

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

Tuesday, 19 September 2017

(Extract from book 12)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(from 13 September 2017)

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

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(to 12 September 2017)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development	The Hon. L. D'Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Industry and Employment, and Minister for Resources	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence (until 23 August 2017)	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

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

Speaker

The Hon. C. W. BROOKS (from 7 March 2017)

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER (to 25 February 2017)

Deputy Speaker

Ms J. MAREE EDWARDS (from 7 March 2017)

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

Acting Speakers

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

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. M. J. GUY

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

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals

Ms S. RYAN

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms Bridget Noonan

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

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	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clarinda	ALP	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

¹ Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ ALP until 7 March 2017

⁵ 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

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.

CONTENTS

TUESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	2755	Women's National Basketball League	2770
ABSENCE OF MINISTER	2755	Polymeric Powders	2771
MINISTRY	2755	Lakes Entrance roads.....	2771
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS	2755	Heyfield timber mill.....	2771
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS		Westfield Southland.....	2771
STATEMENTS		Frank Winter.....	2771
<i>Member conduct</i>	2755, 2756, 2759	Victoria State Emergency Service Craigieburn	
<i>Ministers statements: political donations</i>	2757, 2759, 2760	unit	2772
<i>Electoral reform</i>	2758	Country Fire Authority Craigieburn brigade.....	2772
<i>Influenza</i>	2760, 2761	Remo 'Ray' Ascenzo.....	2772
<i>Ministers statements: illegal firearms</i>	2761	Government performance	2772
<i>Government performance</i>	2761, 2762	Broadmeadows electorate	2772
<i>Ministers statements: gas supply</i>	2763	Regional and rural roads.....	2773
CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS		Justin and Jo Lane.....	2773
<i>Box Hill electorate</i>	2763	Electricity prices.....	2773
<i>Carrum electorate</i>	2763	Eid festival, Flemington	2773
<i>Gippsland South electorate</i>	2764	Essendon Airport.....	2773
<i>Yuroke electorate</i>	2764	Essendon Rowing Club	2774
<i>Eildon electorate</i>	2764	Ascot Vale Football Club.....	2774
<i>Dandenong electorate</i>	2764	Brotherhood of St Laurence	2774
<i>Prahran electorate</i>	2764	St Bernard's College	2774
<i>Pascoe Vale electorate</i>	2765	Ahmed Dini	2774
<i>Ripon electorate</i>	2765	Claude Ullin.....	2774
<i>Yan Yean electorate</i>	2765	Australian marriage law postal survey.....	2774
FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL 2017		Office of Fiona Richardson	2774
<i>Introduction and first reading</i>	2766	Marina Gyfteas	2775
GAMBLING REGULATION AMENDMENT (GAMING		Magpie Primary School.....	2775
MACHINE ARRANGEMENTS) BILL 2017		Linton Primary School.....	2775
<i>Introduction and first reading</i>	2766	Whitehorse Historical Society	2775
FINES REFORM AMENDMENT BILL 2017		Chinese Women's Association of Victoria.....	2775
<i>Introduction and first reading</i>	2766	Mitcham Thunder Basketball Club	2775
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT AMENDMENT		Graeme and June Tindale.....	2776
(PUBLIC LAND CONTRIBUTIONS) BILL 2017		Robert and Joan Fuller	2776
<i>Introduction and first reading</i>	2766	Norwood Blacks	2776
SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS		Ringwood Bowls Club.....	2776
COMMITTEE		Dandenong Thunder Soccer Club.....	2776
<i>Alert Digest No. 13</i>	2766	Dandenong City Soccer Club	2776
ECONOMIC, EDUCATION, JOBS AND SKILLS		Charlton Park 2020.....	2776
COMMITTEE		Southmoor Primary School	2777
<i>Community energy projects</i>	2767	Bentleigh electorate schools	2777
DOCUMENTS	2767	Bentleigh Auskick	2777
CHILDREN AND JUSTICE LEGISLATION		Grand Final Friday.....	2777
AMENDMENT (YOUTH JUSTICE REFORM) BILL		Central Deborah Gold Mine	2777
2017		Marong Road, Bendigo.....	2778
<i>Council's amendments</i>	2767, 2778	Research Eltham Collegians Cricket Club.....	2778
OWNER DRIVERS AND FORESTRY CONTRACTORS		RENEWABLE ENERGY (JOBS AND INVESTMENT)	
AMENDMENT BILL 2016		BILL 2017	
<i>Council's amendments</i>	2767, 2780	<i>Second reading</i>	2781
ROYAL ASSENT	2768	ADJOURNMENT	
RULINGS BY THE CHAIR		<i>Nepean Highway–Wilsons Road, Mornington</i>	2829
<i>Questions without notice</i>	2768	<i>Lalor and District Men's Shed</i>	2829
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE		<i>Regional and rural roads</i>	2830
<i>Program</i>	2768	<i>Moorpanyal Park beach project</i>	2830
MEMBERS STATEMENTS		<i>Frankston railway line car parking</i>	2830
<i>Deer control</i>	2770	<i>Cornish College</i>	2831
		<i>South Yarra Primary School</i>	2831
		<i>White Night Ballarat</i>	2832
		<i>Ballarat Turf Club</i>	2832
		<i>Taylors–Kings roads, Delahey</i>	2832
		<i>Responses</i>	2832

Tuesday, 19 September 2017

The SPEAKER (Hon. Colin Brooks) took the chair at 12.03 p.m. and read the prayer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I rise to advise the house that the Minister for Mental Health will be absent from question time today. The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services will answer in his place.

MINISTRY

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I also advise the house that on top of her current portfolio duties the member for Kororoit has been appointed Minister for Local Government and the member for Sydenham has been appointed Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Before calling for questions I would like to acknowledge in the chamber the presence of the Honourable Tony Smith, Speaker of the House of Representatives. I would also like to acknowledge the delegation from the Botswana National Parliament, led by the Honourable Gladys K. T. Kokorwe, Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana, and also the 34th delegation from the United States of America, under the auspices of the Australian Political Exchange Council, led by the Honourable Ryan Williams, member of the Tennessee House of Representatives.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Member conduct

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. Noting that the Speaker and President have referred Labor's Deputy President to IBAC over printing fraud allegations and that the former Labor Speaker and Labor Deputy Speaker have resigned in disgrace and are now being investigated by Victoria Police, and yesterday with the Premier flagging changes

to the Electoral Act 2002: Premier, why have your first proposals in changing that act not focused on ending the systematic rorting that has been happening within your own ranks and on your own watch?

Mr J. Bull interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Sunbury will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour. I will not tolerate that level of interjection across the chamber.

Honourable member for Sunbury withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank you very much, Speaker, and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Who would have thought the Leader of the Opposition would ask about invoices? He is asking about invoices — today of all days! Keep asking about invoices — you can do it all day if you like.

The Leader of the Opposition seems to have some knowledge about who has been referred to IBAC. I have no such knowledge, and I do not know that he ought to have any such knowledge either. If he does, he can perhaps explain how it is he knows who has been referred to IBAC. That would be a very interesting question for the Leader of the Opposition to add to the large number of questions he has to answer today. But let me assure the Leader of the Opposition: keep on giving us these lectures about probity and integrity. We just love it from you, the greatest hypocrite going around.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier will resume his seat. The Leader of the Opposition will assist in the smooth running of the house.

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, the question was very clearly about what the Premier is going to do with changes to the electoral act that will stop the rorting on his side of the house, not a rant by the Premier. Can you bring the Premier back to actually answering the question he was asked, rather than the incoherent rant we have had so far?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Before calling the Leader of the House, I ask all members to assist with the smooth running of the house by ceasing to shout across the chamber, particularly those members who are at the disadvantage of sitting immediately to my left and right, who I hear the loudest.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, the question from the Leader of the Opposition had a very long preamble. It canvassed many issues, and the Premier is entitled to address those issues, as *Rulings from the Chair* indicates. Those issues might make those opposite a little bit uncomfortable — a little bit red around the face — but the Premier is entitled to address those issues in answering the question.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Members on my left! I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr ANDREWS — Thank you very much. So as the Leader of the Opposition alluded to, I made some announcements yesterday in relation to the government's position around profound reform to the donations and other electoral law in our state. The preamble to the question indicated some knowledge about who had been referred to IBAC. I am in no position to confirm that, and neither should you be actually —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is referring to the fact that I made note in my preamble of those members being referred to IBAC. I wonder if you could enlighten the Premier to the email that you and the President sent out saying that you had referred them to IBAC. You referred them to IBAC, and maybe this guy, in between rorting, wants to read his own emails.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr ANDREWS — As I was saying, Speaker, what a day the Leader of the Opposition is having. We will continue to deliver the electoral reform that is necessary in this state. We would hope that the loud but somewhat unconvincing Leader of the Opposition is a partner in that important reform. We would hope that other parties in this Parliament were partners in that important reform. But whilst we welcome that collaborative approach, the Leader of the Opposition would be unwise to hold his breath waiting for us to take lectures on probity from him.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Before calling the Leader of the Opposition on a supplementary question, I warn the member for Hastings and the member for Kew to cease interjecting.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Multiple Labor MPs are under investigation for rorting taxpayer funds to pay for electoral campaign staff, the members for Melton and Tarneit resigned after rorting the second home allowance, the Minister for Corrections resigned after rorting taxpayer-funded limousines to transport his own dogs, and now there are serious allegations of Labor printing rorts defrauding taxpayers money. Premier, is it not true the only reason you have not proposed changes about rorting to the electoral act is because you cannot guarantee there are no more crooked, rorting Labor MPs in your own ranks?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The house will come to order. The member for Mordialloc and the Attorney-General are warned.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The answer to the question is no — a ridiculous question from a Leader of the Opposition who, so far today, has been out there quoting Donald Trump, blaming the Age, blaming the Labor Party, blaming everybody except himself for his own appalling conduct. Anyone who listened to that Mitchell interview knows you have got some explaining to do.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier should stop debating the question. The Premier is quite happy to let the evidence of his own rorting sit here in the chamber, with the member for Tarneit over there and the member for Melton over here, who sit here as proof that the Premier does not care less about his members putting their hands in the pockets of the Victorian taxpayer.

The SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order. The Premier to continue answering the question.

Mr ANDREWS — Beyond the comments I have already made, of course I will not be running a commentary on investigations, whether they involve the member for Ovens Valley, who sits on the front bench, or any other member of this place.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Oh, they are all minor — the member for Ovens Valley, who still sits on the front bench. It is unwise to comment on ongoing investigations, whether they sit on the front bench opposite or anywhere else in this Parliament.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Ministers statements: political donations

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I am very pleased to update the house that the government will deliver the strictest donation laws —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The level of noise in question time is unacceptable. It is impossible to hear anyone make comments over that shouting.

Mr ANDREWS — Whether they can be crafted to cover secret lobster dinners with the Mafia or secret industry forums in penthouses, we will have to wait and see. But in any event the government will introduce a new disclosure limit of \$1000, not \$13 200, and introduce a \$4000 donation cap over the life of a parliamentary term, not the uncapped donation arrangements as they exist today. We will ban foreign donations —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for South-West Coast is warned.

Mr ANDREWS — and require all donations over \$1000 to be disclosed to the Victorian Electoral Commission in real time so they can become known to the public — not months and months —

Mr Guy interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — Was there a flyer produced for your penthouse meeting?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Kew, the member for Ringwood and the member for Nepean will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable members for Kew, Ringwood and Nepean withdrew from chamber.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Oakleigh will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Oakleigh withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS — There are no flyers for the secret penthouse fundraisers over there, no flyers for the secret penthouse fundraisers you have been running.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — The Leader of the Opposition is trying a little bit too hard today — no flyers, no invoices, no answers, incoherent —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Warrandyte has been warned.

Mr ANDREWS — blaming everybody else, throwing his deputy leader under the bus. There is a better way, though, and this government will deliver it in full. Whether we can put an end to lobsters with mobsters or the sort of penthouse pet behaviour we have seen over here we will have to wait and see. The reform will be delivered —

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

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, I seek leave to table three documents to reinforce the Premier's answer, but they are of him. I am wondering if he can seek leave to table himself and the Deputy Premier at some boardroom forums for Progressive Business. A lunch —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Members will come to order.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, we will be delighted to provide leave for the tabling of those documents if the Leader of the Opposition can provide the invoice and the evidence of his secret penthouse dealings — his sandwiches for cash affair in a secret penthouse.

The SPEAKER — The Leader of the House will resume her seat. Order! There is no ability for members to table such documents. The member can make the documents available to the house if he so wishes. I call the Leader of the Opposition on a question.

Electoral reform

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. With the government yesterday flagging changes to the Electoral Act 2002, in these changes, Premier, do you plan to align the Legislative Assembly with the Legislative Council and require disclosure on the ballot paper of the suburb in which all candidates live so that voters can know whether their local MP lives close by or, in Labor's case, up to 50 kilometres away?

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I was not certain that the Leader of the Opposition would be asking questions about disclosures today, but apparently he is. From someone who I am sure —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — There has been some doubt cast on whether every member of the team opposite actually lives in Victoria, so thanks for your lecture on where people live.

We have outlined a series of reforms to the way donations operate in our state. I had hoped that the Leader of the Opposition would join with us to make these profound reforms either through good conscience, common sense or the fact that he had been stung into action by his own appalling behaviour. It would seem that he would rather play games with these matters.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Attorney-General is warned.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier was asked a very simple question as to whether his reforms would cover off on making it clear whether MPs could say where they lived — whether the member for Tarneit could tell the people of Tarneit that he lived in Queenscliff or whether the member for Melton perhaps could tell his constituency that he lived in a caravan in Ocean Grove. The Premier is not answering the question. The Premier should come back to answering the question and let the house know whether he is considering reforms as outlined by the Leader of the Opposition.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Attorney-General and the member for South-West Coast have both already been warned.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, the preamble to the question raised — the announcement made by the Premier yesterday regarding reforms to political donations —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Allan — No, no, your preamble referred to the government's announcement yesterday. The developers' penthouse pet over there may not like this sort of response, but it does not mean it is not within the standing orders.

The SPEAKER — The Leader of the House will refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr ANDREWS — As I was saying, we made some announcements yesterday in relation to donation reform, and the government will deliver along the lines outlined yesterday.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Premier, your members for Tarneit, Melton, Narre Warren North, Narre Warren South, Werribee, Mill Park and Broadmeadows, just to name a few, all live nearly 20 kilometres from the people they claim to represent and some, like Luke Donnellan, live 40 kilometres from his own seat. In your changes to the electoral act, Premier, will you require that all your sitting MPs must live in the electorate they are elected to represent or at least in an adjacent electorate?

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition knows that he is to refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — They will all live in Victoria, I can guarantee that. I do not know whether those opposite could guarantee that. We will, as a caucus, as a government, put a positive plan to the people of Victoria, and they will make their own judgements about whether they want to go back to four years of unemployment and indolence, four years of wasted opportunities or whether they want to keep on keeping this state strong with the infrastructure —

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

Mr ANDREWS — schools, hospitals and jobs —

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier to resume his seat. On a point of order —

Mr Lim interjected.

The SPEAKER — The member for Clarinda is warned.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the supplementary question was very specific about changes to the electoral act and requiring members to live in or adjacent to the electorate they represent. The Premier is debating the issue and is not relevant to the question. I ask you to bring him back to answering it.

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

Mr ANDREWS — As I said, we made announcements yesterday around profound reform to the electoral act — to donations, to campaign financing reform — and they will be delivered in the terms outlined yesterday.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte has already been warned.

Ministers statements: political donations

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I rise to update the house on the Andrews Labor government's landmark reforms that will create the strictest and most transparent political donation laws in Australia. We are giving Victorians confidence that planning decisions are made on merit and are not a murky favour cooked up over a bottle of Grange, at kitchen tables or in private penthouses. Planning approvals —

Mr Guy interjected.

Mr WYNNE — Says you. Planning approvals must never, ever be for sale. I am proud to be able to say that every decision I have made has always been in the public interest.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition are granted some flexibility and latitude in the behaviour of this house, but I do ask the Leader of the Opposition to cease shouting across the chamber at the minister while he is making a ministers statement.

Mr WYNNE — At some point, some many years away, we know that those opposite will have their turn

at power again, so we have to act now. After all, on the weekend the *Sunday Age* wrote about a failed bid to carve up green wedge land in the south-east corridor, and I quote:

While this ... was ultimately blocked by planning minister Richard Wynne ... the green wedge developers have not been deterred.

Theirs is a long game ...

The article concludes that 'Wynne is a temporary obstacle'. They cannot wait to see me out of office, but I intend to be an obstacle to bad planning for many years to come.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Hawthorn is warned.

Mr WYNNE — And this is not fake news. It is cash for access, meetings in private penthouses and a rare chance for developers to cosy up and curry favour. But thanks to these reforms, there is nowhere to hide from your dodgy deals.

Member conduct

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. With the government flagging a review of the electoral act yesterday, will the Premier commit to amending that act to make it a specific offence to rot public funds for political, electoral or private gain?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Gembrook and the member for Mordialloc!

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I think the Leader of the Opposition will find that those matters are covered by the Crimes Act and various other acts already.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Will the Premier then include in his electoral act changes provisions to disqualify and expel members of Parliament who have been found guilty of rotting the system?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Footscray! The member for Gembrook is warned.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I will need to get the exact details for the Leader of the Opposition, but I understood there already were provisions for the disqualification of members or prospective members of this place if they were found guilty of serious enough offences. So the Leader of the Opposition needs to spend less time trawling through fundraising documentation and more time doing some proper research and asking some proper questions. What a day you are having!

Ministers statements: political donations

Mr PAKULA (Minister for Racing) — I would also like to talk about the government’s donation reform announcement but from the perspective of the racing portfolio. In racing and indeed in wagering there are a number of stakeholders —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I again ask for the cooperation of the Leader of the Opposition in the running of question time and ask him to cease shouting across the chamber. I extend that request to all members of the house or I will begin to remove members without warning.

Mr PAKULA — In racing and indeed in wagering there are a number of stakeholders who can potentially be affected by government decisions. They can be decisions about tax rates, about licences, about things like electronic gaming machine policy, about infrastructure spending. And in a sport where integrity is vital, perceptions are everything. Indeed I was critical in opposition of my predecessor using a leading trainer as a headline act at a fundraiser. So these changes protect this industry from those kinds of very damaging perceptions.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition say yesterday that these reforms are overdue. Seemingly though, the Liberal Party’s dark lords and masters at the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) are not singing from the same hymn sheet. Yesterday Simon Breheny described these changes as ‘undemocratic and a threat to freedom’. I have read some rubbish in my time, most of it written by Mr Breheny. He has applied his undergraduate analysis to everything from 18C to safe schools and now to donation reform, but perhaps Mr Breheny or the IPA, or by extension the Liberal Party, can explain to this house how it is more democratic for a developer with \$10 000 to have more influence over outcomes than 10 000 voters.

Influenza

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) — My question is to the Minister for Health. The community is currently in the midst of a flu outbreak that is taking a toll right across the state. This has had a tragic outcome for a number of people in my community and elsewhere. I ask the minister to update the house on the impact of this year’s flu season on the community.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister could not hear the question. I ask the member for Melton to repeat the question, and I ask members to allow the member for Melton to be heard in silence.

Mr NARDELLA — I ask the minister to update the house on the impact of this year’s flu season on the community.

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I thank the member for Melton for his question. The member is indeed correct to identify that a 30-year-old man has died from the flu, and he is obviously associated with the member for Melton’s community. I would like to extend our condolences to the man’s family, and I know that all members of this place would like to join me in doing so. I also had the opportunity to meet with the people who cared for the gentleman concerned, and they are obviously devastated as well; it is always a very challenging moment to lose one of your patients. I do want to provide my appreciation and gratitude to all members of the Sunshine intensive care unit that work so hard and have also been so affected by this man’s passing.

