorians will have access to a fair market price for tickets, rather than having a situation of a bottom-feeder approach, where people buy a whole bunch of tickets and then wait for the appropriate moment to make money on them by selling them at a significantly higher price.

If you think about it, not in the sense of 'I can't attend an event and I have to then relinquish my tickets', but the secondary market in the scalping sense, it contributes nothing to the events calendar and contributes nothing to the cultural fabric of the state nor to the economy. It is base profit motive at its absolute worst, and I am glad that we are seeking to get rid of it in large part. This bill also, as I said at the outset, provides confidence to the international promoter market, the industry that seeks to bring events here, to come to a state and a jurisdiction which provides a clean slate, a clean opportunity, to sell tickets at the price that the promoter and the artists — wherever the event may be — have declared.

I also want to applaud the member for Narre Warren South for her comments in relation to access to tickets for ordinary Victorians, particularly those committed to a club — as she described them in her contribution — and less perhaps for those who go to these events as a social occasion and spend more time drinking than watching the event, whether it be sporting or otherwise, but usually it is sporting in those situations. I understand there is a place for social connection and business connection at these events, and that is important, but I concur with the member for Narre Warren South in terms of the AFL making more provision, taking more leadership to provide tickets to ordinary club members or for AFL members at the very least. I commend the bill, I commend the minister's leadership on this and I look forward to its swift passage in the Parliament.

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (16:36) — It is a pleasure to make a contribution on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. I commend the Minister for Tourism and Major Events for introducing this bill into the Parliament. Just earlier I felt like I was surrounded by Western Bulldogs fans who were going on about their second premierships win. As members know, my electorate is the home of St Kilda Football Club. It is true to say that the Bulldogs now have twice the number of premierships cups that St Kilda has, which is something funny to admit given this government is building the new St Kilda premises. I had a look

yesterday; they are looking good. The new home of the St Kilda Football Club at Moorabbin Reserve will include a museum, so we are hoping that there will be more than one premiership cup to keep in there.

Of course I was not around in 1966 when St Kilda won their one and only cup, but by all accounts there was a bit of a frenzy in Moorabbin. All of the St Kilda fans converged on Moorabbin's Sierra's pub, which used to stand on the Nepean Highway, and celebrated all night long. In those days obviously we did not have liquor consumption laws as relaxed as we do today, but the pubs in the area got a special licence to keep going. That just shows how much Victorians love the AFL. I guess if you are Victorian and not into AFL, people really do question why. Victorians are quite evangelical, almost, about the AFL.

I think ordinary Victorians have been let down by a system which has allowed scalpers to flourish, a system that has been on steroids, if you like, with technological changes, with the internet and with more online sales of tickets. In some cases in the last AFL finals series some fans were having to buy tickets for up to \$631 in some cases and more than \$1000 in others, whereas just over the border in South Australia there was a totally different situation, because South Australia has laws around anti-scalping — laws that are similar to the laws we are introducing. It was about six months ago that I got a few calls and emails from constituents with regard to the issue of scalping. I made representations to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and I was certainly delighted to receive his response when he confirmed that the government was taking action on this important issue. Certainly my constituents were delighted to receive that news.

It is true to say that Victoria is very much a service economy. Our number one export of course is education, but tourism comes a close second. If you look at some of the most recent stats, our tourism and events industry in Victoria generates almost 210 000 jobs annually. Visit Victoria is playing a key role in growing the state's \$23.3 billion tourism and events industry. When you have such a significant industry, one that is loved by Victorians in a sporting sense but also with regard to the arts — Melbourne is known for good reason as both the sporting capital of Australia and the arts capital of Australia — you have to have a system that can maintain the integrity of these industries and make sure that fans are getting a fair go, and this government is all about giving people a fair go.

What this bill does is amend the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 to expand the act to cover non-sporting major events in relation to ticket scalping provisions and

empower 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. The bill expands the current ticket scalping provisions in the act, creating a new major event ticketing declaration that may apply to major events other than sporting events. There will also be changes as to what constitutes ticket scalping and a simplification of the processes required for event organisers, making it more streamlined, less administratively burdensome and quicker to obtain.

The bill repeals the Tourism Victoria Act 1992, which is redundant given Tourism Victoria no longer exists and has been replaced by Visit Victoria. Visit Victoria was created on 1 July 2016 as a company limited by guarantee. It has brought together the functions of Tourism Victoria's marketing division, the Victorian Major Events Company and the Melbourne Convention Bureau into a single organisation. Visit Victoria is responsible for marketing the state and securing new business, cultural and sporting events. Visit Victoria is not a statutory entity and does not require legislation. It has had considerable success already. Recent figures from the tourism and events industry show that it generates almost 210 000 jobs annually and has played a key role in growing the state's \$23.3 billion tourism and events industry. The targets for Visit Victoria are ambitious: by 2025 the aim is to generate \$36.5 billion in visitor spending and to support more than 320 700 jobs.

Since 2014 it is fair to say that in the tourism sector and the major events industry there have been a number of wins. One of the most notable ones I think was the *Van Gogh and the Seasons* exhibition, which many members attended. That, I believe, ended up being the most popular exhibition held in 156 years at the National Gallery of Victoria — something I know the government and the industry were very, very proud of.

As we know, and I mentioned it earlier, Melbourne is the sport and arts capital of Australia, and in our view no truer words have been spoken. Of course Melbourne hosts the four biggest annual sporting events. It has Her Majesty's Theatre, the Princess Theatre and the Regent Theatre. The Harry Potter musical is of course coming to Melbourne soon, and it is important, given how popular that event will be, given how popular it has been in the UK, that we have appropriate laws to protect people who want to go and see it and who want to experience the night-life and the arts offering that we have here in Melbourne.

I am very pleased that this government has taken action, like other states have taken action over the

years. We are not really reinventing the wheel on this. South Australia, as I mentioned earlier, has similar laws in place, as does Queensland. New South Wales has also recently changed its legislation, and in other jurisdictions legislation has been in place for some time. It is important that Victoria also took a strong position on this issue and introduced this important change, because it is about putting real fans first and stopping the predatory scalpers in their place. That is exactly what this bill will do. These are new measures that will crack down on scalpers and help keep our major events fair and accessible for everyone. I commend the bill to the house and wish it a speedy passage.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (16:46) — I too am pleased to rise today to speak on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. This bill will amend the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 to (a) expand the act to cover non-sporting major events in relation to ticket scalping provisions, and (b) empower 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. The bill will also expand the current ticket scalping provisions in the act, creating a new major event ticketing declaration that may apply to major events other than sporting events. There will also be changes to what constitutes ticket scalping and a simplification of the processes required for event organisers, making it more streamlined, less administratively burdensome and quicker to obtain.

The bill also repeals the Tourism Victoria Act 1992, which is redundant given Tourism Victoria no longer exists and has been replaced by Visit Victoria. I will talk about Visit Victoria a little later.

Everyone knows without a doubt that Victoria is the home of major events. Whether it is sport, theatre, music or the arts, we have the best audiences, we pull the biggest crowds and we create the best experiences to ensure that there is something for everyone to enjoy, whether it be here in metropolitan Melbourne or further afield in our regions. This bill is about retaining our number one position by — and this is very important — ensuring that our events, the major events here in Victoria, are able to be experienced by as many Victorians as possible and that there is fairness for patrons.

With the growth of the online secondary ticketing market, ticket scalping has become an increasingly topical issue not just in Victoria but across the nation and other parts of the world. Currently legislation only covers sporting events, and it will be expanded to cover

cultural events. The Victorian government is committed to enabling genuine sporting fans and music and arts lovers to have access to tickets for the many events on the Victorian events calendar without having to pay inflated prices for events due to ticket scalpers. As I said earlier, at the heart of this bill is an absolute commitment to fair ticket prices so that as many Victorians as possible have the opportunity to access all those events that they love.

The legislative changes will coincide with a broad consumer awareness campaign to educate consumers on the value of buying from authorised resellers and the dangers of buying tickets from unauthorised sellers, which does bring me to talk about football. I am conscious that when I say football there are some people out there who might think I mean soccer. You all know what I mean when I say football; I mean the Australian Football League, the best game. It goes without saying that we are footy obsessed here in Victoria and that tickets to the AFL Grand Final are indeed a very precious commodity.

It is important to note that there are no changes in this bill to the declared status of the AFL Grand Final. Under current legislation the AFL must submit a proposed ticketing scheme to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. The proposal details the allocation of tickets, including how many tickets are allocated to clubs, Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) members, AFL members and other contractual obligations. The bill does not have an impact on the ticket allocation to fans, and indeed at the 2017 grand final over 70 000 of the 100 000 tickets went to fans, including Melbourne Cricket Club and AFL members. I am pleased to note that the bill does provide the potential for the minister to declare other AFL games, such as the Anzac Day match and the finals series, as games that will be covered by the provisions of the act. The AFL will not need to submit a ticketing scheme for these events.

What we do know, however, is that in 2017 there were several media reports of footy fans missing out on tickets to the grand final because they had purchased dodgy tickets from online resale sites. This legislation makes it very clear that tickets will not be able to be resold or advertised for resale at more than 10 per cent above the face value of the ticket. As I said, there will be a consumer education campaign really focused on warning people about the danger of or the potential for fraudulent tickets and so on and to be very cautious about what they are purchasing.

I have to say that I have been very fortunate to have a membership of the Melbourne Cricket Club as a consequence of my uncle transferring his ladies ticket

to me when I was still at school. As a consequence of that I have been able to attend many grand finals and have enjoyed lining up from 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning to secure a seat, including at the 2009 and 2010 grand finals. I appreciate the member for Bentleigh's contribution. I am a long-suffering St Kilda fan and club member. Being a fan of that team, I do extend my best wishes to those others who have spent a long time at the bottom of the ladder, including the Bulldogs and Richmond, who have enjoyed some grand final success in recent times.

In talking about my MCC membership as the result of my uncle transferring a ladies ticket, I want to remind the house — and I know, Acting Speaker Pearson, that you will be well aware of this, being a historian of the Labor Party — it was as a consequence of the anti-discrimination laws that were introduced by former Labor Premier John Cain that we got rid of this antiquated, nonsense notion that women could not be full members of clubs, including the Melbourne Cricket Club and the Victoria Racing Club. It is yet one more example, if we needed one, that it is only Labor governments that fight for fairness.

I understand what it is like to be a long-suffering football fan of a team that has struggled to enjoy success. I am privileged to have my MCC membership. I understand the lengths that some members will go to to get to a grand final. I note that the member for Melbourne is not in the house, but I use this opportunity to point out that one needs to be very careful when wanting to occupy the high moral ground, as the member for Melbourne has perhaps found out when only weeks after her party condemned the number of tickets that were available for corporates at the grand final, she herself was able to accept one. I do not begrudge anyone taking the opportunity to attend the grand final to see their team, particularly a team like Richmond, win the grand final, but it is a cautionary note to all of us. If you want to occupy that moral high ground, then you are setting the bar very high for yourself and you should try and act in accordance with those beliefs. But I digress.

I want to speak very briefly about Visit Victoria. This bill recognises the value of Visit Victoria, which was introduced by this government. Visit Victoria has done a lot of work and been very successful not only in developing a fabulous major events calendar for Victoria as a whole but also in my own electorate tourism has really grown under this government; it has been quite extraordinary. In fact in some information released today by the Minister for Tourism and Major Events overnight stays in Daylesford and the Macedon Ranges have increased by 43.6 per cent in the last year.

This is fantastic news because the visitor economy is worth \$287 million in my electorate and employs at least 1500 local people. I commend the Minister for Tourism and Major Events and Minister for Sport on the work he is doing. These two portfolios are inextricably linked — sport, tourism and major events all go hand in hand.

I am also very grateful for the support for some significant events in my electorate — the ChillOut Festival in Daylesford, which is Australia's largest regional celebration of LGBTI pride, and the Lost Trades Fair, another significant event that occurs on Labor Day each year in Kyneton and has been supported by Visit Victoria. This is a very good bill. Fundamentally it is about fairness and access to our amazing calendar of major events and sporting and cultural activities. I commend it to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VEHICLE INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (FURTHER REFORMS) BILL 2017

Council's amendments

Message from Council relating to following amendments considered:

1. Clause 1, page 2, line 29, omit "(a)." and insert "(a) (subject to a scheme applying to certain unbooked commercial passenger vehicle services).".
2. Clause 7, page 14, line 2, omit "vehicle," and insert "vehicle service,".
3. Clause 7, page 17, after line 14 insert—
() In section 5(2)(c) of the **Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act 2017**, for "reward or hiring fee" substitute "fare or other consideration".
4. Clause 18, page 90, after line 25 insert—

"Division 1A— Protections for unbooked commercial passenger vehicle services

110A Definitions

In this Division—

applicable unbooked service means an unbooked commercial passenger vehicle service in respect of carriage on a journey that begins in—

- (a) the Melbourne Metropolitan Zone; or
- (b) the Urban and Large Regional Zone;

Melbourne Metropolitan Zone means the Melbourne Metropolitan Zone established under section 143B(1)(a) of the **Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983** (as in force immediately before the commencement of item 10.7 of Schedule 1 to the **Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Amendment (Further Reforms) Act 2017**;

Urban and Large Regional Zone means the Urban and Large Regional Zone established under section 143B(1)(b) of the **Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983** (as in force immediately before the commencement of item 10.7 of Schedule 1 to the **Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Amendment (Further Reforms) Act 2017**.