The member for Melton asked a question about the impact of the flu. It is indeed true to say that we are having a horror flu season. We have had 13 500, or thereabouts, flu notifications to date. That is double what we had last year. The same has occurred in New South Wales; their flu rate has doubled. Queensland’s flu notifications have tripled. We do know that Western Australia have not had a significant increase in their flu notifications, so this is a particular challenge for those who are living along the eastern seaboard.

We want to continue to encourage people to get their flu vaccinations; it is not too late to get vaccinated for the flu. This is a particularly virulent strain and the current vaccine is effective in part in protecting people from that flu, but it is a particular strain that we have seen come through the entire eastern seaboard that has had such devastating consequences for people. We want to encourage members of the community to take

flu symptoms seriously. People often report that this starts with the symptoms of having a common cold. We can be dismissive when we have those symptoms, but it is important in this influenza season that those symptoms are taken incredibly seriously. Every day I ask the chief health officer, beggingly, as to whether or not we think this influenza season may have peaked or not, and the best advice that we have at this point in time is that we simply do not know. We have sometimes seen a let-up from the influenza notifications only to see it crescendo again on other dates.

The other thing that we are noticing in this influenza season is its impact not just particularly on the elderly — it is very difficult for the elderly and those that have other illnesses and diseases to cope with influenza, particularly this strain that we have had this year — but we are also seeing a significant increase in paediatric influenza cases as well. So a big call-out to any member of the community, to all MPs and to anyone that has got a platform: vaccinate with the flu vaccine irrespective of your age and seek your advice from a GP. It is a very difficult flu season and I hope it ends very soon.

Supplementary question

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) — Further to her answer, can the minister advise the house what actions she and the government are taking to support our already busy hospitals to deal with the incredible demand caused by the flu season that she talked about?

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I thank the member for Melton for his supplementary question. It is true to say that every arc of our health system is under really significant pressure as they grapple with the incredible growth as a result of the influenza notifications. Health workers are, like the rest of the population, not immune from being impacted by the flu so we still have doctors, nurses, paramedics, volunteers and allied healthcare workers that are also impacted by the flu.

We have taken the step of entering into arrangements with three major private health services to help us deal with the additional demand that is being made of our health services. We have given health services permission to cancel some elective surgeries given the fact that we have to really cope with those that are not just unwell with influenza, but incredibly unwell. With respiratory illnesses and pneumonia that require things like isolation, our intensive care units are certainly under great pressure as well.

Ministers statements: illegal firearms

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — I am pleased today to talk about the legislation that I will be introducing into Parliament shortly, some of the toughest legislation that we have ever seen to tackle illegal firearms and those criminals who use firearms to cause significant harm. These changes will introduce not only drive-by shooting laws but also firearm prohibition orders, giving police the power to prevent people who may pose a threat to our community from using and carrying firearms. This legislation has been developed with and for Victoria Police, and it is legislation that Deputy Commissioner Shane Patton said today is groundbreaking and perhaps the most significant piece of legislation to be introduced for a number of years to ensure community safety.

These powers are not targeted at our legitimate legal registered gun owners — our farmers, our sporting shooters — but at our most serious criminals: at outlaw motorcycle gangs, at youth gangs, at organised crime figures and potential terrorists, those individuals who seek to cause the greatest harm in the community.

These powers work. In New South Wales we have seen a reduction in shooting incidents of 45 per cent over the last five years. These powers will also target individuals associated with organised crime who may have a clean record, but on whom police hold intelligence that shows they may pose a risk to the community. We want to stop these serious criminals in their tracks. That is why we are getting guns out of their hands. As I said, we have developed these laws for and with Victoria Police. We have not developed them over secret lunches with organised crime figures, we are not backing in crime figures, and we are not doing it in secret penthouse locations.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Deputy Premier will assist the running of the house. The member for Mordialloc! Members on my right will come to order.

Government performance

Mr M. O'BRIEN (Malvern) — My question is to the Treasurer. Last Thursday the Australian Bureau of Statistics confirmed that Victoria now has the highest unemployment rate of any state in Australia — higher even than South Australia and Tasmania — and that Victoria's unemployment rate has been worse than the national average now for 12 consecutive months. Treasurer, given Victoria is now becoming the

unemployment state under your government, when are you and the Premier going to start fighting for every job, as you promised you would?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I thank the member for Malvern for his question, and he is just not helping you today. I thank him for the opportunity to talk about what is happening in Victoria's labour market. Of course let us remember that when this government came to power the unemployment rate in the state of Victoria was 6.7 per cent. Today it sits at 6.1 per cent. Let us talk about employment creation: over 270 000 jobs created by this government in three years. How many did they create in four lost, wasted years?

Mr Andrews — How many?

Mr PALLAS — Ninety-six thousand — a pathetic effort.

Mr M. O'Brien — On a point of order, Speaker, the Treasurer is debating the question. He is also misleading the house. He is wrong about the unemployment rate when Labor took office, he is wrong about how many jobs we created and he is yet to explain why Victoria has now got the highest unemployment rate in the country, which was the question, and I ask you to bring him back to it.

The SPEAKER — I uphold the point of order. I ask the Treasurer to come back to answering the question. The actual question was a broad one.

Mr PALLAS — To answer the question again, 6.7 per cent unemployment under those opposite in November 2014; it is now 6.1 per cent. So let us be very clear: the unemployment rate has dropped. But let us also be clear that the participation rate in the Victorian labour market has risen over the same period by 1.7 per cent. So when you talk about growing an economy and creating jobs, the one thing that you can be sure of is that the participation rate goes directly towards the productive performance of the Victorian economy. We have one of the highest participation rates in the nation, but we have the highest participation rate in the labour market in this state's history.

This is a clear and dramatic demonstration those opposite were abject failures when it came to creating employment. Our record stands clearly in stark contrast to their pathetic effort: 270 000 jobs created by this government. But let us look at full-time employment: over half — 177 000 — of those jobs were created by this government.

What did those opposite do with full-time employment? Well, it was pretty pathetic; it was less

than 16 000 full-time jobs — less than 16 000. So anytime the member for Malvern wants to come into this place and debate unemployment rates, the participation rate in the economy, the fact that our economy is growing four times faster than when he was given custodianship of the Treasury, I can tell you I relish the opportunity. I think he should go back to talking about developers and donations.

Supplementary question

Mr M. O'Brien (Malvern) — Treasurer, under Labor Victoria has the country's highest tax rate, the highest crime rate, the highest rate of industrial disputes and now the highest unemployment rate in the country. How much worse does it have to get before you admit that your left-wing agenda of being soft on crime, being soft on rogue unions, driving up energy prices and taxing Victorians to the hilt is hurting the very families you are supposed to assist?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I thank the member for Malvern for his question yet again. I suppose the only thing that is really rising is the member for Malvern's stocks — his leadership stocks.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Honourable member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

Mr PALLAS — We have announced of course a \$221 million payroll tax relief — the question went to our tax packages — and 38 000 businesses have profited from that. We also reduced the payroll tax rate by 25 per cent for 4000 regional businesses. In just three years we have delivered tax cuts for businesses totalling over \$560 million. That is more than double what those opposite managed in four years.

Mr M. O'Brien — On a point of order, Speaker, in relation to relevance, the state tax take has increased by \$4 billion a year under this Treasurer. He needs to start getting back to the facts and why our unemployment rate is as bad as our tax rate and our crime rate under this government.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, the supplementary question from the member for Malvern made a number of incorrect and wild allegations, and the Treasurer is entitled to address those issues as he is answering the question. The only unemployment figure the member for Malvern is interested in is that he wants

to see unemployment go up by one. There is only one job he is interested in, and that is the audition we are seeing right now.

The SPEAKER — There is no point of order.

Mr PALLAS — Let us just remember that Victoria's taxation and royalty revenue per capita is below Western Australia, the ACT and New South Wales. Revenue inflows for the state of Victoria are at 3.7 per cent compared to the 8.5 per cent revenue inflow —

The SPEAKER — The minister will resume his seat.

Ministers statements: gas supply

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Ports) — It is a real privilege to be here today to update the house on a vital project.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — I ask the Leader of the Opposition to assist with the running of the house. Let us see if we can get through this minister's statement without too much shouting.

Mr DONNELLAN — This is very much a story about job creation, additional revenue and the reliability of our gas supply — that is, the choice that AGL has made at Crib Point at the Port of Hastings to make that its Australian liquefied natural gas import terminal. What great news this is for the local region around there. It is great news, and they have been very pleased.

Since 1997 the port of Hastings has not had a new customer. We know why. It is because when the Libs were last in and dealing with that they crimped the capacity of the port of Hastings to compete. So that did not particularly help it, but AGL expects the project to result in 2.3 million tonnes of trade per year, requiring an extra 40 ships coming through the port of Hastings. That is really, really good news, and of course there are enormous job opportunities that come with that.

We know that the Hastings area is challenged for jobs, so we go to the local community to see what they have had to say. Wayne Lewis, who spoke to the *Mornington Peninsula Leader*, said that the area needed to be revitalised. He said, 'Anything that brings jobs to the area is a good idea'. Another resident said, 'We have to move forward, and more jobs would be great'. Local cafe worker Krystal Johnson said she was in favour of any project that gives people work.

But what happened when they went looking for the member for Hastings for comment? Where was he? He was missing. He was absolutely missing. He had nothing to say about this job creation scheme. But we know where he was. He was in a highchair beside Uncle Tony and Uncle Frank at a fundraiser of course. He was sucking on a lobster. He was sitting there with Dodgy Hodgy and Matthew the Mobster, having a dodgy old time.

The SPEAKER — The minister is warned that he is to refer to members by their correct titles.

Ms Sandell — On a point of order, Speaker, I have an adjournment matter, a constituency question and two questions on notice that have not been responded to within the requisite 30 days. They are questions 12 956, 12 946, 12 939 and 12 931. They were asked of the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, the Treasurer and the Special Minister of State. Can you please require those ministers to answer the questions?

The SPEAKER — I will follow those matters up.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Box Hill electorate

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — (13 063) My question is to the Minister for Education. Box Hill High School was sent a letter dated 16 June this year by Anthony Raitman, acting regional director of the North Eastern Victoria region, about placements of new year 7 students, including instructions about priority of placement, testing and enrolment restrictions. I ask: does this letter accurately reflect government policy, and does an enrolment restriction apply to Box Hill High School for 2018? If so, to what level of enrolments has the school been restricted? Appallingly, Box Hill High School has been ordered to cut its enrolments and its highly acclaimed gifted student program. Hundreds of parents have signed a petition calling on the government to reverse this cut, yet the minister will not even admit that there has been a cut, let alone defend it. It is time for the minister to be truthful about the terrible harm being done to this outstanding school.

Carrum electorate

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — (13 064) My constituency question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Parks Victoria has a carry-in, carry-out policy for rubbish at sites managed by Parks Victoria across the state. They recently announced the commencement of this policy along the

Patterson River and National Water Sports Centre. Local residents in my electorate of Carrum have contacted me to voice their concerns about the plan to remove public rubbish bins from locations along the Patterson River. After my discussions with Parks Victoria and strong pushback from my local community Parks Victoria has decided not to remove the bins along the Patterson River. Minister, can you assure my community that these bins will stay in place?

Gippsland South electorate

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — (13 065) My question is to the Minister for Education. What will the minister do to address the asbestos that is causing problems at Seaspray Primary School and other schools in my electorate now that the government has backed down on its promise to remove asbestos from every school? Seaspray primary has been on the waiting list for new toilets for a long period of time due to the presence of asbestos in them. The school has been told it is now not getting new toilets and that they may be replaced within the next three years. The school cannot wait that long. Staff are being exposed to the asbestos every time there is a malfunction with the toilets and water needs to be turned off. The new toilets are going to cost in the vicinity of \$110 000. One hundred and ninety thousand dollars was provided by this year's budget to improve learning at the school, but that will now have to be diverted to fixing the toilets. The school is frustrated and disappointed, to say the least, that they are going to have to spend this money on improving toilets. What will the government do to fix this situation?

Yuroke electorate

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — (13 066) My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. What information can the minister provide to the residents of the Yuroke electorate to update them on the delivery of an additional Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) unit for Craigieburn? The Craigieburn SES do an incredible job in our community, and I know that those residents in particular would appreciate an update on this important project.

Eildon electorate

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — (13 067) I refer the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to the road safety program on the Goulburn Valley Highway between Yea and Cathkin and raise my question on behalf of the local emergency services. The next stage of the project will see the installation of centre wire rope barriers on the Goulburn Valley Highway between Molesworth and Cathkin. On this section of the highway at Home

Creek the road is subject to regular flooding. This causes hazardous conditions, posing risk and disruption for drivers. Part of the road is often closed. Obviously having barriers in the centre of the road at this point will be troublesome and unsafe for drivers unless the road is treated appropriately to address this matter. This would involve raising the road above the regular flood line. Minister, will you instruct VicRoads to use this opportunity to treat this road issue at the same time as the installation of the centre wire rope barriers? It is a much better option than dealing with the consequences of not having it addressed and having to deal with it at a much later stage.

Dandenong electorate

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — (13 068) My constituency question is to the Minister for Industry and Employment. I ask: how will the proposed \$2 million additive manufacturing hub help small to medium enterprises in Dandenong and the south-east grow and create more jobs? I am proud to be a member of a government that supports innovation and has a strategic vision for our future industries. This was highlighted by the recent launch of our *Advancing Victorian Manufacturing* statement just last week. The south-east is home to the largest manufacturing hub in Australia and accounts for over 90 000 jobs. Investment and support for future high-value manufacturing opportunities allows businesses and workers to remain at the forefront of advanced manufacturing, critical research, innovation and development. This is important for our economy and the jobs it supports.

Prahran electorate

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) — (13 069) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: what is the latest information on the St Kilda Road safety improvement study? With spring arriving and the sun coming out more and more people will be riding their bikes, St Kilda Road is one of our most popular routes, but also one of the most dangerous.

There has been little news on the progress of installing separated bike lanes along St Kilda Road. The last time I asked, the minister stated that the next round of community consultation would commence in April 2017, and the study, including community consultation, preparation of concept designs, traffic modelling and detailed project cost estimations, is expected to be completed by mid-2017. This has not occurred. This project seems to be stuck in development hell, with delay after delay and promised deadlines missed. I urge

the minister to share the latest results of the study with the public, have a genuine consultation with the community and get on with the job of installing separated bike lanes along St Kilda Road.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — (13 070) My question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and the question I ask is: what are the estimated savings households in the Pascoe Vale area will enjoy as a result of the introduction of the Victorian renewable energy targets? I welcome the recent introduction of legislation for the Victorian renewable energy targets. The Andrews Labor government's targets of 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025 will play an important role in reducing the costs of power for Victorian households and businesses. I ask the minister: what will the impact be in Pascoe Vale?

Ripon electorate

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — (13 071) My constituency question is to the Minister for Corrections in the other place. Will she apologise publicly to Ms Shirley Boyle and the Beaufort community? I received a copy of a letter from 87-year-old Ms Boyle to the minister, dated 14 August. An excerpt:

I do hope you enjoyed your visit August 1st to Beaufort.

Due to your inconsiderate actions I can assure you not too many of the local people did.

First, we were kept waiting for some considerable time whilst you selfishly walked the pathway in your own time, no thought to the elderly members of Beaufort standing and waiting.

One consolation was we could not hear you speaking, so at least that was a bonus.

Then later we were informed that the local press were told they could not attend. Channel 9 had been granted rights to the event. So much for free press, and since when has our government become beholden to commercial enterprises?

Well, it may impress you, you were not mentioned or shown on the TV evening news.

...

How to win friends and influence people, I think not.

Yan Yean electorate

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — (13 072) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. What timeline is planned for the rollout of new bus services for Wallan? This year's Victorian budget provides funding for improved bus services in growth areas across Melbourne, including Wallan. Wallan and surrounding

areas like Beveridge are certainly a priority for me, and the community is very supportive of bus services. Can the minister please provide details of when better bus services will be delivered in and around Wallan?

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, the member for Carrum asked the minister to assure her community of something. That sounds very much like an action, so I would ask you to look at her question and rule it out of order, as she was actually asking for an action rather than information.

The SPEAKER — I listened to all of the constituency questions today and I thought they were all within standing orders, but I will check *Hansard* and report back to the house.

Mr Watt — On a further point of order, Speaker, on 8 August I asked the Minister for Police question 12 894. It was a very simple question. I simply asked how many police stations were in the Boroondara police service area. I am yet to receive a response to that. The response was required by 7 September. Given that I have just checked the database and it does not show that the minister has answered the question, I would ask you to direct the minister to answer the question, because I do not have an answer to that question.

The SPEAKER — I will follow that matter up at the conclusion of question time.

Ms Staley — On a point of order, Speaker, I have a similar point of order. Question 12 258, which I asked the Minister for Health on 21 February this year, is still unanswered. Could you please follow it up?

The SPEAKER — I will follow that matter up as well.

Ms Knight — On a point of order, Speaker, I just want to seek your advice. I want to correct the record regarding the constituency question raised by the member for Ripon for Minister Tierney, who is not here to defend herself. The reason the event was delayed was because the Aboriginal person doing the welcome to country was sick and could not be there, and we had to wait for another Aboriginal member to —

The SPEAKER — Order! This is not an opportunity for members to answer matters that have been raised in constituency questions, so there is no point of order. I will consider the matters that have been raised and report back to the house.

FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL 2017*Introduction and first reading*

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) introduced a bill for an act for an act to amend the Firearms Act 1996 and to make consequential and related amendments to the Control of Weapons Act 1990, the Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012 and the Fortification Removal Act 2013 and for other purposes.

Read first time.

**GAMBLING REGULATION AMENDMENT
(GAMING MACHINE ARRANGEMENTS)
BILL 2017**

Introduction and first reading

Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 in relation to gaming machine entitlements, responsible gambling codes of conduct, self-exclusion programs, standard conditions, agreements, cashless gaming and forms of money and credit, references to the Melbourne statistical division and to make related amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) — I ask the minister for a brief explanation of the bill.

Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation) — This bill relates primarily to the gaming machine arrangements that will apply following the expiry of the current entitlements in 2022, and this bill will also make legislative amendments to address gaming machine related harm.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

FINES REFORM 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 amend the Fines Reform Act 2014, the Bail Amendment (Stage One) Act 2017, the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, the Infringements Act 2006, the Magistrates' Court Act 1989, the Road Safety Act 1986, the Sentencing Act 1991 and the Sherriff Act 2009 and for other purposes.

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — I ask the minister for an explanation of the bill.

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I can advise the member for Hawthorn that the principal purpose of the bill is to implement two recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Prevention of Family Violence in relation to a specific infringements system for victim survivors of family violence and other ancillary amendments to the act to help facilitate the implementation of those recommendations.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
AMENDMENT (PUBLIC LAND
CONTRIBUTIONS) BILL 2017**

Introduction and first reading

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to introduce a land contribution model for the infrastructure contributions plan scheme, to increase and provide for the indexation of the community infrastructure levy and to make other miscellaneous amendments, to make consequential amendments to the Subdivision Act 1998 and the Building Act 1993 and for other purposes.

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

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — The bill implements significant change to the infrastructure contributions scheme introduced last year to change contributions for public land from a cash basis to both a cash basis and indeed the provision of land. That is basically what it is about.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Alert Digest No. 13

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 13 of 2017* on:

**Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Bill 2017
Corrections Legislation Further Amendment
Bill 2017
Local Government (Central Goldfields Shire
Council) Act 2017
Long Service Leave Bill 2017**

Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Amendment (Governance) Bill 2017

Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Bill 2017
together with appendices.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

ECONOMIC, EDUCATION, JOBS AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Community energy projects

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) presented report, together with appendices and transcripts of evidence.