110B Application of Essential Services Commission Act 2001

- (1) For the purposes of the **Essential Services Commission Act 2001**—
 - (a) this Division is relevant legislation; and
 - (b) the commercial passenger vehicle industry is a regulated industry in relation to applicable unbooked services.
- (2) If there is any inconsistency between this Division and a provision of the **Essential Services Commission Act 2001**, the provision of this Division prevails.

110C Objective of the ESC

The objective of the ESC in relation to the commercial passenger vehicle industry is to promote the efficient provision and use of applicable unbooked services.

110D Powers in relation to fares regulation

For the purposes of Part 3 of the **Essential Services Commission Act 2001**—

- (a) applicable unbooked services are prescribed services; and
- (b) the maximum charges for the services covered by paragraph (a) are prescribed prices.

110E Price determinations

Without limiting section 33(5) of the **Essential Services Commission Act 2001**, the manner in which the ESC may regulate prescribed prices includes determining different prices according to—

- (a) the time of day at which, or day of the week or kind of day on which, an applicable unbooked service is provided;

- (b) the speed at which the commercial passenger vehicle used in the provision of the applicable unbooked service is travelling;
- (c) the distance travelled by the commercial passenger vehicle used in the provision of the applicable unbooked service;
- (d) the type of commercial passenger vehicle used in the provision of the applicable unbooked service;
- (e) the occupancy of the commercial passenger vehicle used in the provision of the applicable unbooked service, including where there is more than one passenger;
- (f) where a journey in respect of which the applicable unbooked service is provided begins or ends;
- (g) the prevailing economic conditions, including the price of fuel and the consumer price index;
- (h) any other matter the ESC considers to be relevant.

110F Exercise of regulatory functions

- (1) The ESC must make a determination under this Division of the maximum charges for applicable unbooked services before the first anniversary of the day on which this section comes into operation.
- (2) The ESC must complete a review of a price determination no later than 2 years after it is made.

110G Offence to charge or ask for a fare for an unbooked service in excess of the maximum fare

A person who drives a commercial passenger vehicle for the purpose of providing an applicable unbooked service must not charge or ask for a fare for the service that is in excess of the fare or hiring rates permitted by a determination of the ESC under this Division.

Penalty: 60 penalty units.”.

- 5. Clause 20, page 253, line 12, omit “169(1)” and insert “169I(1)”.
- 6. Clause 20, page 266, after line 19 insert—

“47A Price determination

- (1) This clause applies to the determination that was—
 - (a) made under Division 5A of Part VI of the old Act; and
 - (b) in force immediately before the commencement day.
- (2) On the commencement day, the determination as modified by subclause (3) is taken to be a determination under Division 1A of Part 6.

- (3) For the purposes of subclause (2), the determination is modified as follows—
- (a) a determination of a price that is expressed to relate to Urban and Large Regional Zone taxi licences is taken to be a determination of a price for an applicable unbooked service in respect of a journey that begins in the Urban and Large Regional Zone;
 - (b) a determination of a price that is expressed to relate to metropolitan zone taxi licences is taken to be a determination of a price for an applicable unbooked service in respect of a journey that begins in the Melbourne Metropolitan Zone.
- (4) Nothing in this clause affects the ESC’s obligation, under section 110F(1), to make a determination under Division 1A of Part 6 in the time specified in that section.
- (5) In this clause—
- applicable unbooked service* has the meaning given by section 110A;
- Melbourne Metropolitan Zone* has the meaning given by section 110A;
- Urban and Large Regional Zone* has the meaning given by section 110A.”.
7. Schedule 1, item 4, line 27, omit all words and expressions on this line and insert—
- ‘(b) in paragraph (fb), for “taxi industry” **substitute** “commercial passenger vehicle industry in relation to applicable unbooked services within the meaning of Division 1A of Part 6 of the **Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act 2017**”.’.
8. Schedule 1, item 11, page 280, line 27, omit “115,” and insert “115A.”.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport)
(16:57) — I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

I will just make a few comments on what has been a very long policy development and legislative process. It is with some optimism that I rise this afternoon to hopefully seek the support of the house for the final instalment of that process.

Members of the house will know that what we are considering here are amendments to the second tranche of the legislation that the Andrews Labor government has put in place in terms of improving and modernising the commercial passenger vehicle industry. The first tranche of the legislation was put to the Parliament earlier this year and concluded, I think, in around August. This is the second set of reforms that need to be

made to enable an environment where there is choice for passengers across the range of service providers that they have access to and the putting in place of important safety frameworks that are required.

The reason we are considering this matter this afternoon is that the bill was passed by the Legislative Assembly without amendment, but the Legislative Council made some amendments that were moved by Fiona Patten, a member for Northern Metropolitan Region. The government accepted those amendments which deal with issues around fare deregulation. I understand that the reforms in this area of the bill attracted some attention and raised some issues on the way through. I reiterate something that I think I indicated during the debate a few weeks ago when this bill was in this place, which is that fare deregulation was brought into Victoria by the former Liberal government — the immediate past Liberal government — which in 2014 deregulated fares, including unbooked rank and hail fares, in both regional and country taxi zones. What we undertook through this legislation was to expand that to the rest of the state. So just to be clear, the regional and country zones already had deregulated fares prior to this legislation. We were putting this in place for the rest of Victoria.

Unbooked trips still require an up-front fare estimate and the use of a taxi meter to calculate the fares. The fares would be set by the networks that have been established under this legislation, not individual drivers. However, as I indicated, there was concern that this may create some confusion for passengers, which led to Ms Patten raising these issues and putting forward some amendments that were acceptable to the government and ultimately to the Legislative Council. These amendments provide for the ongoing regulation of the unbooked commercial passenger vehicle services.

It is proposed under the framework that the Essential Services Commission will continue to determine the fares for unbooked services and under the proposal that we are considering the industry will still have the flexibility to set their own fares for booked services. This will ensure that the community will receive the benefit of the reforms because, of course, they are the reason why we are making these changes — to support passengers to have more choice, greater competition, cheaper fares as a result of this increased competition and, most importantly, better services.

As I indicated, it is with some optimism that we have reached the final stage of what has been a very long journey. I appreciate the work that has been undertaken in the Legislative Council and now put the

bill, as amended, for support in the Legislative Assembly today.

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (17:01) — I rise to make a brief contribution on the amendments to the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Amendment (Further Reforms) Bill 2017, and advise that these were supported in the upper house. We will not be opposing them here. I will just take the opportunity to raise a couple of matters that I have been asked to put on record in relation to the bill and the amendments. First and foremost, there was concern raised in the sector that the government intends to wind back the provision of the VHA plates and the subsequent series. I know Mr Davis and Minister Pulford had a number of discussions about this during the debate in the other place and some assurances were sought on that matter. Mr Davis has today provided me a letter from Mann Lawyers, who act on behalf of the Victorian Hire Car Association (VHCA). I ask the minister to take on board — and she will no doubt respond in due course through Minister Pulford — that Mann Lawyers have written to the minister saying:

We act on behalf of the Victorian Hire Car Association, an association incorporated pursuant to Victorian and Australian law.

We write following the conclusion of debate in the Legislative Council on the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Amendment (Further Reforms) Bill 2017, which passed, with amendments, on 30 November 2017.

This is written to Minister Jaala Pulford. It continues:

Pursuant to *Hansard*, your contribution to debate on the bill included the following passage:

Secondly, the amendment suggests that the VHCA or their successor in law should be responsible for the allocation of plates. The VHCA does not currently exist in law, so we are concerned about the drafting in this respect or the detail in this, because something that does not currently have a legal status also cannot have a successor. So there is a lack of certainty and clarity that would be introduced. For those reasons we are not supporting this amendment.

That is the end of the quote from *Hansard*. The letter from Mann Lawyers goes on to say:

The allegation that ‘the VHCA does not currently exist in law’ is concerning to the association as, to the extent of our enquiries, the VHCA does exist in law, and at law. Pursuant to Consumer Affairs Victoria, the association has been duly registered, with a constitution, with first incorporation in 1991. In that time, it has advocated on behalf of members of the taxi and hire car industries. It has sat, and continues to sit, on numerous government working and reference groups. The association’s president and vice-president have, in that capacity, repeatedly met with the Minister for Public Transport and given evidence before the inquiry into the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017. Put

simply, the VHCA is an incorporated association, with the status equivalent to a corporation, and is regulated by the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

As such, in our view, there is no reasonable basis for the proposition that the VHCA does not exist in law.

If there is a basis on which to assert that the VHCA does not currently exist in law, we request that you advise us as this may have material consequences for members of the association. Given the reference to ‘we’ in your statement, the presumption is that this reflects the government’s position. The statement is of particular concern given that the VHCA has, for some length of time, been involved in negotiations with litigation funders and a well-known law firm, Maurice Blackburn, regarding a potential class action against Uber. The allegation that the VHCA is not a legal entity is deleterious to those negotiations, which involve an eight-figure amount of funding.

If the minister’s intention was otherwise than as is expressed in *Hansard* — that the association, for instance, does not possess a role specified in law or that the VHCA is not a statutory body — we request that you take the appropriate steps to correct the parliamentary record and advise us of such.

In the event that no steps are taken to correct the record, I am instructed to formally write to the President of the Legislative Council pursuant to orders 21.02 to 21.05 of the Legislative Council standing orders to seek a right of reply on behalf of the association.

We look forward to your earliest response.

I put that letter to Ms Pulford in the other place on record and seek clarification on that for the Victorian Hire Car Association. As I said, Mr Davis and Ms Pulford had quite some discussion on the *Hansard* record in the other place on this matter, but I take the opportunity to raise it here so that that is clarified and the matter hopefully put to rest in the way that the VHCA think it ought to be or that certainly they or their lawyers are given a right of reply if that is not the case.

Secondly, this has, as the minister said, been a long debate on two bills around the commercial passenger vehicle industry. It has been a long debate to get where we are, and at every opportunity I have implored the minister and her department to deal as quickly as possible with some of the claims and hardship cases that we hear about. Again, there is one that I think was sent to all MPs today. It was certainly sent to me by email at 3.28 p.m. today from a Karam Deep Sidhu. Mr Sidhu has an outstanding business loan of \$266 000, having purchased a taxi licence for \$515 000 in 2012. He has received payouts — \$100 000 from the transition fund and an additional \$50 000 — but he has an outstanding business loan of \$116 000 and he is quite stressed about that and the possibility that the bank will take the family home. In his email he outlines his case. He has a young family with two young

children, and he is not sure how he is going to address this business loan.

There are many, many examples from taxi families. We continue to hear from taxi families about their cases of hardship and the assets they bought and how they are only getting limited amounts back now. I would ask again that the department and the minister address those claims or those issues as quickly as possible and as fairly as possible so that the levels of stress and anxiety caused by these bills amongst taxi families are resolved to the greatest satisfaction of those taxi families.

Mr Sidhu's email today is yet another example of someone who is trying to run a business, has a loan, has invested and has built up his business yet he has now got a business loan debt outstanding to the bank. He is stressed and worried that the bank might come looking for that additional money and foreclose on his house when he has got a young family.

With that having been said and having put on record both the letter from Mann Lawyers in relation to the Victorian Hire Car Association and again a plea to the minister and the department to deal with the taxi families in a fair, consistent, quick way on all their claims and grievances, we are not opposing the amendments before the house. I am happy to leave that as my contribution — that we will not oppose these amendments when they are put.

Mr WATT (Burwood) (17:09) — I rise to follow the shadow minister for roads and infrastructure, who just spoke about Mr Sidhu. The reason I want to speak about Mr Sidhu and his circumstances is that I raised a constituency question some time ago asking the minister what advice she had for Mr Sidhu to repay his \$112 000 loan. I must say that I was very disappointed with the disregard that the minister had for Mr Sidhu and his circumstances.

When we are talking about this particular issue I understand that the minister said that this has been going on for quite some time, and I accept that it has been going on for quite some time. I have spoken with many, many people who have been adversely affected by the policy position that the government has now taken, which is clearly a different policy position to that which the government took to the last election. The now Minister for Roads and Road Safety some four years ago in this house talked about compensation and the lack of consultation. The language he used was quite inflammatory. It was so inflammatory that during debate on the first tranche of legislation that went through, the Parliament had to be shut down because I tried to repeat the words that the now minister used four years ago.

This topic affects people greatly, and I have constituents in my electorate who are still hurting from the actions of the government. Mr Sidhu has an outstanding debt which needs to be paid. When the government has finished giving him all the relevant compensation — and I understand that the government does not call it compensation; it calls it transition payments and the like, but nonetheless it is some form of compensation for the taking of his licence — he has been left with a \$112 000 debt that he needs to pay —

Mr Hodgett — \$116 000.

Mr WATT — It is \$116 000, and no capacity to pay it.

I listened to the previous debate around scalping. Many people on the government side talked about being fair. They said that it is the Labor Party that stands up for fairness and does the fair thing. The fair thing would be for Mr Sidhu not to have a debt hanging around his neck and for him to be able to move on with his life like many people who had taxi licences. He should not be left with a massive debt as a result of government policy and the government's position.