Tabled.

Ordered that report and appendices be published.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Acting Clerk:

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978:

Order under s 17B granting a licence over Edinburgh Gardens Reserve

Order under s 17D granting a lease over Bush Park Reserve

Duties Act 2000:

Reports 2016–17 of exemptions and refunds under ss 250B and 250DD (two documents)

Report 1 January to 30 June 2017 of Foreign Purchaser Additional Duty Exemptions under s 3E

Financial Management Act 1994 — Report from the Minister for Agriculture that she had received the Report 2016–17 of the Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission — Operation Tone: Special report concerning drug use and associated corrupt conduct involving Ambulance Victoria paramedics — Ordered to be published

Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 — Notices under s 32(3)(a)(iii) in relation to:

Ministerial Order No 1039 — School Council Employees (Employment Conditions, Salaries, Allowances and Selection) Order 2017 (*Gazette G36, 7 September 2017*)

Statutory Rule 44 (*Gazette G28, 13 July 2017*)

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

Baw Baw — C114

Boroondara — C252

Glen Eira — C152

Greater Shepparton — C201

Melton — C162, C183

Wyndham — C197

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 85, 89, 90, 91

Documents under s 16B in relation to the *Financial Management Act 1994* — Order declaring CenITex a specified entity

Surveillance Devices Act 1999 — Report of the Victorian Inspectorate under s 30Q

Victoria Grants Commission — Report year ended 31 August 2017

Victorian Broiler Industry Negotiation Committee — Report 2016–17

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

Crimes Legislation Amendment (Public Order) Act 2017 — Whole Act — 13 September 2017 (*Gazette S303, 12 September 2017*)

Education and Care Services National Law Amendment Act 2017 — Part 1, Part 2 (except ss 30, 31 and 68), Part 3 and Part 4 — 1 October 2017; remaining provisions — 1 February 2018 (*Gazette S303, 12 September 2017*).

CHILDREN AND JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (YOUTH JUSTICE REFORM) BILL 2017

Council's amendments

Returned from Council with message relating to amendments.

Ordered to be considered later this day.

OWNER DRIVERS AND FORESTRY CONTRACTORS AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Council's amendments

Returned from Council with message relating to amendments.

Ordered to be considered later this day.

ROYAL ASSENT

Messages read advising royal assent to:

12 September

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2017

19 September

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

Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Questions without notice

The SPEAKER — On 7 September 2017 the Leader of The Nationals raised a point of order in relation to the responsiveness of the Premier's answer to a supplementary question from the Leader of the Opposition. I reviewed the record and consider the answer was responsive.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Program

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

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 5.00 p.m. on Thursday, 21 September 2017:

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Bill 2017

Corrections Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2017

Oaths and Affirmations Bill 2017

Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017

Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision)
Amendment (Governance) Bill 2017.

I will only speak very briefly on the motion before the house. It is another government business program that has a number of significant pieces of legislation on it. I know we particularly look forward to a very hearty debate on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017, an important piece of legislation. I note for the record that the Liberal-National coalition opposition are seeking to have that bill taken into consideration in detail later in the week. I have indicated to the

opposition that time permitting we would make time available for that on Thursday afternoon.

I would also like to advise the chamber that the take-note motion on the budget is on the notice paper. I think we have had a pretty good go at what was a fantastic budget. I will be dispatching that motion at the end of this sitting week, so last call for anyone who may wish to speak on that great budget that was presented to the Parliament earlier this year.

Finally, I have just provided to the house a motion that we will be debating tomorrow regarding changes to sessional orders and the desire for a video-on-demand service. This is something that a number of members have been keen to see introduced. It has been a feature of some conversations we have had in the Standing Orders Committee. I understand the Legislative Council is moving in similar terms. Therefore it makes sense to have consistency across the Parliament on these matters. I am anticipating it may not be a long debate tomorrow, because I understand it is something that people are keen to see, but I indicate that that is an additional item for consideration over the course of this sitting week. With those comments I commend the motion to the house.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — Yet again there is one serious failing with this government business program, and that is that it fails to provide any measures to deal with the rorting and abuses that have taken place by former Presiding Officers of this house. I will not go over previous ground, but it continues to be a slight and a stain on this house's reputation that the government is refusing to allow us to deal with the shadow over our probity, over the standards held by the current government and by its MPs, in not allowing this issue to be dealt with. As I have said time and time again, the allegations of rorting by both the former Speaker and the former Deputy Speaker should be referred to either a specially established select committee of this house or to the Privileges Committee for the evidence to be received, recommendations to be made and for this house to deal with the matter.

In a similar vein, we still have on the notice paper the Transparency in Government Bill 2015 amendments of the Legislative Council, and they are yet again not on the business program.

We do note that the government has varied the business program from that which was previously foreshadowed to drop provision for puppy farm legislation. We will await further developments in that regard. We do appreciate the fact that the government has foreshadowed the likelihood of being able to consider

the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017 in detail later this week, because that is a very complex piece of legislation and it deserves that consideration. But while the government continues to refuse to deal with the rotting and abuses that are festering in its ranks, we oppose this government business program.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to make a brief contribution in support of the Leader of the House's motion for the government business program. In my last contribution I quoted Guns N' Roses in my support for that government business program because of course I did graduate with first-class honours from the Burvale finishing school. I do concede that in so doing I disadvantage the member for Box Hill, because I think Guns N' Roses were a bit after his time. To that end I thought that I would quote an artist more familiar to the member for Box Hill, and I needed to look no further than Doris Day, with her song *Too Marvellous for Words* from the 1950s classic *Young Man with a Horn*:

You're just too marvellous
Too marvellous for words
Like glorious, glamorous
And that old stand-by, amorous.

On that note I commend the government business program.

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) — We will not be supporting the government business program in this instance for the same reasons we have not supported it over the last several months: because we feel the members for Melton and Tarneit need to be referred to the Privileges Committee. It is good to see the government finally taking some steps in regard to integrity by announcing some donations reform after we have hassled them over the last two and a half years.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr HIBBINS — It is good to see; I am going to notch that up as a win. But there is still some outstanding business to deal with in regard to integrity, the referral of those members to the Privileges Committee being one of them. I note that we have still got on the notice paper the motion regarding the parliamentary integrity adviser. I think in the upper house they have got a reference looking at a parliamentary integrity commissioner. I think it would be wise for this house to join in with that inquiry.

Certainly I welcome the government now bringing forward a motion to allow for the videotaping and recording of Parliament. It is something certainly the Greens have been pushing for for a long time, so we

welcome that. But in this instance we will not be supporting the government business program.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — The Andrews Labor government's priority of keeping the community safe is highlighted in this government business program. I want to emphasise this point. The government is establishing a new statutory authority to keep watch over the state's most serious offenders. The authority will provide independent rigorous oversight of the post-sentence scheme, which provides for the detention or supervision of serious sex offenders who pose an unacceptable risk to the community after prison. The reform bill is part of the Labor government's response to the Harper review, including record investment of almost \$400 million across the past two budgets. This goes to the key proposition that the Andrews Labor government is going to implement all 35 of the Harper review recommendations; they either have been delivered or are in the process of being implemented. This is an issue of critical importance that this government business program addresses.

It also encourages investment, employment and technology development in renewable energy, and I think that is another issue that will be of state significance and hotly contested and debated. There are also a range of other issues that we are addressing. In particular I want to highlight that these are the key propositions to keep building on the narrative that the Andrews government is delivering in the best interests of Victorians. We have been asked to be succinct in our contributions, so I recommend the government business program, and I do want to get to the debate on the motion about the broadcasting of the conduct of the house, because it should prove to be compulsive viewing.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — The Nationals in coalition are opposing the government business program for the reasons outlined by the member for Box Hill. We have got a number of bills on the program this week, including the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017, and I do welcome going into consideration in detail on that. There is quite a lot to be said about this particular issue, and there is a lot that Victorians want to know about the issue. I too am looking forward to hearing the contributions and making one on this particular bill. There is the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Amendment (Governance) Bill 2017. The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Bill 2017 addresses an ongoing issue that has been around this place for as long as most of us. I do note that the Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016, one might say, has rolled over or taken a nap. It has disappeared for this week and has

been replaced by the Corrections Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2017.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr CRISP — Yes, it invites so many interjections, but perhaps we will not go as far as we could.

There is also the Oaths and Affirmations Bill 2017, which again is doing some work in an area that is a growing part of our lives. So many documents have to be certified, and it is something our justices of the peace do a wonderful job of. With those words, I indicate that we are opposing the program but looking forward to this week's debates.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 43

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

Noes, 38

Angus, Mr	Northe, Mr
Asher, Ms	O'Brien, Mr D.
Battin, Mr	O'Brien, Mr M.
Blackwood, Mr	Paynter, Mr
Britnell, Ms	Pesutto, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Ryall, Ms
Burgess, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Clark, Mr	Sandell, Ms
Crisp, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Dixon, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Fyffe, Mrs	Smith, Mr T.
Gidley, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Guy, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Hibbins, Mr	Tilley, Mr
Hodgett, Mr	Victoria, Ms
Katos, Mr	Wakeling, Mr
McCurdy, Mr	Walsh, Mr
McLeish, Ms	Watt, Mr
Morris, Mr	Wells, Mr

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Deer control

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — I would like to thank the Parks Victoria staff and the shooters association who I recently went out deer hunting with through Yellingbo. Yellingbo has a major issue with deer through the forests. Obviously we have seen the damage they can do to the environment, particularly because they are a hoofed animal. Yellingbo is such a precious part of Victoria. It is an area in which we have the pink heath, we have the helmeted honeyeater, we have got the lowland Leadbeater's possum and we obviously have got a lot of other environmental outcomes there, and it is very important that we control the deer.

I want to thank not only the Parks Victoria staff, who are fantastic in their brief, but the shooters we went with. I have never been involved with shooting. I have never been a shooter other than as a former police officer — and you hoped not to get your gun out — but whilst with the group out there it was fantastic to speak to some true conservationists, people who genuinely want to take care of the land and make sure it is preserved for the future.

Whilst we were out there on the night we took out a stag and a sambar deer. I have learned a lot about the damage that they can do to property and obviously to the environment down there. They had three shooters there on the night. Those three qualified shooters are some of the best in the network, and they make sure that they get assessed by Parks Victoria so they can continue the program that was started by the former coalition government so we can continue to make sure we protect those areas and the environment. We can look forward to a positive future for Yellingbo, and we can ensure that we can get the deer population down in areas in my electorate.

Women's National Basketball League

Mr EREN (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — Basketball fans will be making a beeline for Geelong Arena, which is in my electorate, next month, with the Melbourne Boomers set to take on Bendigo Spirit — as will the member for Bendigo East, of course. The Women's National Basketball League (WNBL) Victorian showdown will be held in Geelong on 13 October, which is a Friday. It is going to be a great night. The WNBL is going from strength to strength, and with a new television deal with Fox Sports locked in for the season, the future looks even brighter.

Our government secured the first WNBL match in Geelong for nine years in January, when the Boomers took on Adelaide Lightning at the same venue. Games like this give locals a chance to see their heroes live in their own backyard and visitors the opportunity to see all that this region has to offer. The Labor government is proud to have helped secure another WNBL match in Geelong, thanks to funding from the Significant Sporting Events program. We are proud to be bringing WNBL action back to Geelong by securing another slam-dunk event for regional Victoria.

Polymeric Powders

Mr EREN — Last Friday I represented the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change at the announcement of a resource recovery infrastructure grant at Polymeric Powders in my electorate of Lara. This \$13.8 million fund for major infrastructure will keep problem products, including e-waste, food organics and plastic, out of landfill and help drive economic growth across regional and metropolitan Victoria. Ninety jobs are being created. It is a great program. Well done to the Andrews Labor government.

Lakes Entrance roads

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — My office has been contacted by a number of business owners in Lakes Entrance regarding plans to alter the Myer Street–Esplanade intersection. Some consultation has occurred over recent months regarding the proposed installation of pedestrian crossings along the Esplanade, which is no doubt the busiest street in town. As a result I have been told one of the options being considered is to block or restrict access to Myer Street from the Esplanade. In line with what VicRoads has done at Stratford, where it has widely consulted with the community on any prospective changes, I encourage a similar approach here not just with the business sector but with the entire community. One of the issues raised is that if this were to proceed, the increased traffic stress on neighbouring streets would be an issue that would need to be dealt with. The modelling of these movements should be provided to the community in full and feedback obtained before any decisions are made.

Heyfield timber mill

Mr T. BULL — Labor's reannouncement on Friday that it has saved the Heyfield mill by buying it raised more questions than it answered. In March we heard from Labor that the mill would not lose any jobs overall, then in July it was no jobs will be lost in the transition period but with no explanation of what the transition period is. Then in August there were 20 lost jobs.

What the people of Heyfield want to know is, given one shift at the green mill has already gone, will there be any further reductions in employment in the next 12 months and, if so, when? What percentage of the mill does the government own and how much taxpayers money has it used? And does the government intend to maintain the ownership longer term? Rather than do more press conferences from the steps of Spring Street, these are some of the questions the community wants answers to, and the government should travel down and address these.

Westfield Southland

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — Westfield Southland in my community are introducing paid parking, which is impacting on our local workers. The hardworking staff at Southland businesses will also be hit by paid parking. Westfield are planning to introduce a flat rate of \$5. That might not seem like much for some people, but \$5 for a family adds up to \$1300 over the course of a year. These are workers who have already had their penalty rates cut, workers who are on \$40 000 and \$50 000. The response from Westfield Southland to date has been nothing short of extremely disappointing. They have suggested that this is a heavily discounted rate. It does not matter how you spin it, Westfield — zero dollars charged to workers at the moment increasing to \$5 is not a discount in anyone's book or anyone's opinion.

The Victorian government is investing in the Southland train station. This will be a fantastic station for our community — the fourth busiest on the line — and it will greatly benefit the businesses of Westfield and Westfield Southland's underlying profits. Of course Westfield made \$750 million in their half-year profits recently, a 20 per cent rise. That station is taxpayer-funded, and those retail workers at Westfield are working day and night to make ends meet and put food on the table for their families. So what we are asking of Westfield is to reconsider this charge they are putting on workers who are struggling to make ends meet. Reconsider your decision and support these people who underpin your prosperity.

Frank Winter

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — I rise this afternoon to mark the passing of Frank Winter, who sadly lost his battle for life in August. Frank was a Liberal stalwart in the best sense of the word. If there was a job to be done, Frank was not only always available but was front and centre in any of the myriad tasks that are part and parcel of winning and holding parliamentary seats. In 2006 our party held the seat of Mornington by a slender

margin. We determined that an initial direct contact with the voters, via mail, was a sensible way to open the campaign. That decision meant that over the course of six months more than 20 000 letters had to be signed, folded, put in envelopes and posted by hand. I did the signing, and Frank was a key member of the team that met every week to stuff envelopes and keep the letter program and the neighbourhood visits they promoted on track.

An autodidact, Frank had a sharp and inquiring mind that could be relied on to keep candidates and members on their toes. At his funeral a niece noted his enthusiasm for the battle of ideas at the heart of our democratic system. That enthusiasm frequently extended to branch and electorate meetings. He was never a yes-man, and if there was a case to prosecute, Frank could be relied upon to present it, but always in a respectful and constructive manner. I have no doubt that Frank's commitment to democracy and to Liberal ideals drove his contribution to peninsula politics.

Frank was a good friend and he will be sorely missed. My thoughts, and those of Linda, are with Trish and the family. Vale, Frank Winter.

Victoria State Emergency Service Craigieburn unit

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — I rise today to acknowledge some terrific volunteers from the Yuroke community. The Craigieburn Victoria State Emergency Service recently hosted their annual presentation night, celebrating their wonderful members. A real highlight of the evening was the announcement that the sixth controller had been appointed, and for the first time it is a female, in Nicole Ashworth. Nicole is a local paramedic and mum, and I am sure she will be an outstanding leader of the unit. Nicole takes over from Martin Ledwich. Martin has provided sensational leadership over his tenure, and I am sure he is looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Kylie, as they travel around Australia in their caravan. Well done, Marty, who was also awarded life membership on the night — a very fitting honour.

Country Fire Authority Craigieburn brigade

Ms SPENCE — The Craigieburn Country Fire Authority (CFA) also hosted their annual presentation night in September. The Craigieburn CFA is an exemplary brigade, with career staff and volunteers working side by side on the fireground and indeed enjoying the awards night together side by side. Highlights included senior station officer Michael Wearne being awarded a 50-year service medal and

first lieutenant Chris Gray was awarded a 25-year medal. Congratulations to all of the award winners. Your service is invaluable.

Remo 'Ray' Ascenzo

Ms SPENCE — I would also like to acknowledge local community champion Remo 'Ray' Ascenzo, who was recently reappointed as the president of the Craigieburn Bowling Club. Ray was instrumental in securing new clubrooms for the club. He has also been an active volunteer in Little Athletics and the cricket and football clubs. I am sure he will once again lead the bowling club with distinction. Well done, Ray.

Government performance

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — This Andrews Labor government has an angry culture of rorts and blatant ripping off of taxpayers. I now read that the shoppies union, closely aligned to this government, has struck an obscene pay deal with McDonald's, in which young workers will earn \$5 an hour less than the award. This agreement also says that the union will always be present at the induction of new employees, where they can pressure vulnerable young people to sign up to the union. Once signed, the union will deduct between \$7.90 and \$19.60 per fortnight in membership fees, depending on the number of hours worked — rivers of gold for the shoppies union. Sadly this is what Victorians have come to expect from the Andrews government's union masters — a government with the members for Tarneit and Melton, who have been well and truly caught, and we now have allegations of printing rorts by other members. How many other Labor members will be caught with their hands in taxpayers pockets?

Mr Pakula interjected.

Mrs FYFFE — I certainly do care about employees. The Attorney-General has it completely wrong. Having had children who have worked at McDonald's, and having employed children, I am appalled that he would think that I do not care. The Attorney-General has no idea what he is talking about all. He is talking a load of rubbish.

Broadmeadows electorate

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — The Andrews Labor government is making major investments to improve education, sports facilities and the environment for individuals and families living in Fawkner. I was delighted to join the Minister for Sport and the member for Pascoe Vale last week for the

announcement of \$1.36 million to deliver eight new netball courts at Charles Mutton Reserve in Fawkner, two courts at the John Pascoe Fawkner Reserve in Oak Park and two courts at Cole Reserve in Pascoe Vale. All 12 will be floodlit, giving local players and teams the flexibility they need to train more often and more safely into the evening. These are outstanding opportunities. One of the reserves is next to the Fawkner Primary School, so we will have a really great hub there with this leading school. The school has also benefited to the tune of \$352 000 for an upgrade, with modernisation of classrooms and facilities.

I am looking forward to hearing from Moreland City Council about a new library proposition to be used hopefully to extend the model for lifelong learning, skills and jobs, global learning village-style, and to look at what we need for communities for the 21st century.

Also in sport, I highlight that there has been substantial funding for a football ground in the area, with \$6.4 million allocated for a premier sport and education hub.

Regional and rural roads

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — I urge the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to address the critical state of our region's roads, which are riddled with potholes and broken and eroded edges. Since Labor came to power in Victoria, all we have seen is more money directed to Melbourne and barely any attention given to our country roads. The Premier's recent decision to cut country speed limits rather than fix our roads is yet another example of country people getting treated like second-class citizens by Labor. Lowering speed limits is merely a bandaid measure and an admission that under Labor our roads are getting worse and are now at a critical point of danger for our local people.