I think the time for politics in this regard has finished inasmuch as this will probably be one of the last opportunities for us to have a significant conversation and discussion on these changes. I think we need to put petty politics behind us. We need to understand that there are some people who are really hurting. There are people who are hurting right across the state, not just my constituents. Right across the state people are hurting because of the policy position that the government has taken. I cannot let this go, because this is a policy position which the government did not have at the last election. The government appears to have done a complete about-face from its previous policy position, to the point where many people are coming to me and crying on my shoulder about their inability to pay their bills and having no assets. They have worked for quite some time to build an asset base in the form of a licence or a number of licences that they thought at the time were assets, and they were always treated as assets, and now they have been taken away. The government does not recognise the damage that it is doing and has done to people.

I have attended many protests on the steps of Parliament. I have met with many people in my office, and I have been trying to help a group of people who have been treated unfairly. If you took a policy position because you think it is a good policy position, that would be one thing, but to go to an election saying one thing and then three years later do something

completely different is somewhat concerning. What is also concerning is the misinformation that has been coming out over the last three years while this government has been in power. I talked —

Ms Allan — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I appreciate that this is a bill with a significant amount of policy and content; however, none of what the member for Burwood is saying is in any way remotely relevant to this bill. This bill speaks to a whole range of framework setting around safety issues and a whole range of other measures. I encourage you to bring the member for Burwood back to addressing the content of this bill because even as his own colleagues have acknowledged, he is not addressing the substance of the amendments which are before the house. If he needs reminding about what the amendments are about, they are to do with the changes to the fares that are set on rank and hail. I ask him to come back to addressing the substance of the amendments.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny) — I ask the member to come back to addressing the bill and the amendments before the house.

Mr WATT — I am happy to address the bill and maybe to take guidance from the minister. I am not going to go for too long on this, but in the broader context of the debate, I think it is important that we take heed that what we say and what we do in here actually has a real effect. I have turned up to the briefings that have been made available to members of the opposition. I specifically remember turning up to a briefing some time ago and asking a question around compensation for hire car licences. I was told very clearly that the amount — and it was not a throwaway comment; it was a discussion, and it was reinforced to me — that hire car licence holders would be compensated was \$40 000, not the \$25 000 that they have been.

I would just say in the broader context of the issue that it has been a very long debate. The minister has talked about the long debate around taxi licences and hire car licences and where we have got to. They should not be forgotten in this debate. All of these issues have been ongoing for some time, and we accept the fact that there has been some discussion. It is the misinformation that disappoints me. While we are not opposing these amendments we are disappointed with the way that the government has handled itself through this debate. When the government talks about being fair, it has been anything but fair when it comes to taxi licence holders and hire car licence holders.

Motion agreed to.

OFFSHORE PETROLEUM AND GREENHOUSE GAS STORAGE AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 18 October; motion of Mr PALLAS (Minister for Resources).

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (17:18) — I rise to make a contribution on the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. This bill amends the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2010 to provide protections for the holders of petroleum titles affected by changes to the boundary between the offshore area and the commonwealth-defined offshore areas.

The main focus of this bill is to take into account some of the change in tidal waters that alter potentially when the 3 nautical miles are mapped from the onshore point to offshore, and to ensure that if those boundaries move, the titles that are contained within the mapping do not affect the permit-holders. Ultimately it is protecting those that have existing permits to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the new mapping that is being carried out.

On that basis the opposition will not be opposing this bill. We believe it is very important that we protect those people who are seeking to do exploration, particularly during the times that we are currently experiencing, when it is important to bring more supply into the market. When we are looking at the likes of gas, which I will talk a little bit about today, it is important that we ensure we do not disadvantage those title holders.

The amendments to this bill will ensure that the title holders who are affected by the boundary change receive equivalent entitlements to those they would have otherwise had, were it not for the relevant boundary change. The bill also provides reciprocal arrangements for the protection of the commonwealth petroleum title rights in the event of a boundary change, a feature already provided for under the state petroleum titles under relevant commonwealth legislation. It amends the delaying provisions to ensure that the effect of a boundary change is delayed with respect to a commonwealth title while that title remains in force. It will establish a framework to automatically grant or extend the coverage of a commonwealth petroleum title when part of the title moves from commonwealth to Victorian coastal waters as the result of a boundary change. It provides arrangements for the valid granting of renewals of Victorian petroleum and greenhouse gas

titles when part of that title has moved into commonwealth waters as a result of a boundary change. The overarching impact of this bill is to better align state and commonwealth legislation, and to increase protections for relevant title holders.

We believe, or certainly we have been informed, that there are 17 current commonwealth petroleum titles located along or near the coastal waters boundary: 10 pipeline licences, three exploration permits, one production licence and three retention leases. Pipeline licences in particular are vulnerable because a licence may extend from commonwealth waters across the coastal waters boundary to carry raw products from the Bass Strait petroleum fields to onshore Victoria for processing. It is very important that those title holders are protected.

One of the things that I wanted to discuss today is when we have situations where title holders have looked at going from onshore to offshore to be within the boundary of 3 nautical miles and therefore to be effectively considered as offshore exploration. When you look at some of the legislation and the moratoriums that have been put in place by this government, we now have a situation where some companies are unfortunately being advantaged or disadvantaged. We also have a situation where some companies unfortunately have to look at deliberately working their way through to avoid some of the moratorium legislation just to get some exploration going.

I want to particularly point out the Black Watch and Halladale fields, which are developed through four extended reach wells, which will be drilled from an offshore location. The gas is transported from a drill site via two sections of pipeline totalling 10 kilometres. A pipeline connects the onshore well location to a tie-in point in an existing pipeline and then further through the Otway or Iona gas plants. These fields have reserves in excess of 50 billion cubic feet, and the Black Watch field is located in an area of 46 metres of water.

So here you have a situation where the current moratorium in place does not allow for onshore exploration of gas. Certainly the difference between the coalition and the government at this point is that we have said that a Liberal-Nationals government would allow exploration of onshore gas and that we would kickstart the industry. Obviously we would ensure that no fracking would take place in Victoria because we support the ban on fracking. We would also ensure that landowners would benefit and that they would have a right of veto. These policies are part of a gas policy we announced a few months back, and effectively the

situation in terms of the Black Watch and Halladale options looks at this very thing.

One of the things that we think is very important is to reduce the costs and bring new entrants into the market. We know offshore exploration is a very costly exercise. This limits the ability of a whole lot of smaller participants to enter the industry because you have to deal with and purchase very big bits of equipment. We know the cost of drilling and exploration is actually about 10 times that of onshore exploration. In the particular case of Halladale the cost, because it starts onshore and then goes offshore, is certainly not as expensive as purely offshore drilling, but it is nowhere near as cheap as onshore exploration.

The case was made to me by many people in the industry. Particularly when you are talking about environmental situations, it makes far more sense to be able to drill straight onshore than going and drilling 1 kilometre down and then 10 kilometres out into the ocean floor and seabed, and having to run extended piping. So the opposition's policy would enable the likes of onshore exploration and not have the situation where you have to start a drill site onshore, go offshore and then bring that gas back onshore.

Back in October 2014 the first lot of permits for offshore gas drilling near the Bay of Islands — so the state government which was certainly under our watch — allowed drilling to start in the waters off the Great Ocean Road. It was Origin Energy which was given the permit to tap into Halladale gas field near the Bay of Islands national park 30 kilometres south of Warrnambool. It allowed petroleum production licences, for the first time, to be drilled in these waters, and it allowed about 70 jobs to be created. Also — and certainly I saw this when I visited the initial workings that were being done at Halladale — this enabled job creation in the whole town, from the likes of catering, hardware, equipment and transport; a whole range of industries was created when this business was established.

The Halladale project is a multimillion-dollar project. It helps provide natural gas for residents and businesses. The licence allowed the company to search for natural gas and associated liquids. As we know, gas was first discovered in the Bass Strait, in federal waters, in 1965, and this licence, because the project was within Victorian waters, allowed gas exploration to be done under our legislation. The Halladale project escaped the government's moratorium on onshore gas drilling because the reserves are located within 5 kilometres of the shore and can be reached by drilling horizontally.

As I alluded to, on the one hand we certainly commend Origin for the work that they did initially in taking up this project, creating the jobs and kickstarting industry in terms of exploration, and now Beach, which it has been sold to. We know that that project frustrated a number of gas companies which wanted to drill in the land nearby. There have been many, many companies, Lakes Oil being one of them, that have permits very, very close to the Halladale project, but they are not allowed to drill onshore because of the moratorium that the Labor government has put in place. However, you have got the situation where another company is able to do this offshore-to-onshore process. As I said, that project has now been sold to Beach, but it was a very complex project to run the pipeline through and to do a lot of the test drilling, and it certainly took Origin a fair amount of time to get that process going. The simplest and easiest method is a straight onshore drill that would not have to go through that very, very expensive process.

I am not going to spend much time elaborating today because I am conscious that there are a number of people who want to contribute to the debate, including the former Minister for Resources, who I am sure has a lot to contribute on this particular bill. I will just finish by saying that, needless to say, resources have always been a key part of Victoria as a state and have provided a competitive advantage for us for many, many years. It is very disappointing that we are seeing our resources being locked up and that we have no opportunity to conduct onshore exploration for gas. All that is doing is harming businesses and all Victorians, who are experiencing unprecedented prices — prices that we have never seen before — which is making it very, very hard, particularly for many small businesses that I talk to, to stay in business.

The same applies to energy with the closure within five months of Hazelwood power station. It is seeing power prices almost double. We have heard the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change say on countless occasions, 'It's all about supply', in a situation where, when it comes to gas and when it comes to baseload power, albeit the Latrobe Valley and Hazelwood power station, in both instances this government has not allowed supply to take place.

We certainly believe that in terms of gas, getting onshore exploration of gas to kickstart the industry and get more supply into the market, particularly for smaller businesses to be able to compete, is really important, and that will certainly ensure that we can start to get that competition going. Unfortunately in the offshore element you have got a lot of these big companies, and this will allow some small entrants. With those words I will conclude by saying, as I said at the beginning of

this contribution, that we will not be opposing the bill. However, we are very, very keen to see this government get on with it and kickstart industry with some onshore exploration of gas as soon as we possibly can to reduce the pressure on prices for all Victorians.

Mr NOONAN (Williamstown) (17:32) — It is a pleasure to follow the member for Caulfield and make a contribution on this Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. Although it was relatively minor, I would say that I had a hand in developing this particular bill when I was Minister for Resources. This gives me an opportunity to thank the many dedicated staff in the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources who have a focus on this particular area of Victoria's economy and also those within Earth Resources Regulation and what was the Geological Survey of Victoria for their assistance to me. As a minister I was certainly well serviced by many dedicated and hardworking people, and I look back on my time as resources minister with many positive memories, having achieved a great deal in a short period of time.

The member for Caulfield explained the technical aspects of this bill, and he did that quite well. This is a relatively technical bill in function and in detail. We know that in Australia, offshore petroleum exploration and development is regulated by a title system. Petroleum-related activities can only be conducted if a company acquires and maintains a valid title. The most important feature of this bill relates to the boundary between Victorian and commonwealth waters and the impacts associated with the shifting of a boundary. We know that Geoscience Australia is currently undertaking a review of the offshore coastal boundaries in Victoria. The outcome of this review is expected to be known next year. Changes to those boundaries, even in a minimal sense, will have the impact potentially of creating some uncertainty for those titleholders. To the extent that we as a Parliament can give certainty if there are in fact boundary changes, that is what this bill will do.

The member for Caulfield stepped us through the fact that if there is a substantial movement in the boundary in a seaward direction, I understand, up to 17 permits, one production licence and three retention leases could be impacted. Similarly, in the instance that a substantial movement in the boundary towards a landward direction takes place, up to 16 Victorian petroleum titles, nine pipeline licences, one production licence for exploration permits, one retention lease and two access authorities could be impacted.

If a boundary shift takes place and titles granted under the commonwealth act cease to fall within the boundary, the commonwealth may no longer have jurisdiction to deal with that part of the title as it has moved. In light of Victoria's significant role in the generation of gas and oil for the rest of the country, Victorian legislation that provides security for titleholders is in fact required more than ever, and that is exactly what this bill will do. This bill will provide a reciprocal arrangement to that which already exists within the commonwealth legislation.

The member for Caulfield made some general comments in relation to the oil and gas industry. Indeed if you look back at Victoria's history in relation to the peak of Victoria's crude oil production back in the 1980s, I think it has been some time since we have seen annual production around that 170 million to 180 million per year figure. In fact we are substantially lower on production these days than we were at the height of that period. In terms of gas, last year Victoria produced about 400 petajoules of gas and consumed about 200 — about half of what we produced. The rest of that gas made its way into the eastern Australian grid, as it is known, and that is why we still claim today and will continue to claim to be a net exporter of our gas and we will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

Of course those who have followed this issue of gas in recent times will know that there has been much said and written in relation to gas and the future of gas in Australia. Those who understand this issue well are right when they say that Victoria and Australia are really swimming in gas. It is what happens to the gas when we bring it into our pipeline system that really matters, because what we have seen in recent times is probably the biggest disruption to gas production and usage of that gas that Australia has seen since gas was first discovered. That is because three very, very large liquefied natural gas plants have been established in Queensland, and they are exporting significant gas to the Asian markets. That is not a bad thing; that is actually very good for our economic development and opportunity here in Australia, but the reality is that we are exporting far more than we have available to satisfy domestic markets.

The other thing that is happening is that because we are now exporting gas from the eastern Australian grid the value of that gas is now pegged to an international value. That means that in fact Australian households and businesses are paying an export value for gas, which we have never done in the past. What we have sensibly done on our side of politics is we have called on a national basis for a correction of that arrangement to ensure that the needs of domestic gas users are met,

particularly when it comes to Victoria, particularly on the basis that we continue to be a net exporter of gas in such a way that we can stabilise the price of that gas and ensure that Australian users are catered for first. That is a sensible approach, and that is sadly where the facts of this have been lost in terms of the opportunities that political pointscoring have provided during the course of this particular debate.

I heard the member for Caulfield talk about the opposition's position now in relation to gas, and I would make the point, because he did not, that the opposition's position has changed on the issue of onshore gas. Political parties are allowed to change their position, but it is worth again making it clear that in this term of Parliament we have had a parliamentary inquiry into the issue of onshore unconventional gas, which looked at the issue of unconventional extraction, commonly understood to be fracking, which we have banned. We have proudly done so on this side of politics, and we will stand on the right side of history when it comes to that ban.

In the course of the parliamentary inquiry into the issue of onshore gas they did look at the issue of conventional gas. I want to quote from the report of that parliamentary inquiry because it provides important evidence in the context of this ongoing debate. It says:

There has been significant exploration for onshore conventional gas reserves in Victoria since the 1950s. No conventional gas has been found in the Gippsland region. In 1959, conventional gas was discovered near the Port Campbell township in the onshore Otway Basin. Dr Goldie Divko states that exploratory wells were then drilled across the onshore Otway Basin in the 1960s. From the late 1970s until 2006 (particularly between 1986 and 2006) the Port Campbell embayment was an active onshore gas-producing region, until the discovered commercially viable gas was depleted.

That is why we know today that in Victoria there are currently no commercial onshore conventional gas reserves. That is why our government announced when I was the minister that we would invest \$42.5 million into a Victorian gas program. This is the biggest investment ever made by a Victorian government in equipping ourselves during the period of the moratorium leading up to 2020 — midway through 2020 — to do the geoscientific work that is necessary to gather the evidence to actually understand whether or not there are serious reserves of onshore conventional gas.

This work has started. This work will involve a team of about 20 people and involve considerable community consultation. What we did when we announced this was ask Malcolm Turnbull and his resources minister at the time to match Victoria's funding. If they are serious

about getting more gas into the grid and bringing down prices on gas, they will match the Victorian contribution. Because yes, we all want to take advantage of resources and keep prices down, and this is of course the sensible way in which Labor approaches government and this issue. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr WATT (Burwood) (17:42) — I rise to speak on the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. I do want to take up a few things that the member for Williamstown talked about, but firstly I want to put on record my view, which is that with energy — whether it is petroleum, gas or diesel — we should be trying to look at good policy and get a little bit past the politics. I am concerned, frankly, about Victoria's ability to have electricity through the summer period. Given the changes to some of the positions that the government has taken, given the closure of Hazelwood and given the 22 per cent of electricity that has come out of the market, I have serious concerns about our ability to keep the lights on over the summer.

Victorians deserve reliable and affordable electricity, and we in the coalition want to make sure that when we get into government we have reliable and affordable electricity for all — not just for those who can afford to put solar panels on their roofs, not just for those people in Toorak or Brighton who can afford to pay for solar panels, but also for many of those people in Ashwood, Chadstone or Ashburton in my electorate and many of those in public housing who cannot afford solar panels. We as the coalition want to make sure that we have reliable and affordable electricity, and I as the member for Burwood have serious concerns about our ability to have power during the summer period when we are going to have peak demand. It is an indictment of this government — the prospect of blackouts — because of the positions that it has taken around energy policy.

The member for Williamstown talked about the price of gas being directly related to the export of gas. One of the problems that we have is we have a government here that refuses to understand that they are the government in Victoria. They are responsible for whether or not we have gas, how much gas we have, whether we have electricity and how much electricity we have.

The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change in question time only a few weeks ago pointed to an app on her phone by Red Dolphin. I have looked at that app consistently since that period, and actually before she mentioned it I knew of this app. What the app shows is that Victoria has the highest cost of electricity,

and it has had that since the minister pointed people to the app. We in Victoria used to pride ourselves on having cheap, reliable electricity. That allowed us to have a competitive advantage in the manufacturing sector. We are seeing manufacturing jobs fall off the cliff. Part of that comes back to the government deciding to triple coal royalties. We have seen prices go up. We have seen energy providers come out of the market. We have a serious problem in this state.

I have serious concerns about constituents who come into my office and tell me that they cannot afford to pay their electricity bill or they cannot afford to pay their gas bill. I have constituents who come to me and say, 'I'd like you to ring my provider to make sure that my bill has been sent', because they cannot afford to pay late fees. They say to me, 'I can't afford to pay late fees, so please call my energy provider'. I have constituents who have had their gas cut off. They have actually cut the gas so that they do not get charged. I have serious concerns. I have constituents who go to bed when it gets dark. They cover themselves with blankets because they cannot afford gas. They cannot afford electric heating; they cannot afford gas heating. Constituents of mine are in dire circumstances, and it does not appear as though we have a government that understands that we have people in real need here in Victoria.

It is not just in my electorate. I know it is right across the state. People understand that unless we have electricity we will not be able to turn our lights on at night. We will not be able to cook if we have got electric ovens. The minister's answer is, 'Gas — it is all about gas. The price of electricity has gone up because of gas'. Let me tell you, if you take 22 per cent of the production out of the market, then you are going to force the price up. When the minister stands in front of us and tells us, 'Electricity prices are all a product of gas', then I would say, what is the minister doing about the gas problem? What is she doing to make sure that gas is not going up so we can afford gas? If the minister tells me that gas is the problem, then why is she refusing to accept conventional onshore gas?

The member for Williamstown just talked about the fact that we do not need to worry about conventional onshore gas because there is no conventional onshore gas. If there is no conventional onshore gas, why are we banning it? Why has the government gone about banning something that apparently does not exist? If it does not exist, then you do not need to ban it. What you do need to do is find ways to be able to tap into what might be there. You need to look for it. The minister is the one who is telling us that gas is the problem. If gas is the problem, let us get more gas. The

way to do that is not to ban conventional onshore gas exploration and production.

We in the opposition, we in the coalition, have come to realise that we actually do need to get on with it and find energy sources that will bring down the cost of electricity and reduce the cost of living for my constituents. We need to make sure that when the summer heat hits properly — and we understand that we are in summer — and when the peak time comes, that we have the electricity and we have the power. There is nothing wrong with turning on an air conditioner. What is even worse than not being able to afford it is that the electricity does not exist because of brownouts or blackouts — and then we have a serious problem in this state.

I have a serious concern about the health effects on my constituents who will suffer through the heat this summer. They will suffer because the government has not done what the government needs to do to shore up electricity supplies. If you look at the closure of Hazelwood and the potential closure of other power stations as a result of policies that the government is driving, and if you look at the potential for energy shortages, to cover off those energy shortages what we are actually going to do is use diesel-generated power. Anybody who is seriously concerned about the effects on the environment or carbon emissions cannot seriously come into this place and say that they think it is a good idea to provide the electricity that we need for the summer to get ourselves through that period because we do not have the coal, through diesel — diesel of all things. What we do know is that diesel is dirty, and this government is simply replacing coal with diesel.

I am not sure how members opposite could seriously turn to their constituents and say, 'We have got reliable electricity. We have got reliable forms of power'. What are members opposite going to say to their electorate when the lights do not turn on, when they do not have the capacity to make sure that constituents are safe? Because it will get hot, and as night turns to day, when it gets hot people will want to consume electricity. When we in Victoria do not have the electricity over the summer period, then we have some serious concerns.

Councils have already said that what will happen is people will end up going to the pool or they will go to the library, because you will not have to pay for the library. We will see many people go to the library. We will see many people go to the cinemas. I am hearing that the government might actually hand out free cinema tickets so that the elderly, who would suffer through the heat in their homes, will be able to be in the cool of a cinema. People do not want to be in the cool

of a cinema. People want electricity in their homes, and it is incumbent upon the government to make sure we have that electricity. I have some serious concerns about our capacity to keep our residents safe and our capacity to provide the electricity that we need to provide. It is the duty of the government to make sure that we can turn on the lights, and it is the duty of the government to make sure constituents are safe and have affordable and reliable electricity.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (17:52) — I am delighted to make a contribution on the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. I listened with interest to the member for Burwood's contribution. I feel it is incumbent upon me to point out a couple of observations to the member for Burwood in relation to his contribution. Firstly, in 1998 the balance of the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria was privatised by the Kennett government, so the ability to have a command and control approach to the economy in relation to gas supply and distribution was gone at that point in time.

The second point I make is that we now have an integrated eastern energy market, and we have gas pipelines that run up from Bass Strait into Victoria, into New South Wales and into Queensland. One of the challenges we have and one of the issues that I wish to take the member for Burwood up on is the fact that in about 2008 Santos decided to invest billions of dollars — I think it was probably \$2 billion or \$3 billion — in a liquefied natural gas plant at Gladstone, Gladstone Liquefied Natural Gas, otherwise known as GLNG. The feedstock for that plant was going to be as a result of fracking in Queensland. So the use of non-conventional or onshore gas would provide the feedstock to produce the gas to go to Gladstone to convert it into liquefied natural gas and to then send it off for export.

The issue here, though, is that because of what we now know in relation to fracking, that feedstock was lost. So Santos had invested billions of dollars, and they decided they wanted to try and bid up the gas reserves along the eastern seaboard in order to then export that gas. Now, as a result of that, at around the time that Gladstone Liquefied Natural Gas plant came onstream, gas was trading at, I think, around about \$8 to \$9 per gigajoule. The long-term average in Victoria was \$5 to \$6 per gigajoule. So straightaway there was an incentive for Santos to buy up Victoria's gas supply and to export it.

Last time I checked, export policy is a matter for the federal government. Last time I checked, once the gas leaves Victoria there is not a great deal that we can do

about it. Last time I checked, it is no longer actually a state-owned enterprise that is manufacturing the gas or distributing the gas; it is a private company. So the ability for the state to try to intervene in these matters is somewhat limited. I am not quite sure if the member for Burwood realises what an energy market looks like and how the Victorian energy market has been devised and developed, but I think there is a weakness in his logic and his thinking.

The other point I make too is that the member for Burwood attacked the government's decision — the minister's decision — to look at having diesel generators available. The reality is that for the bulk of the time baseload and intermediate peaker power stations will be able to deal with Victoria's energy needs. When you look at a baseload coal-fired power station coupled with intermediate peaker plants like the one that AGL commissioned up at Somerton, coupled with the hydro plant up in Bright, that will on any given day be able to deal with Victoria's needs.

What the minister has done in relation to having diesel generators is to be able to deal with those sudden shocks, which usually occur at around 5.00 p.m.

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — I will come to that interjection in a moment. They will deal with those shocks that occur at around 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock when people come home, their house is hot and they turn on the air conditioning. It is a way of basically saying that where the system is in stress and demand, running riot, there is capacity for diesel generators to come in to fill that demand, briefly I would suggest — I do not think you are going to have them running for days on end — in order to make sure that the lights stay on.

In relation to the interjection of the member for Hastings in relation to Hazelwood, Hazelwood has always been, at least since probably the early 1990s, a dog of an asset.

Mr Burgess — What?

Mr PEARSON — It is a dog of an asset. It is old technology.

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — Again, if you listened to my contribution, you would appreciate the fact that I am talking about that very brief moment in peak periods when there is a need to fill the demand.

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — Well, Hazelwood didn't fill all that demand.

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — The member for Hastings is not being honest. If Hazelwood covered that need, then there would be no need for peaking plants, because base load would cover that. But base load does not cover that, which is why there is gas and why there is hydro. I would also point out to the member for Hastings that we did not make the decision to close Hazelwood. Hazelwood was owned by Engie. Engie is a French multinational company that had made a decision to get out of all fossil fuels, and they got out of this and they got out of gas in Perth. They made that decision.

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — Okay. Yes, we tripled coal royalties; that is right, and I think in terms of what that meant per megawatt hour it was around about 4 cents per megawatt hour.

Mr Burgess — It tripled the cost of business.

Mr PEARSON — It did not triple —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny) — Through the Chair.

Mr PEARSON — Through the Chair, it clearly did not triple the cost of business because it was a modest increase in relation to the base —

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — Clearly the member for Hastings cannot count past 21.

The reality is that what you saw happen with Hazelwood was a decision by the operators to recognise that the station was commissioned in 1964, I believe, and it was old technology; and the cost of trying to keep that station running just did not make sense. In the same way, AGL has determined that the Liddell coal-fired power station in New South Wales is past its use-by date. The reality is that whenever you have property, plant or equipment there is a depreciation that is levelled against those assets. There comes a point in time when the asset is written down to zero because it is past its use-by date.

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — The reality is that the tripling of the coal royalties had nothing to do with the fact that

the asset had been run down. It was an old asset. That is the reality.

If we look at Bass Strait, there are 23 offshore platforms and installations that to date have produced 4 billion barrels of crude oil and 8 trillion cubic metres of gas. The bill is important because what it does is provide certainty to those businesses that have made those investments in Bass Strait in terms of the assets they own. The bill is important because it deals with that, which I think is an important issue. The other issue is that gas is an intermediate fuel source, as we would appreciate and acknowledge, but the reality is that in terms of trying to provide that certainty and greater levels of investment in Bass Strait there is a need to encourage those companies that have made those investments and to provide some level of certainty so they can continue to make those investments.