Complaints from concerned residents are increasing as our roads deteriorate, whether it be a near miss due to having to swerve to avoid a pothole on the Glenelg Highway at Muntham Hill, on the Henty Highway near Warracknabeal, at the Murtoa turn-off to the Wimmera Highway or between Hamilton and Horsham. A motorbike rider recently hit a pothole near Rainbow, which caused a serious accident with the rider lucky to survive. Enough is enough. Our lives are at risk. Labor must stop ignoring our country road network and fix our roads.

Justin and Jo Lane

Ms KEALY — I extend my congratulations to Justin and Jo Lane from Lane Building Contractors on

receiving the prestigious 2017 Master Builders Award for Best Custom Home for their project in Haven. This award is a huge credit to the Lane's commitment to building excellence, outstanding craftsmanship and professionalism. Well done, Justin and Jo. Not only are you great contributors to the community but you are making our region very proud by demonstrating that we have industry leaders in our own backyard.

Electricity prices

Ms KEALY — The number of small businesses that are feeling the pinch of skyrocketing electricity prices is escalating, with more than one business a day now contacting my office to raise their concerns about the impact of rising electricity bills on the cost of running their business. Labor's reckless policies that led to the closure of Hazelwood power station means power prices are going through the roof due to insufficient supply. As a result, people are putting off their workers —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The member's time has expired.

Eid festival, Flemington

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — On the weekend I attended the Eid festival at Flemington and met with community leaders to discuss our exciting plans to redevelop the public housing estate. Who should I see there but the mooching federal member for Melbourne, Adam Bandt. You can always be assured that if he can score a free meal from the most disadvantaged members of our community or have his photo taken, he will be there in a flash. But on working for these communities and trying to secure safe and modern accommodation and employment opportunities — do not worry about that; if there is work to be done, he is nowhere to be seen.

Essendon Airport

Mr PEARSON — I was recently advised that the Turnbull government is proposing to make changes to the curfew at Essendon Airport, and submissions to the review are open until 10 October. I am concerned about these proposed changes. I will be working with the federal member for Maribyrnong, the Honourable Bill Shorten, as well as the federal member for Wills, Peter Khalil, to make sure that the voice of the community is heard in this process.

Essendon Rowing Club

Mr PEARSON — Congratulations to the Essendon Rowing Club on another successful annual Saltwater Challenge.

Ascot Vale Football Club

Mr PEARSON — I was delighted to officiate at the Ascot Vale Football Club Vikings's end-of-season celebrations. This club has only been going for three years, but it has been growing from strength to strength. Well done to Peter McNamara and John Thompson on a great event.

Brotherhood of St Laurence

Mr PEARSON — Well done to the Brotherhood of St Laurence, with their Stepping Stones program that is being run out of Flemington. This innovative program skills up women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to start their own small businesses. Well done to Rebecca Meddings on running a fantastic session, and I look forward to visiting again later in the year.

St Bernard's College

Mr PEARSON — I was delighted to catch up with Adam Taylor, the principal of St Bernard's College. St Bernard's performs a great role in my community, educating many young Catholic men, and it was wonderful to see the new facilities.

Ahmed Dini

Mr PEARSON — I was also delighted to catch up and meet with Ahmed Dini, who is a local African-Australian community leader.

Claude Ullin

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) — I rise to pay tribute to Claude Ullin, who passed away recently. Claude served as a councillor in the City of Malvern and the City of Stonnington for 25 years. He was mayor of Stonnington and Malvern five times, the last being in 2016.

Claude conducted himself as mayor and councillor in what I would call an old-fashioned manner. My fellow Greens councillor Erin Davie and I always appreciated Claude for being collegiate and being prepared to advise and assist but also for being respectfully forthright when he held differing views, which despite coming from different ends of the political spectrum occurred less than one would imagine. Too often our political differences give way to pettiness and personal

hostility, but that certainly was not Claude's approach. We could do with more people taking Claude's approach to public life. Claude was passionate about the arts and was a strong advocate for our community, including on clearways and the need to connect South Yarra station to Melbourne Metro.

Vale, Claude Ullin. Thank you for your service to our community. Our thoughts are with you and your family.

Australian marriage law postal survey

Mr HIBBINS — This weekend I was out and about in the Prahran electorate supporting marriage equality and encouraging people to fill out their surveys and post them back straightaway. The response from Prahran residents has been an overwhelming 'yes', with many residents anxious they had not received their surveys yet and very much keen to support marriage equality. I am in awe of the strength and resilience of the LGBTI community for all the rubbish they have had to put up with in their fight for equality, this survey being just another example.

Thanks to everyone who joined me in Prahran and to others across Victoria who knocked on doors and spoke to voters. Let us keep the pressure on until marriage equality is achieved. I also note that last night Stonnington council passed a motion in support —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The member's time has expired.

Office of Fiona Richardson

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — Death is a truly traumatic event, and we often forget that in many ways it triggers a number of endings. I was reminded of this yesterday when I received an email from Tanja Kovac, chief of staff for the Honourable Fiona Richardson, stating that their office was finishing up. Tanja wrote this email on behalf of all of Fiona's staff — another ending for them, another death, another round of grief and trauma. I would like to say to Tanja, Maree, Ashlea, Katerina, Isabelle, Emily and Rebecca that I am so sorry for your loss — not only the loss of your minister and friend but also the loss of your jobs. I am so sorry that you have to deal with this event so soon after dealing with the illness and death of Fiona. I am thinking of each and every one of you, and your families and loved ones.

I would also like to put on record my sincere thanks for the work that each and every one of you has done for women and children in this great state, for carrying the torch for Fiona when she was too sick to carry it herself and for behaving with great dignity and professionalism

throughout an incredibly difficult time. I am deeply disappointed that there is not a place for any of you here. I know that one of Fiona's wishes was that there would be. I am sorry for the great loss of intellectual property that is leaving with you all. I hope you all find amazing jobs soon. You certainly deserve that. I wish each and every one of you all the very best.

Marina Gyfteas

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) — It is with some pride that I rise to congratulate a former workmate and great friend, Sergeant Marina Gyfteas, on being honoured with the Breavington Award. The award is named in honour of the first Australian soldier executed by the Japanese in World War II — another Northcote policeman, Rodney Breavington. While the corporal showed incredible courage in front of that firing squad way back in 1942, I would like to think this award is for the often unheralded officers who have committed their careers to making this state a safer place, a better place.

The award is a peer-based accolade, and as someone who has shared a police vehicle with Marina I cannot think of a more worthy recipient. The fact that we also share a birthday means that we catch up at least once a year. Tammy Mills in the *Age*, a reporter who I remember cut her teeth on police rounds in my electorate, cited stories of Marina tackling a naked man in a Vietnamese restaurant through to also feeding a homeless youth sleeping in a car park.

Marina, like so many others, will never be fronting the media or searching for fame; she is just one of those hardworking, self-effacing officers who make Victoria Police great. It is food for thought that on Victoria's next public holiday, 29 September, it is also National Police Remembrance Day. If you are not at work or you are not going to the footy parade, consider going to one of the services around the state of Victoria and remembering those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Magpie Primary School

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) — Recently I attended the 160th anniversary celebrations of Magpie Primary School — a fantastic achievement for a small rural school where generations of students have begun their education. Clearly much has changed over the years, with students now learning in modern new classrooms using computers, iPads and interactive whiteboards — quite different from my school days when we had wooden desks and chalkboards and, for a short time before the advent of biros, we wrote with dip-pens and inkwells. Gone is the morning milk program where the milk, in individual bottles, sat in the sun for a while,

meaning that the contents did not always taste nice. Magpie instead now runs a breakfast club funded by the Andrews government, ensuring that all students can have a great start to the school day.

I commend the work of the principal, Peter Clifton, along with all staff, school council members and the Magpie community for their efforts in seeing Magpie Primary School continuing to provide an outstanding education for its students.

Linton Primary School

Mr HOWARD — Next month I will be joining in on the community celebrations for Linton Primary School's 150th anniversary. In 1857 Linton Primary School was established on the current site as government school 880. On the weekend of 14 and 15 October the Linton community will come together with a reunion dinner for former students, with a family fun day on the Sunday. I want to commend Linton Primary School's principal, Ian Forrester, the staff and all of those at Linton for the wonderful program they provide there.

Whitehorse Historical Society

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) — Congratulations to the Whitehorse Historical Society on their fantastic heritage family fun day held on Sunday, 17 September. With the fabulous weather, the community was out in force enjoying the history of Whitehorse, the beautiful Schwerkolt Cottage, vintage cars and loads of activities in Mitcham.

Chinese Women's Association of Victoria

Ms RYALL — Congratulations to the Chinese Women's Association of Victoria on their 30th birthday celebration. There has been a fabulous 30-year effort in supporting women through a range of activities. The committee acknowledged the huge volunteering effort that has occurred over those 30 years and the momentous support it has provided to so many.

Mitcham Thunder Basketball Club

Ms RYALL — Congratulations to Mitcham Thunder Basketball Club, which have celebrated their first birthday after a huge year of very hard work. It is great to see the club succeed so much within the first year with 13 teams, many of which won their division's grand final.

Graeme and June Tindale

Ms RYALL — Congratulations to Graeme and June Tindale on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary. There is so much to celebrate and so many memories to treasure at the time of this wonderful milestone.

Robert and Joan Fuller

Ms RYALL — Congratulations to Robert and Joan Fuller on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary. What a wonderful milestone filled with treasured memories and so much to celebrate.

Norwood Blacks

Ms RYALL — Congratulations to the Norwood Blacks netball team on their premiership season. Winning the grand final against Fairpark Netball Club 35-29 is a very sweet victory and one hard earned. It is fabulous to see the women in our community achieving great things. Well done.

Ringwood Bowls Club

Ms RYALL — All the best for the season to Ringwood Bowls Club. It was fabulous to cut the ribbon to open their alfresco area and to kick off the season for this fabulous club. There is always a great welcome for anyone visiting or wanting to join this very great group of people who make the club what it is.

Dandenong Thunder Soccer Club

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — A big congratulations to Dandenong Thunder Soccer Club, which was recently crowned NPL2 champion after defeating Northcote City Football Club 2-0 in the grand final. It went down to the wire, with a truly nail-biting finish in extra time. Thunder's Veton Korcari executed a spectacular bicycle goal and Alon Blumgart found the back of the net in the dying seconds of the game to secure the championship.