I think if you look at it in 20 to 30 years time, probably the last coal-fired baseload power stations in operation will be Loy Yang A and Loy Yang B, and they will need to be offset with a number of intermediate sources, notably gas, again complemented with renewables, as we transition ultimately to a cleaner energy future. So gas plays an important part in that equation. We do not have enough gas at this point in time to be able to just shut down every baseload coal-fired power station because, frankly, we would run out. I remember a few years ago learning that if you converted every single baseload coal-fired power station to gas you would probably deplete the Bass Strait basin within about seven years. But we have got to try and encourage these companies and make sure that they have certainty over the assets they own and the assets they have invested in and that we are able to provide that level of certainty.

The reality with a policy area like this is that it is complicated. Those opposite can shout their interjections, but the future was never going to be a dirty coal-fired power station that was 50 years old. That was not going to —

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — Again, we didn't turn it off, member for Hastings.

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — No, no. Again, your party was the party that actually privatised the State Electricity Commission of Victoria and sold Hazelwood in the mid-1990s.

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr PEARSON — It was not running efficiently at all. It was always a dog of an asset. It was running at around 60 per cent capacity. So you can be in denial. You can be a climate change sceptic — that's what you are — but this is an important piece of legislation. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) (18:02) — I rise to speak on the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. The Greens will not be supporting this bill. The bill seeks to give effect to arrangements between the commonwealth and states relating to revenue from petroleum sources that straddle the boundaries of those jurisdictions. This bill essentially wants to provide protection for holders of offshore titles, to protect their rights to drill and to protect their rights to profit from the fossil fuel industry.

In the federal Parliament, a similar bill was opposed by my Greens colleagues. That bill followed a High Court judgement that potentially threatened the profitability of the offshore petroleum industry, and the bill sought to protect oil and gas companies' profits. My colleague Senator Sarah Hanson-Young spoke to that bill at the time and she said, and I agree with her, that this is just another of the frequent bills that comes into Parliament aimed at keeping the offshore oil and gas industry going, giving that industry the regulations that they want and that suit them.

Governments in Australia seem to spend a lot of time making sure that the big oil and fossil fuel companies get exactly the regulatory settings that they ask for. This bill in federal Parliament was no exception, and now we are seeing it here in the Victorian Parliament. The Greens opposed the bill in the federal Parliament and we will be opposing this bill here. That is because the Greens will always oppose measures that make it easier to dredge up and burn fossil fuels while a climate emergency is happening all around us. The Greens will always oppose measures which seek to support the archaic and outdated oil and gas industry when in fact what we should be doing is keeping fossil fuels in the ground.

We stand, and we are the only party that stands, together with the fishing industry, the tourism industry and the environmental movement in opposing drilling for oil in our pristine marine environments. We saw what happened in the Gulf of Mexico. It can happen anywhere, including here. A big oil spill would forever damage and destroy precious areas in our marine environment. The campaign to protect the Great Australian Bight in South Australia is one that has really galvanised local communities. It is a campaign based on wanting to protect our precious marine life and that ecosystem, and ensuring that drilling for oil by

massive multinationals does not occur. We know that because of the lack of courage and spine from governments across the board, big multinational oil and gas companies continue to put pressure on our parliamentarians to get access to the Great Australian Bight to drill for oil and other offshore areas to drill for oil and gas.

This is despite the huge risks to the environment and to the climate. This government seems willing to take this risk, and wants to give this industry the regulations to protect their drilling and to protect their profits. Unfortunately this bill is just the latest in a series of efforts by this Labor government, supported by the Liberal and National parties, to prop up the fossil fuel industry. Here we have seen millions of taxpayer dollars poured into the Victorian gas program. This program pays taxpayer money to help identify new resources in the Otway geological basin, presumably in order to promote further exploration and development of gas.

This Labor government is literally using taxpayer money to go on the hunt for fossil fuels. This is even after the community campaign to Lock the Gate and to ban onshore gas and fracking was incredibly successful in getting Labor to ban fracking. Yet we are still seeing the Labor government use taxpayer dollars to investigate gas resources in the Otway basin. As part of this gas program there is even funding to directly promote investment in offshore gas. If voters want to see where this government stands when it comes to fossil fuels, it simply does not get any clearer than that.

Meanwhile, we also have the CarbonNet Project looking for ways to capture carbon emissions and store them in offshore reserves, similar to those dealt with in this bill. Putting taxpayer dollars into carbon capture and storage is not the way of the future. Instead we should be weaning ourselves off polluting fossil fuels, not continuing to support them and then frantically throwing taxpayer dollars around trying to figure out how to store their waste.

If the oil and gas companies want to continue to pollute our atmosphere, the very least they could do is fund their own research and development into carbon capture and storage and demonstrate that it is commercially viable. There is a \$40 million higher resources expenditure in the 2017–18 budget than in the previous budget, and at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings the then resources minister told us that this was from ramping up the CarbonNet Project to the next phase after delays. This is simply a ridiculous amount of money — tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer money — to spend on investigating an unnecessary and outdated technology

when we should be looking simply to the wind and the sun for our future power needs. We should not be spending tens of millions of dollars to find a way to sequester carbon underground when actually the best way to do that is to keep fossil fuels in the ground in the first place.

Pursuing the carbon capture and sequestration fantasy is just the death rattle of a dying industry. If we can store greenhouse gases underground, then the fossil fuel industry simply does not have to change their business model, and they can go on polluting with a get-out-of-jail-free card in their back pocket. But there is one problem: carbon capture and storage simply does not work. Experts agree that carbon capture and sequestration has not been carried out economically anywhere in the world. Mining industry leaders know that no-one is stumping up the cash to open new coal plants. These geoengineering technologies are unproven, they are risky and they are expensive. Plus we are just dumping the problem somewhere for future generations to deal with. We simply cannot keep running from this problem. Instead of using taxpayer dollars to clean up the mess that has been created by the coal, oil and gas industries, we just need to keep fossil fuels in the ground in the first place.

Renewable energy we know is here. It is ready to implement, it is becoming cheaper by the day and it is more than capable of providing our energy needs if we actually invest in it properly. But it is clear here in Victoria that we are still happy to be on the fossil fuel bandwagon and to continue to support that industry, not just through regulation, but through taxpayer dollars as well. This bill is just another example of that.

It is clear the Labor government know they are doing the wrong thing. The *Statement on Future Uses of Brown Coal* — Labor's statement on what they wanted to do with brown coal in this state — was released very quietly to ensure it sailed under the radar. The Premier's Facebook page, which is prolific, mentioned nothing about Victoria having an 'open for business' approach to coal, even though they were the words used in the report. Yet we are still seeing tens of millions of dollars for the CarbonNet Project and other fossil fuel projects. This is — let us be clear: this government in Victoria, a Labor government — funding brown coal on the sly.

We know, as I have said, that the best way to store carbon is to avoid emitting it in the first place by leaving it in the ground. I call on the government to close the door on carbon capture and storage. I call on them to close the door on funding offshore gas exploration. I call on them to close the door on

introducing regulations like this that are simply written for the oil and gas industry, and to close the door on fossil fuels.

The Greens actually have a plan to phase out our brown coal and transition to 100 per cent renewables and to support the community and workers while we do so, and we know that this is actually what Victorians want. If we do not plan for climate change, if we do not plan to get out of fossil fuels, the rest of the world will just forge ahead and we will be left carrying the can, continuing to prop up a dying industry. It is really time that politicians on both sides of this chamber, no matter which party they come from, simply face the scientific fact that we are up against. We are in a climate emergency — you will not find a climate scientist who tells you otherwise — and it is actually time we acted like it. The very least we should do is not continue to introduce regulations and legislation and funding that prop up this industry. The very least we should do is shut the door on any new fossil fuel projects and actually transition away from the current ones we have.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) (18:11) — The member for Melbourne still had some time available to her, but I am pleased to be able to speak to —

Ms Sandell interjected.

Mr HOWARD — I understand her challenge though because she did not really speak on the bill at all. I think it is appropriate to speak on the bill first, and I will be pleased to make some further comments in response to some of the comments that have been made by members from the other side of the house.

We have not heard much on this bill to date because it is a machinery-type bill that recognises an odd feature. The odd feature is that the state offshore boundaries that come up against the federal offshore boundaries, further than 3 kilometres out from the coastline, are not fixed. The fact that they are not fixed means that there are challenges for bodies, such as those that have offshore licences and pipelines. The titles may be found to be not entirely in the state jurisdiction or not entirely in the federal area, but because of boundary changes they can move. This bill really is simply putting in place an arrangement for when boundary changes occur.

At the moment we find that Geoscience Australia is responsible for determining and regularly reviewing these offshore boundaries. At the moment it is undertaking a review of the Victorian federal offshore boundary, and next year it will come down with an outcome on new boundaries.

This legislation simply puts in place machinery measures for pipeline holders in particular but also for petroleum licences. We know there are 17 licences held in the federal area that could be found partly in the state area: for pipeline holders, there are 10; for exploration permit-holders, there are three; and there is one production licence and three retention licences. For those who might find that their titles are now not entirely either in federal or state areas, that they have moved, this bill simply puts in place a recognition that nothing will change in terms of their actual ability to continue as they have been.

This is not major legislation that changes the lives of Victorians. It simply puts in place sound legislation which provides security for those who are in the industry — running pipelines, exploring, running petroleum titles or whatever. It ensures that with the review of boundaries that is taking place they know that the rules are not changing and they can continue to operate as they have been operating. There is clearly an arrangement in place on this issue, as there is with many other matters, where the state and the federal governments are working cooperatively to ensure that even though the boundaries may change between the state and the federal governments in terms of offshore boundaries, the operators operating on those offshore sites can continue with business. That is the basis of this legislation — nothing dramatic, nothing that is going to change the lives of Victorians overall. But it is something that clearly is relevant to what we know are significant investments in these offshore developments, and it provides security for those offshore developments. The Victorian government is committed to ensuring that these investors are able to operate in a confident environment, and we know then that it keeps the security of offshore petroleum, gas production and so on in safe hands.

There is not really a lot more than one can say about this particular piece of legislation, and hence those who have spoken on the legislation before me were often drawing on a broad range of associated topics. I will make some comments about those, because one of the issues that clearly has come up is the issue about gas production in this state. Some members of the opposition keep harping on that the Victorian government needs to be able to provide more gas or needs to be able to provide more petroleum for that matter, that it needs to ensure that we have enough of these resources so that we have electricity through the summer.

What they have neglected to say — and they know the truth — is that this industry has been privatised. We know that the energy industry was privatised, mostly by the Liberal-National coalition under Jeff Kennett, and

since that time the industry across the country has mostly been in private hands. Therefore the Victorian government no longer has the control, as it used to under the Gas and Fuel Corporation or under the State Electricity Commission. We are reliant upon private industry to hop in and invest in whichever form of energy provision they have.

As a member of the state government I am certainly pleased to say that we do recognise that global warming is real. We have taken leadership in promoting alternative clean energy sources like wind and also solar. We are showing leadership in gradually changing the balance of energy that is being produced in the state to try to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We continue to work along that way.

The issue of gas has been a particular concern. As we know, gas prices have been rising this year. Is it because we are not producing enough in Victoria? It is not. We know that in fact the reserves of Victorian offshore gas amount to something like 400 petajoules annually, and in Victoria our usage is only about half of that. We know that the problem of gas, as some members have identified, is because it is owned by private operators — Santos owns much of it — and it is in fact being exported to other states and other countries. The problem is a federal issue. Controlling the gas to ensure that we get adequate amounts within our state is something that is important, but clearly that is a federal matter. It is something that the state government has no control over. That is a matter that the opposition fails to recognise. It wants to play games to misrepresent the case for political purposes.

It was certainly interesting to hear the concerns of the opposition about the closing of Hazelwood. That again was a decision made by a private operator which recognised that for its own reputation it did not want to be seen to be continuing to operate one of the world's dirtiest power stations, with polluting greenhouse gas emissions higher than most other power stations around the world. It recognised that to make it cleaner it would have required investment beyond what it was prepared to put in, and so Engie made that decision to close Hazelwood.

We know that the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) is the body that is in place to oversee energy provision across the country and to try and ensure that there is enough supply of energy to meet peak needs. We know that in the coming summer there will be peak needs as people use air conditioning. It is interesting to see that switch from peak need being on very cold days, as it used to be, when people would use their heaters to now being on hot days when suddenly more and more

people are using air conditioners. It is interesting to see the way that this has changed. Therefore AEMO has, as we have identified, put in place a situation where it is acknowledged that diesel generation may be needed in this state for short periods of time to meet that need but certainly not to meet base load. Base load continues to be provided by coal, with wind in there to provide some of that, as well as hydro — that mix. That is what AEMO is looking at.

The last thing I should make note of is that in the member for Melbourne's rant, which did not relate to the bill very much at all, she said the Greens are opposed to just keeping the rules as they are. They appear to want to close down all coal-fired power stations immediately and do away with any further offshore petroleum or gas exploration. That does not recognise the reality of the world. Yes, we do need to address greenhouse gas emissions and bring down our reliance on petroleum, gas and coal. Yes, we do need to maximise our chances of bringing in wind, solar and so on, but the technology is not there yet. We cannot do it immediately. It has got to be done sensibly. It is good to see that we have got a Labor government in place that does get that balance somewhere near right and sensible. If it was left to the Liberals and The Nationals, they would not close down any coal-fired power stations. They would simply want to see it all going and we would be in a mess.

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) (18:21) — I rise to speak on the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2010 to provide protection for the holders of offshore titles that may be affected by changes to the location of boundaries between Victorian coastal waters and commonwealth waters.

Sitting here and listening to the contributions from the other side of the chamber, I was quite interested. We have got a smattering of Luddites around. We have this talk of nostalgia for the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SEC) of more than 40 years ago. The SEC was known as safe, easy and comfortable. I remember very well those days. The Labor Party has been in power for the majority of the years since that time, 40 years, so they had plenty of time to prepare to make sure that everything was fixed, yet there is this continuous harking back to those dark years, as they referred to them, the Kennett years. Talk about Luddites! It is time to move on, and it is time to actually handle the problem and to fix it.

Some of the first wells in Victoria were drilled in the 1920s to 1940s in the Anglesea and Torquay areas, part

of the Otway Basin. The Otway Basin covers approximately 150 000 square kilometres extending along the southern margin of Victoria and South Australia to the north-west of Tasmania. Eighty per cent of the basin is offshore. In 1965, after overcoming the many technical challenges of the deep water and extremely hostile weather conditions, BHP and Esso drilled Bass Strait's first offshore well. The well successfully encountered hydrocarbons, and the Barracouta gas field was discovered. Additional gas-bearing reservoirs were located in 1966, and oil was discovered in 1967. Through these discoveries, Bass Strait was confirmed as a world-class hydrocarbon province. The discovery of oil and gas in Bass Strait was a boost for Australia. Australia was provided with an increased degree of energy independence and self-sufficiency previously unthinkable. This gave manufacturing in Victoria an even better competitive advantage in energy security.

Today Victoria's petroleum — oil and gas — exploration and production is concentrated in the offshore commonwealth waters of the Otway and Gippsland basins. The offshore Gippsland Basin covers approximately 46 000 square kilometres. Drilling started in the late 1960s, and it is one of Australia's most prolific systems, having historically generated approximately two-thirds of Australia's cumulative oil production and one-third of its gas. In 2012 it was reported that remaining reserves in the Gippsland Basin were estimated at 400 million barrels of liquids and 5 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Victoria's energy market has historically had the cheapest electricity prices in the country because of its brown coal and gas reserves, but now it is rivalling South Australia as the most expensive. Cheap and reliable energy is what built this state. Our manufacturing industries thrived on secure power and affordable energy. It became the lifeblood of this great state. The government is clearly always putting sustainability before security and affordability. I agree that sustainability should have a part but not override our energy security and affordability. Neither should it override the need for families to be able to provide light, power, air conditioning and comfort for their families. The cost of electricity is very damaging to so many. So many coming into my office — decent people, a lot of them pensioners — are having great trouble in paying their bills. They are going and sitting in shopping centres to stay cool or in the winter to stay warm because they cannot afford to run air conditioning and heaters at home. There are parents who are having to juggle paying the power bills and paying the food bills and are falling behind on their school fees.

I do not see how the government is actually tackling these cost-of-living pressures. This bill, of course, is not particularly aligned to that. But, as I said before, they blame everyone but themselves for the power price increases — Jeff Kennett, the French — but it does not change the fact that in the 2016–17 budget, the coal royalty levy was tripled to gather an extra \$252 million. Hazelwood power station was expected to pay \$87.5 million in increased taxes by this government, forcing an early closure. Hazelwood represented 22 per cent of Victoria's energy generation supply and put downward pressure on electricity prices. Also, what is this government signalling to the private sector involved with energy: no point in investing here because you will probably be copping more taxes in future? How will this mindset affect our offshore industries and our sovereign risk?

Currently the Victorian government estimates that 17 per cent of Victoria's generated electricity comes from renewable energy: that is up roughly from 12 per cent since Hazelwood's closure. It is no wonder prices have jumped so much. I can only wonder what prices will increase to if it jumps to 40 per cent, as proposed by this government. The fallout from this closure has made Victorian household electricity bills rise by 7.7 per cent in the recent March quarter. Average household energy bills are expected to rise \$300 this year — \$300.

The Australian Energy Market Operator has also warned that Victoria faces 72 days of power shortfall in the next two years due to Hazelwood's closure, yet there are no practical plans in place to prevent looming blackouts, putting increased pressure on our gas-run generators. Hospitals have had to divert parts of their health funding just to keep their lights on. Now we hear the government is investing in diesel generation as backups here and around the state. I hear the South Australian government has also invested in diesel generation to fix their troubles and their self-inflicted wounds. It has been reported that South Australian Labor are trying to keep the costs secret.

South Australia has a state-based target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2025. That state's failure to effectively integrate more than 40 per cent renewable energy with the wholesale electricity market contributed to their security and affordability problems. The South Australian energy disaster educated federal Labor and the Western Australian Labor government to put aside legislated schemes to meet specific renewable energy targets. But not Victorian Labor — they are locked in to increasing power costs.

The opposition will take the cost-of-living pressures of Victorians seriously, even if this government does not.

The opposition has already announced that if elected in 2018, it will abolish the Victorian renewable energy target to stop energy prices from soaring further. We will support the safe exploration of offshore reserves and we will lift the moratorium on conventional gas exploration in Victoria while keeping the ban on fracking. We will also look after our farmers by ensuring fair royalties and a right of veto, putting downwards pressure on the cost of living.

We here are elected. It is a very important position that we have. We are here to represent the whole of Victoria, but it seems to me that the poor, the aged and the infirm are not being looked after properly by this government. The increasing costs are taking a great toll on all of them. There will be many who will not be having a happy Christmas.

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (18:29) — I would also like to rise to speak in support of the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. As a previous speaker, the member for Buninyong, was saying, this bill is a machinery bill, if you like, a sort of a technical bill which talks about making some small changes that have to be done by way of making changes to legislation to ensure the current situation is maintained and the rights of those who have licences and permits to mine or take resources offshore have the certainty and the understanding that they can continue to do so in the same manner that it was agreed they could.

What happened is that many years ago there was a settlement between the commonwealth, the states and the territories — at least the Northern Territory — to ensure that as far as possible there would be common rules that would apply in the maritime areas, the sea. Those rules and regulations would apply across the board to ensure that there was no confusion in terms of, in this case, Victorian titles as compared to commonwealth titles when it came to permit-holders that may be putting in pipelines or taking oil or whatever. What it did was ensure that the boundaries that are determined by the commonwealth, the Victorian boundaries, continue to be the same. We cannot actually say what those boundaries are, of course, because boundaries on the coastline change — there is the sea and there is the water. This bill provides rights for permit-holders even if the boundaries may slightly change because of currents, because of the sea or because of changes to the coastline. Permit-holders will continue to have what they had prior to the change, so the title is a little bit flexible and can change. Continuity and stability are guaranteed for those permit-holders even if the boundaries may change because of changes to the coastline and so on.

This is important legislation because it ensures certainty. It gives gas and oil companies the ability to know with certainty the boundaries of their titles and what they are entitled to take from the environment. We have heard a lot of far-reaching debate and discussion talking about climate change in most cases and the need for alternative energy and renewable energy to ensure the security of our planet and our future generations. Of course I totally support that and agree that we need to do something about climate change. The state Labor government is doing a lot on renewable energy and to ensure that we have good, secure supplies into the future.

The government is looking at security not just through renewable energy but also through jobs. We saw, for example, when wind farms came into doubt under the last state Liberal government that there were a lot of jobs in jeopardy, such as those at the Keppel Prince Engineering plant in Portland. There were wind turbines there, and really that company was about to go under. Luckily the Labor government came in after those terrible four years and was able to start investing again in and promoting renewable energy, including in that business and the jobs of the many people who worked there. This was also of great benefit to the local area, including Portland, Warrnambool and the surrounding areas, and to all the businesses that rely on the wages that people make in that workplace and spend in the local area.

When it comes to the petroleum industry, yes, it is quite a dirty industry, it is old energy and we are looking at moving away from that because of greenhouse gas emissions, but that transition needs to be done in a sensible and organised way to ensure job security as well as the supply of energy. When we look at some of the companies in the petroleum industry, it is not just the way they operate in terms of their permits offshore but also the way they operate in terms of their workforce. If you look at the offshore arm of Esso down in Gippsland, there is a very long-running dispute at the moment. Esso, through its contractors, is doing what is now becoming more and more common among unscrupulous employers — employing contractors using sham agreements. A contractor is given work by Esso for a particular period of time. They employ so many workers — I think in this case about 200 maintenance workers — and they then do the work offshore. Near the end of that contract the contractor goes through all the legal loopholes of changing its name and becoming a different company, sacking all the employees and then making up a new enterprise agreement with, in this case, three workers. Once that enterprise agreement has been made, the contractor attempts to employ the existing workforce of 200 on much lower wages and conditions. In the case of Esso, workers there on strike and having to

deal with the company are facing up to 30 per cent wage cuts, a lot of changes to rosters and a lot of changes to annual leave entitlements.

This is work that can be very difficult. You are away from your family for long periods of time. You could be on the rigs for up to two weeks at a time without any ability to get home or to drop in and see the kids or to find out what is going on because you are literally in the middle of a sea and you are getting in and out by helicopter and there is bad weather and so on. When we look at legislation such as the bill we are debating today we know that governments want to be supportive and assist and work with companies that are providing resources for the economy. We are being as cooperative as we can to ensure that there can be business as usual and that Esso and other companies can work in an organised and easy fashion without red tape and without problems in terms of legislation, so it really is disappointing to see them behaving as they have been with the workforce down at Esso offshore around the Gippsland area. It really is disgusting. I hope to see an end to this, and I am sure the workers there will stick together.

They have a lot of support down there, and I am sure ultimately they will win, but the sacrifice that they make in the meantime when these companies do things such as this is significant. I understand that it has been reported in some of the local papers and in leaflets that in fact this is a company that has made a lot of money and is one of the many companies that pay little, if any, tax in this country.

So here we are again, doing the right thing — as we should — ensuring that we honour the agreement with the commonwealth to ensure that we have legislation that provides for the way that boundaries shift when you are talking about the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act and to make sure that companies can continue to go on with their business. But then we have companies that do not pay the tax that they should and also treat working people with contempt by trying to cut their wages and conditions, particularly in an area such as Gippsland, which has had its fair share of difficulties.

We have had the Hazelwood mine fires, we have had a reduction in the dairy industry down that way, and here we have again companies like Esso putting the boot in and trying to take existing workers wages and jobs away if they do not accept much less than they have worked for and fought for in the past. This legislation is important. It is a mechanical type of legislation just to make sure that things are in line, and I commend the bill to the house.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) (18:39) — I rise to make a contribution on the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. The Nationals and coalition are not opposing this bill, and the coalition did not oppose the original bill when it was introduced in early 2010.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Storage Act 2010 to provide protections for holders of petroleum titles affected by changes to the boundary between the offshore area and the commonwealth-defined onshore area. The state has control of the waters out to 3 nautical miles off our coast, and the commonwealth has control of the waters beyond that. This bill is about managing some issues around boundary changes, should they occur, and the infrastructure that is around those boundaries. The amendments to this bill ensure that the titleholder who is affected by a boundary change receives equivalent entitlements to those they would have had otherwise were it not for the relevant boundary change. The bill provides reciprocal arrangements for the protection of the commonwealth petroleum title rights in the event of a boundary change, a feature already provided in the state petroleum titles under the relevant commonwealth legislation.

It amends delaying provisions to ensure that the effect of a boundary change is delayed with respect to a commonwealth title where that remains in force. It will establish a framework to automatically grant or extend coverage of the commonwealth petroleum titles when part of the title moves from commonwealth to Victorian coastal waters as a result of a boundary change. It provides arrangements for the valid granting of renewals of the Victorian petroleum and greenhouse gas titles when part of that title is moved to the commonwealth waters as a result of the boundary change.

An overarching impact of this bill is to better align state and commonwealth legislation and to increase protections for relevant stakeholders. The amendments are aimed at bringing state legislation closer to commonwealth legislation to protect the current and future offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas titles. Western Australia has enacted similar legislation. It is only Western Australia and Victoria that have viable offshore petroleum reserves, and the need for this legislation is only relevant to those two states.

It is a complicated bill about boundaries. An example that might be a little closer to my electorate is that New South Wales, when Victoria came into being, retained the Murray River, its bed and up to three chains from the spring high-water mark in the early 1850s. That boundary is extremely difficult to manage because

nobody was around to bang in a peg at the appropriate time in 1851. So boundary changes can be a challenge everywhere when they occur. This bill certainly helps in that area. Some of the boundary issues with the Murray River require similar management from time to time.

Some of this bill does deal with the potential for the geological and other sequestration of greenhouse gases. CO₂ is a by-product of open combustion which occurs in our power stations. In particular in the Gippsland area, which is close to the existing oil and gas fields in Bass Strait, there has been a long-held desire to take the CO₂ back and inject it into those spent gas fields in Bass Strait. It can be compressed from the thermal power stations and then it has to be pipelined. At this stage its ability is very much to be fully proven, but probably when it comes to compressing and sequestering it in the spent gas fields it requires very large thermal power stations, and such a project would require those power stations to be operating for quite a number of years.

We do know that those gas fields are depleting in Bass Strait. There are varying estimates but the ones that I have read indicate that the Bass Strait gas fields will expire in about 2028. That does seem to be a long way away in some respect, but it is much closer than most people think, and that will leave us with some considerable challenges if new gas is not found. With those challenges in mind, that is very much why the coalition has come about a policy to allow for the exploration of conventional gas. This is not fracking, this is looking for conventional gas — extensions of those deep gas fields that exist in Bass Strait — onshore.

It is very, very important when it comes to protecting our farmers and protecting our farmland, but also protecting our energy future that we do find more gas in order to power the gas turbines that are very much a transitional fuel for us into the future.

While I have the opportunity I would also like to talk about some of the other things that have happened around greenhouse gases or the sequestration of CO₂. A decade or so ago when I was first elected to Parliament there was quite a lot of research work going on, particularly at James Cook University in Queensland, using algae to digest CO₂. The CO₂ was suspended in a water medium, algae then proceeded to grow and the algae was processed and initially split, or cracked as it was called then, between the protein and the oil, which was fish oil. That oil could then be used as a biofuel. Then the food scientists got hold of it and decided to try to move that directly into the food chain.

I have tasted some of the green algae, and it does taste like fish oil. Following a trip to Queensland when I had a good teaspoonful or two of it, I woke up in the morning and found that I had green teeth, so it was a case of keeping my mouth shut until it disappeared. By the way, it did not taste too bad. That research project has gone by the by.

I then look to my area where everybody is trying to do what they can to be reasonable climate citizens. In our agricultural area we have huge almond farms. As we know, trees absorb CO₂ to grow. The almonds are hulled and shelled to extract the kernel, they are stored and burnt in a small-scale thermal power station. Select Harvests in my electorate has got a cogeneration plant that burns the shells to produce electricity and steam to treat the almonds — and the process goes on. They are treating the almonds and they are producing CO₂, which goes back to the orchard and the trees absorb it. This is a practical way to do the little things that count.

Similarly, we were involved with a project for using winery marc. When you make wine the stems and seeds are a by-product. They go to Australian Tartaric Products, which extracts the tartaric acid. The balance is then burnt in a thermal power plant to provide the heat that is needed for the tartaric acid extraction process and to power the site. There is a great deal that can be and is being done, particularly in the agricultural sector.

A few years ago the Linklaters used the CO₂ from their diesel tractors in their air seeder to see how that went, so people are trying all sorts of things. Olive waste is now being actively considered by the large olive farms in my electorate, again in the cogeneration process. This is where everybody can make a difference in various ways. I am very proud of the approach to the environment that is taken in my electorate.

On energy in general, which is a topic that is perhaps for another day, I note that today Terry McCrann has written a very interesting article, which I advise those who read *Hansard* to have a look at, as it does make some very scathing assessments of where our energy system is. With that, The Nationals in coalition are not opposing the bill.

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) (18:48) — I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. As honourable members have mentioned this evening, the bill is fundamentally about the machinery in relation to the state and federal boundaries, which we know are not fixed. That therefore results in challenges about jurisdictional responsibility, functions and roles in such matters. Geoscience Australia regularly reviews these

boundaries, and this legislation puts in place the machinery around how licences can operate under particular titles. Other members this evening have discussed that at length.

The primary purpose of the bill is to amend the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2010 to provide protections for the holders of offshore titles affected by possible future changes to the location of the boundary between Victorian coastal waters and commonwealth waters.

The amendments will ensure that a titleholder who is affected by a boundary change receives equivalent entitlements to those that they would have otherwise had were it not for the relevant boundary change, and this is where this boundary change becomes important, and it is the reason for the bill. By agreement, the commonwealth, states and the Northern Territory maintain, as far as practicable, common rules for the regulation of offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas activities. Consistent with that agreement, the bill provides reciprocal arrangements for the protection of commonwealth petroleum title rights in the event of a boundary change, as are already provided for in state petroleum titles under the commonwealth legislation, and a number of members have discussed that this evening.

The bill creates a framework, which will automatically grant or extend the coverage of commonwealth petroleum titles where part of a title moves from commonwealth to Victorian coastal waters as a result of a boundary change, while also providing arrangements for the valid granting of renewals of Victorian petroleum and greenhouse gas titles where part of that title has moved into commonwealth waters as a result of a boundary change.

The Andrews Labor government is committed to a renewable energy market that is modern and flexible, and of course we have introduced our renewable energy target. Let us remember, and I discussed this earlier today in a previous contribution, that the state is growing significantly. It is growing upwards of 100 000 new people calling Victoria home each year, and as this happens more and more pressure is put on all of our essential services, like roads, schools, hospitals and of course the energy market. That is why there is a need to bring on more energy through renewables — through wind, through solar and through other technologies. But equally we understand the practicality and the realities around doing that. First and foremost we are fundamentally committed to jobs.

What you need in these situations is transition over time, and we know that jurisdictions across the world are moving in that direction. There are significant challenges in the east coast gas market. We know there is not a supply issue; there is a demand issue. Victoria produces in fact 7.2 million households worth of supply, but only uses 3.6 million households worth. That is the equivalent of around 206 petajoules each and every year. Clearly we understand that there is far too much gas being exported, and a number of these factors have already been mentioned this evening by members.

To set the context, following the 1979 Offshore Constitutional Settlement, the commonwealth, states and the Northern Territory agreed to maintain, as far as practicable, common rules for the regulation of offshore activities. Geoscience Australia, as I have already mentioned, has an ongoing responsibility to define the limits of Australia's maritime jurisdiction, and it is currently undertaking a review of the offshore coastal boundary in Victoria. This is where the critical element of the bill comes in — that is, around the review boundaries, in particular for this state. Any changes as a result of this review are expected to be announced in 2018.

The bill reflects some of the changes made in 2015 to the commonwealth legislation regulating offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas activities, and which ensured the security of offshore titles granted under the Victorian act. There are a number of key details that the bill deals with. In particular I would like to touch on the ability to amend existing provisions in the Victorian act to ensure that the effect of a boundary change is delayed with respect to a commonwealth petroleum or greenhouse gas title while that title remains in force. A number of members this evening have mentioned the complexities around achieving this balance. It certainly is not an easy balance to achieve.

Automatically granting or extending the coverage of the commonwealth petroleum titles, where part of the title moves from commonwealth to Victorian coastal waters as a result of these boundary changes, is another component or another provision that is incorporated in the mechanics of this bill.

The bill goes on further to provide for those arrangements for the valid granting of renewals of Victorian petroleum and greenhouse gas titles where part of those titles were moved into commonwealth waters as a result of the boundary change. Without necessarily knowing what those changes are going to be, there needs to be that creativity and flexibility within the framework to provide for those future changes, and that is certainly something that I think is an important point.

I know that the member for Buninyong spoke at length on this, and I think it is something that is well noted. The bill will also provide those arrangements for any necessary variation to the conditions of a title affected by the boundary change, and I think that is something that needs to be incorporated given those points that we mentioned earlier.

If we look at how the bill specifically applies to Victorian offshore titles that are affected, we know that the commonwealth act provides an equivalent framework to ensure security of title in the converse scenario where part of a state, or the Northern Territory, becomes located in commonwealth waters due to that boundary shift. This is by way of the provision of the commonwealth act that acknowledges that the commonwealth act does not apply to the part of the title that has become located in the commonwealth waters while the transition remains in place. The provision operates in conjunction with the reciprocal provision in the Victorian act, which states that the Victorian act continues to apply to the relevant title area. Much of this can seem quite mundane and quite dry, but these are important provisions that go to the management of what is an ever-changing and quite dynamic market, and this is a bill that I certainly think is needed.

In the time that I have remaining I want to go back to those key provisions and requirements around an energy market being flexible and having the ability to transition through time. Certainly in my area, and I know in other honourable members' areas, there is significant demand. We have ever-changing communities, communities that are experiencing significant growth and communities that five or 10 years ago did not exist; they were simply greenfield sites or vacant land. We know through this growth and through the ever-challenging fact of more and more people wanting to come into this great state that the Andrews Labor government is getting on with providing the key infrastructure, the key services, road, schools and hospitals to deliver for our growing communities, and of course we have a changing energy market.

This bill provides for the necessary framework around what is a dynamic market. As we have heard this afternoon it is a market that requires flexibility, specifically in relation to those boundary changes. With those comments I commend the bill to the house.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (18:58) — It is a pleasure at this late stage of the day to rise to speak on the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017. As previous speakers have said, this is actually a technical bill that is essentially a series

of amendments. As other speakers have taken the liberty to speak generally on the matter, I would just like to provide a very brief commentary.

From the green corner we have people telling us what we should do, but they will never have a chance to make a decision because they are mere commentators in this space; that is the Greens party. In the blue corner we have had a lot of lectures from people who do not really understand what the future looks like in this energy space. Given the commentary from the green and the blue, those of us in the Labor government who are dealing with energy policy have probably got our policy spot on.

We actually are talking about sustainability, not just in the sense of it being about renewables but about it being an efficient supply of power that is cost-effective and that will supply new jobs in a new industry. I recommend the Ross Gittins article in the Fairfax press which says that for his next trick Turnbull wants us to think he is a magician. Go and read that. Gittins is a very good commentator on a lot of issues. I can see the frown from the member for Kew. He is probably not a Ross Gittins fan. Gittins does give some good advice to politicians and one piece is:

Economists are always telling politicians not to try picking industry winners.

This is what he is telling you about backing coal-fired power stations.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Adjournment matters

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (19:00) — On the last sitting Thursday the member for Brighton took a point of order regarding whether the member for Melbourne had requested two actions in her adjournment debate contribution. The Acting Speaker referred the matter to the Speaker for consideration. On behalf of the Speaker I have reviewed the transcript and I am satisfied that at the start of her contribution the member for Melbourne asked for one action: for the Minister for Racing to ban greyhound and jumps racing in Victoria. However, towards the end of her contribution she also spoke about duck shooting and at the end of her contribution restated her action to include ending duck shooting.

The member for Brighton is correct that a member can only seek one action in the adjournment debate. On this occasion I am prepared to accept the adjournment debate matter raised by the member for Melbourne but

ask the minister to only address the action requested at the start of her contribution. I remind members to take care in how they express their adjournment debate issues and to ensure that they only request one action.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Vacant residential property tax

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) (19:01) — (13 792)
The issue I raise this evening is for the attention of the Treasurer, and the action I seek is for the Treasurer to provide an explanation as to how his vacant property tax exemptions are assessed.

A constituent of mine recently contacted my office with some real concerns about one of the eleven new taxes that the Andrews government promised not to introduce, but did once elected. This government has recently claimed they want to make things fair, but the vacant residential property tax has no intention of being fair, as it taxes everyday, hardworking Victorians who purchase a property for work purposes, for a holiday house or for a secondary occasional residence. This tax is clearly not fair.

My constituent Mr Parry has his primary residence in Warrandyte and has also purchased an apartment in Melbourne as both he and his wife work at times in the city, making this Melbourne property now taxable by this greedy government. As outlined on the State Revenue Office website, there is only one exemption for work-purpose properties, and that is:

The property must be occupied by the owner for at least 140 days in a calendar year for the purpose of attending their workplace or conducting business. To be eligible for the exemption, the workplace must be located in one of the specified local council areas.

I ask the Treasurer: why does Mr Parry now have to tell the government where he and his wife sleep throughout the year and why they sleep there in order to avoid being taxed an extra \$6500? And how will the government monitor these 140 days? Will the government be supplying booklets similar to those used by learner drivers for logging hours? If a relative of the family or another immediate family member uses the property for work purposes, will this also be counted towards the 140 days?

This tax is clearly open to evasion by declaring the property as a holiday home and only having to prove residence for four weeks rather than 140 days under

those circumstances. This tax is a desperate money grab by a Treasurer who is facing multibillion-dollar blowouts on all of the Andrews government's major projects and is hell-bent on making hardworking Victorians pay for his inability to get the sums right.

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr R. SMITH — Again, the action I seek is for the Treasurer to provide an explanation as to how his vacant property tax exemptions will be assessed. Do you have something to say?

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr R. SMITH — You shouldn't be here. You know that. You are a roting, thieving member of Parliament, and you should not be here.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Member for Warrandyte, through the Chair.

Lonsdale Street, Dandenong

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) (19:03) — (13 793)
My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I seek from the minister is that he conduct a review of the right-hand turn conditions and restrictions in operation along Lonsdale Street in central Dandenong.

Currently motorists cannot turn right from Lonsdale Street throughout Dandenong's central business district, and this is having a detrimental impact on traders on the eastern side of Lonsdale Street. To access the businesses on that side of the road, many motorists are forced to travel a significant distance beyond their intended turning point to make a U-turn and then to double back. This is a significant inconvenience, making it more difficult to access these shops and subsequently easier to go elsewhere. In particular there has been speculation that the right-hand turn restrictions may be leading to an increased shop vacancy rate along Lonsdale Street. Local Little India traders are also keen to see traffic redirected through their precinct, which is Foster Street, to ensure its success long into the future.

The City of Greater Dandenong has also requested a review of the right-hand turn ban. They have safety concerns that the right-hand turn ban is causing an unnecessary build-up of traffic along Lonsdale Street, and I think this is worthy of investigation. Over 35 000 vehicles travel through central Dandenong every day. Our main street is one of the busiest in Melbourne's south-east. We need to ensure our road rules are properly serving the community, and this means providing the best available road conditions to

ensure the best possible traffic flow as well as safety, of course, and accessibility to all those businesses in the region so that they can continue to thrive. As such, I seek that the minister conduct a review of the right-hand turn conditions and restrictions in operation in central Dandenong.

Kilmore roads

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (19:05) — (13 794) My adjournment matter is also for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I am seeking from the minister is that he address the terrible and deteriorating condition of roads around Kilmore and provide the funding that is needed to make those roads safe and in an acceptable condition for residents — and that takes a number of forms.

I have recently been speaking to residents from around Kilmore, and what is most concerning to them is the terrible condition of Kilmore's roads. I met with Peter Medley last week. He lives on Broadford-Kilmore Road. At the moment he has issues with the height of the grass on his roadsides, which probably comes to above my shoulder. There is a real issue there in that VicRoads will only undertake one slash a year. He is concerned about the fire risk that that presents. In my view there is a real need for the minister to instruct VicRoads, and provide them with the funding, to undertake more than one slash of that long grass a year to protect the safety of those residents.

It is also about the condition of the local roads, including the Northern Highway, Kilmore-Lancefield Road and Broadford-Kilmore Road. Those roads are all facing issues with potholes, bumps and deteriorating road edges as well. We all know that if you fix country roads, you save country lives. Some parts of those roads are completely worn out. Constituents have contacted me concerned about potholes, but they are also concerned about the urgent need for resurfacing.

Obviously the population of Kilmore and the surrounding areas is increasing quite dramatically, and as a consequence it is vital that the government actually invests in those roads to ensure that we have adequate infrastructure. That of course raises the issue of the Kilmore-Wallan bypass, which the government has been absolutely silent on for the last three years. The community is still desperately waiting for some direction from the government, which seems to continue to find new reasons to delay the process.

I would also urge the government to give serious consideration to the application made by Mitchell Shire Council to the Growing Suburbs Fund for money to

revitalise Kilmore's main street. The bypass project has been an important part of being able to do that, but I think it is absolutely necessary that the government gives favourable consideration to its application for that revitalisation of the main street to get trucks off that street and reinvigorate things for traders. I do note with some disappointment that the coalition made a commitment of \$2 million to do that, which the Andrews government scrapped.

Broadmeadows electorate roads

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (19:08) — (13 795) My adjournment request is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is for the minister's department to examine improving road connections between Broadmeadows and Campbellfield. Key infrastructure is required to unlock the development potential between Broadmeadows and Campbellfield, one of the biggest areas for industrial and manufacturing employment in Melbourne's north. However, connections from the Broadmeadows town centre to the Northcorp industrial area and the rest of Campbellfield are poor. Pascoe Vale Road and the two railway lines act as a barrier between the east and west of Broadmeadows. These connections deliver infrastructure that enables employment, but as I identified in the strategy document published last year, *Creating Opportunity: Postcodes of Hope*, it is the interconnection that is now critical. The proposed Merlynston Creek road crossing linking the old industrial areas with the new through Belfast Street, Broadmeadows, would be ideal for this proposition.

Beyond this centre and its critical connections, we look at what is happening with the rest of the transport infrastructure that we are improving. What I am calling for is an integrated system. It is vital to look at how we design the capital of Melbourne's north in Broadmeadows. This would now also help with the CityLink Tulla widening project that is going on at the moment from Melbourne Airport to Bulla Road. We have got the curfew-free international airport at the back door. This is one of the most strategic assets we have for economic development. There is going to be a new runway built as well, so there is a whole economic development model to be built around that — new jobs, from white collar to blue collar jobs — and that will be really important for this community.

We have just removed the level crossing at Camp Road in Campbellfield, and it was done in record time and done safely. This was a crossing that proved to be fatal and continuously dangerous, and I am delighted to report to the Parliament that trains will be running

under Camp Road for the first time tomorrow. That has even been fast-tracked.

These are important initiatives. Families will get home safely. We will increase productivity. We will attract investment, and we will create jobs where they are needed most.

Sandringham railway station Christmas lights

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) (19:10) — (13 796) I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. By way of general preamble, the Victorian Parliament currently is set up to mark a number of important occasions — Hanukkah will be celebrated here tomorrow lunchtime and there is a Christmas tree in Queen's Hall. Likewise, the City of Bayside is seeking to mark Christmas with the installation of bud lighting at a number of locations.

The Black Rock clock tower has a spectacular display of lighting which provides a focus on the district, and the City of Bayside is seeking to install bud lighting at the Sandringham railway station.

The matter that I wish to raise with the Minister for Public Transport is for her to review, in the spirit of Christmas, the proposed charges by Metro Trains Melbourne to secure the provision and installation of bud lighting at the Sandringham railway station. According to correspondence I have received today from the City of Bayside, there is a quote from Metro Trains that is seeking project management costs of \$2807 and a margin of \$556, meaning that the cost of these items, excluding the lights and other matters, including installation — just the management costs — will exceed \$3000.

I am advised by the City of Bayside chief executive officer, Mr Adrian Robb, that the City of Bayside had 'sought a waiver of these fees but our request was declined'. The council has indicated via the CEO that they will be seeking to escalate this matter through the appropriate channels.

Increasing costs is not a matter that the government is unfamiliar with, with increasing electricity and gas charges, road tolls and more than 20 charges which have been increased since the last election, when they said that they would not be imposing any new taxes. There have been more than nine new taxes introduced as well as a number of other costs that have been increased.

I seek that the minister liaise with Metro to see whether, in the spirit of Christmas, they might be able to facilitate the installation of bud lighting at the Sandringham

railway station without the impost — the excessive impost in the view of the City of Bayside — of management costs and a margin that goes over \$3000.

Victorian Emergency Management Institute

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (19:13) — (13 797) The matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Emergency Services, and it concerns the Victorian Emergency Management Institute (VEMI) at Mount Macedon. The action I seek is that the minister join me early in the new year to celebrate the opening of the institute.

My community recalls the federal Liberal government closing the then Australian Emergency Management Institute following the Abbott government's infamous commission of audit and 2014–15 budget. Overnight a vital piece of Australia's emergency management infrastructure was trashed, and 60 jobs were lost as a consequence. The story of the emergency management institute is illustrative of the fundamental difference between Liberal and Labor — while they are for cutting down, we are for building up.

My community was delighted, as you can imagine, Deputy Speaker, when the Deputy Premier and Minister for Emergency Services announced in 2016 that the old Australian Emergency Management Institute would be purchased by the Victorian government and reopened as the Victorian Emergency Management Institute. VEMI will build leadership capabilities across our emergency services, drive change and encourage diversity in the sector through education and training. The facility is set on 6.5 acres and includes a large theatre with tiered seating, a simulation centre and room to accommodate almost 60 people. The site has been redeveloped to meet Victoria's emergency management training needs now and into the future, with an overhaul of the accommodation facilities, the installation of new technology and safety upgrades. Importantly, the future of the golf course at the site was secured by the minister, with the Victorian government signing an agreement to lease the land back to the Mount Macedon Golf Club for the next 15 years, with an option to extend that for a further 15 years.

The opening of the Victorian Emergency Management Institute is a much-anticipated event, and I look forward to welcoming the minister to Mount Macedon in the new year.

Road safety

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) (19:15) — (13 798) The matter I wish to raise is for the Minister for Roads and

Road Safety, and the action I seek is that he have some discussions with VicRoads and hopefully, through them, with Victoria Police to educate people on and enforce the keep-to-the-left road rule. Lots of cars and trucks stick to the right-hand lanes where they are just an absolute nuisance. We are spending billions of dollars to upgrade freeways and roads, with some that are multi-lane or multi-carriageway roads, yet we have a number of cars and trucks that stick to the right-hand lane. You might be in a 100-kilometre zone and they are sticking like — I was going to say ‘like something to a blanket’ —

Mr Edbrooke — White on rice.

Mr NARDELLA — That is right, like white on rice on the right-hand side. It is a 100-kilometre zone, it is a bright and sunny day, and they are sticking there doing 80 kilometres. It happens on the Geelong freeway, it happens on the Monash, it happens I am sure on the Calder Freeway where you are just frustrated. It happens on the West Gate Bridge, where you have got trucks, you have got cars, it is an 80-kilometre zone and they are doing 60 kilometres up the bridge. It just congests the whole freeway system. There might need to be some consideration in terms of having — like on the Geelong freeway — three lanes or more on a carriageway where the trucks keep out of the right-hand lane. You see this on the West Gate Freeway where the heavily loaded trucks are in the right-hand lane trying to get up the bridge. It happens on the Bolte as well. It is extremely dangerous, because then cars have to travel illegally — because the law does not allow this — on the left-hand inside lane to pass these slow vehicles. That is not only dangerous but is frustrating for many road users.

Whether it is the enforcement, whether it is some education, whether it is some other action that might need to be taken to speed up travel on these major freeways and highways, I ask the minister to have those discussions.

Frankston ministerial visit

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (19:18) — (13 799) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Small Business, and I ask the minister to visit my Frankston electorate in the coming months to speak with small businesses about opportunities the state government can offer them to grow and prosper. I understand in the last financial year more than 7700 small businesses have accessed support from the Small Business Bus right across the state of Victoria, and this is certainly something I think our Frankston community could take advantage of. Small businesses make an incredible contribution to our community and our economy in

Frankston and of course Victoria, and I know business owners would look forward to an opportunity to speak with the minister in person.

Clyde North bus service

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) (19:19) — (13 800) My question is for the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is the introduction of a bus service along Grices Road in Clyde North. With the massive growth in the area, the housing estates extend for kilometres down Grices Road from Clyde Road and pass by thousands of homes.

Without a bus service it is virtually impossible for the residents to access either the local shopping centres or train stations without the use of a car or by adding great expense to the trip. Clearly the people living in Clyde North are being let down by this Andrews government and its policies, which seem to favour only those living in the city. The residents of Clyde North deserve to have the same access to public transport as people living in the city. Without access to public transport they are at a disadvantage when seeking employment, accessing education, attending doctors' appointments and quite simply going about their daily lives.

If we are to encourage people to shift into an area such as Clyde North, it is incumbent on the government to provide access to public infrastructure and services. As traffic congestion is also a major problem, this government should be doing its utmost to provide residents with alternative forms of transport. A regular bus service along Grices Road would certainly help with this issue and should be implemented without delay.

Ivanhoe library

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (19:20) — (13 801) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Local Government, and the action I seek is the minister's support for the Living Libraries Infrastructure program for the Ivanhoe library in my electorate. The Ivanhoe library is a member of the Yarra Plenty Regional Library, which provides library services for some 115 000 members across the Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Banyule council areas. That is 31 per cent of a population of nearly 400 000 people. It has 155 staff and 3.6 million loans a year.

But the Ivanhoe library, built in the 1960s, up there with the historic Heidelberg town hall, does not have lift access. It is a two-storey building and you have got to work your way up a couple of flights of stairs to access parts of the library service there. It is a fantastic library in very difficult circumstances and conditions.

We have staff providing excellent services to the local community, but of course what we provided in the 1960s is not fit for purpose in the 21st century.

In the community consultation plan, in February 2017, Cate said in relation to the plan for the new Ivanhoe library and cultural hub:

Finally, a plan to bring the Ivanhoe library into the 21st century ... Libraries nowadays are vibrant areas that create community and encourage participation in a range of activities ...

I agree that it is not just about borrowing a couple of books; it is about access to the internet and it is an opportunity for people in the community to come and read the papers and to get engaged and involved. We know, as a family with a young daughter, it is a place for activities, a place for parents to come and meet and an opportunity for some time out and to allow children to get involved in a range of activities. As someone who was chair of the Yarra Plenty Regional Library when I was a Banyule city councillor, I know the value of the library services that we provide right across Nillumbik, Banyule and Whittlesea.

What I would say is the libraries in the Banyule City Council area do not reflect some of the libraries that we have seen in places like the electorate of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, who is at the table, out at Mill Park. Certainly we do not have those sorts of facilities in Ivanhoe. For too long Ivanhoe residents have funded and resourced services to the north of the municipality because of the capacity that people in Ivanhoe have had to generate a lot of the wealth and opportunity for those across the municipality. But it is time for a new Ivanhoe library. It is time for the community in the south of my electorate to get the services they deserve. The Living Libraries Infrastructure program provides opportunities for the government to provide those services, and I am hopeful the minister will support the grant.

Responses

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) (19:23) — I will refer the following matters to the appropriate ministers: the member for Warrandyte raised a matter for the Treasurer regarding vacant property tax exemptions; the member for Dandenong raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety regarding a right-hand turn at Lonsdale Street in Dandenong; the member for Euroa raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety regarding the state of roads around the Kilmore area; the member for Broadmeadows raised a matter for the Minister for

Roads and Road Safety regarding improving road connections between Broadmeadows and Campbellfield; and the member for Sandringham raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport regarding charges for Christmas bud lighting at Sandringham station.

The member for Macedon raised a matter for the Minister for Emergency Services regarding the opening of the Victorian Emergency Management Institute at Mount Macedon; the member for Melton raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety regarding compliance matters to do with the keeping to the left of the road rule; the member for Frankston raised a matter for the Minister for Small Business and requested a visit to small businesses in the electorate; the member for Bass raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport regarding a bus service for Grices Road in the Clyde North area; and the member for Ivanhoe raised a matter for the Minister for Local Government regarding support from the Living Libraries Infrastructure program for the Ivanhoe library.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house now stands adjourned until tomorrow.

House adjourned 7.25 p.m.