It was a great way for Thunder to cap off an outstanding season, winning the championship and also the league. They finished on top of the ladder, nine points clear of their closest rival, another great Dandenong club, Dandenong City. Congratulations must go to Thunder's star striker, Brandon Barnes, who was the league's top goal scorer, netting a stunning 35 goals for the season. Brandon is also the Football Federation Victoria NPL2 gold medal winner for the second year running.

Community sport brings together people from all backgrounds, races and religions, and nowhere is that more true than at Dandenong Thunder. Together they ride the highs and lows of wins and losses, red cards and penalties, freakish goals and unbelievable saves. They are a community in every sense of the word, enriching — and occasionally exasperating — the lives of their players, coaches, members and fans every week. Thunder will now be promoted to NPL1 for 2018 and I cannot wait to see what they can deliver on their return to Victoria's first-class soccer league. They are a fantastic club who I am sure will continue to represent our community in great fashion.

Dandenong City Soccer Club

Ms WILLIAMS — I must also make mention of Dandenong City Soccer Club who, on the back of a great season, just missed out on promotion, finishing second behind Thunder in the league before sadly losing 3-2 in the promotion play-off against their sister club Melbourne Knights. I cannot wait to see them vie for the top spot again in NPL2 next year.

Charlton Park 2020

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — Congratulations to the committee of Charlton Park 2020, particularly John Harley, and congratulations to the entire Charlton community. Your project is happening, and it has been a long road. The committee was first formed in late July 2006 and has been funded by both sides of the Parliament, initially by the Brumby government and then by the Baillieu government.

They have been waiting for and working on this project for a long time, and through that process they have attracted funds from the Buloke Shire Council and \$775 000 from the federal government. They are looking for \$500 000 from Racing Victoria, which I understand is on its way, and the committee has raised \$1.3 million for this project. That has been from across the community — the Charlton Community Bank has chipped in; the football, netball, cricket, hockey and harness racing clubs have all contributed; the ladies auxiliary, the football-netball-hockey social club and the A & P Society have contributed. The service clubs have contributed, members of the community have contributed individually, and I am very pleased to have been personally able to support the campaign to get this project on the road. I am speaking about this today, but the minister was meant to announce this last week and I am not sure why she has not. You should just get on with it. The community knows it is coming — go and announce it.

Southmoor Primary School

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — During the last parliamentary sitting week, the member for Ringwood was very openly venting that the Andrews Labor government had invested \$45 million in school capital works in Bentleigh. I have pleasure in informing her that the figure has since grown to more than \$46 million. Last week I joined the Minister for Education in announcing that Southmoor Primary School will receive a new \$1.4 million permanent modular building as part of Labor's \$155 million Victorian School Asbestos Removal Program. Southmoor is a growing school in Moorabbin, which next year will have around 500 students. The school's enrolment growth is testament to the hard work of staff and families, which is strongly supported by this government.

Bentleigh electorate schools

Mr STAIKOS — Over the last couple of weeks schools in the Bentleigh electorate have been showcasing their talents in music and the performing arts. It was a pleasure attending McKinnon Secondary College's winter concert, St James College's *Across the Barricades*, Bentleigh Secondary College's production of *Grease*, St Catherine's Primary School's very original production of *Turn Up Your Radio!*, which was super fun, and OLSH College's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Well done to all staff and students involved.

Bentleigh Auskick

Mr STAIKOS — Congratulations to Bentleigh Auskick on winning Auskick Centre of the Year at South Metro Junior Football League's recent presentation night. Well done especially to Andrew Goldfinch; not only is he the Auskick coordinator but he is also doing a great job on the East Bentleigh Primary School council. Bentleigh AusKick, part of Bentleigh Junior Football Club, has a bright future with a brand new pavilion on its way, as well as a long-awaited electronic scoreboard at King George Reserve.

Grand Final Friday

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) — This government is anti-small business and the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, who sits in the other place, is a joke. Whilst he is swanning around the world — last year he spent over \$209 000 of Victorians' money and travelled 52 days overseas on junkets — small business will once again grind to a halt on grand final eve. His correct title is the Minister Against Small Business.

Victoria now has one of the highest numbers of public holidays of any state in Australia and, not surprisingly, also has the highest unemployment rate. The minister is either plain stupid or ignorant if he refuses to acknowledge the correlation between high numbers of public holidays, high taxes, increased industrial action, soaring electricity prices and high unemployment.

His recent comments confirm his lack of small business knowledge. The minister says there is nothing stopping business from opening their doors on a public holiday — labour costs are one reason, Minister. 'We've created no barriers', says the minister — a public holiday is a barrier, Minister. 'Allows people to spend time together', says the minister — perhaps the minister should speak to the business owners who will be covering shifts on the day.

But the minister's greatest faux pas and proof that he is unfit to be the minister for small business must surely be his statement that the public holiday was not created as an economic stimulus. Minister, it most certainly is not, and with your anti-stimulus package it is clearly time for you to step aside. If you are defending the grand final eve public holiday, which costs Victorian businesses over \$1.2 billion each year, on the basis that it allows some people to socialise for the day, then you are incompetent and unfit to represent the hardworking small business owners of Victoria.

Central Deborah Gold Mine

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — Just in time for the school holidays, the Central Deborah Gold Mine is once again open to the public, with its premium Nine Levels of Darkness tour back open following the completion of a \$380 000 infrastructure upgrade. The upgrade was funded by the Andrews Labor government as part of the \$27 million Bendigo groundwater project to manage groundwater from mine voids in Bendigo.

Visitors can once again drop 228 metres underground in the original miners cage to level 9 of the mine and be guided through the authentic mine tunnels to see firsthand why Bendigo's geology makes it one of the top 10 goldfields in the world; this is a one-of-a-kind experience in Australia. The level 9 tours had been on hold while the existing pumps, originally installed in 2011, were refurbished and new stainless steel pipes were installed to pump groundwater from the Deborah line of reef and underground workings to alternate lines of reef where it can be safely stored or extracted and treated.

Marong Road, Bendigo

Ms EDWARDS — I was also pleased and thrilled last week to announce \$3.5 million from the Andrews Labor government to conduct planning studies to ensure that the section of Marong Road between Ironbark and Maiden Gully meets the future needs of the community. Marong Road is currently used by 12 000 vehicles a day, with traffic volumes increasing each year as a result of substantial growth in these areas. The planning project will ensure that residents and road users will have a safer and more efficient road for years to come. VicRoads will engage with the community as part of the project to understand what is important to them in regard to the future of Marong Road. This is an important project because it is the main road linking Bendigo, Maiden Gully and Marong with roads to the north.

Research Eltham Collegians Cricket Club

Ms WARD (Eltham) — I want to congratulate the Research Eltham Collegians Cricket Club, which had a fantastic open day on Sunday. It was a terrific family event, inclusive of the community and just a great indicator of how inclusive and fun this club is. It has got a great future with its new development coming up.

CHILDREN AND JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (YOUTH JUSTICE REFORM) BILL 2017

Council's amendments

Message from Council relating to following amendments considered:

- Page 80, before line 1, insert the following heading—
“Part 11— Amendments relating to review of Act”.
NEW CLAUSE
- Insert the following New Clause to follow clause 64 and the heading proposed by amendment number 1—
‘A New Part 5.9 inserted
After Part 5.8 of Chapter 5 of the Principal Act insert—
“Part 5.9— Review of Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017
492B Review of Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017

- The Minister must undertake a review of the amendments made to this Act and other Acts

by the **Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017** to determine whether the policy objectives of the **Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017** remain valid and whether the amendments made by that Act remain appropriate to achieve those objectives.

- The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the third anniversary of the first day on which all the provisions of the **Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017** have commenced.
- Without limiting the matters that the review may consider, the review must cover the following matters—
 - the effects of the amendments made by the **Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017**, whether adverse or otherwise, on the following—
 - rates of offending and re-offending;
 - incarceration of young people;
 - community safety;
 - the long-term well-being of children and young people in contact with the justice system;
 - the operation of youth control orders;
 - the operation of youth diversion strategies and programs;
 - the operation of the system known as the dual track system;
 - the categorisation of certain offences as serious youth offences, and the effect of this categorisation on decisions about bail, non-custodial sentences and the placement of young adults in youth justice centres;
 - whether the incarceration of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and young people has increased or decreased as a proportion of the total incarcerated population of young people in Victoria since the **Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017** received the Royal Assent;
 - whether any additional legislative, administrative or policy reform is necessary to improve the operation of Victoria's youth justice system.
- The Minister must cause a report on the review to be laid before each House of the

Parliament not later than 12 months after the third anniversary of the first day on which all the provisions of the **Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017** have commenced.”’.

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

The Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Bill 2017 passed the Legislative Council following a government house amendment providing for a review of the provisions of the bill. That review was agreed to following discussions with the Greens party. As part of those discussions the Greens party suggested the bill include a provision for a review of the changes contained within the bill. It is important to ensure that legislation is effective and achieves its policy aims over time. On that basis the government agreed that it would be appropriate for the bill to include a review mechanism which was the subject of the amendment.

So there is a new part 5.9 in the act; it contains new section 492B, which requires the minister to review the effect of the amendments made by the Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017. That review will determine whether the policy objectives of the act remain valid and whether the amendments remain appropriate to achieve those objectives. That review is to occur as soon as possible after the third anniversary of the commencement of all of the provisions in the act, and it will allow enough time following the commencement of the act to collect sufficient data for a robust review. The minister will then report to Parliament on the review not later than the fourth anniversary of the commencement of all of the provisions in the act. The review will be able to consider the effect of all of the changes that have been made by the act, whether adverse or otherwise.

This is a very important piece of legislation. This legislation means that young offenders may face longer detention periods. It means that young people have the very real risk of having their matters heard in higher courts. It means that there will be much tougher consequences for young people who assault youth justice officers while in detention. It means that there will be a presumption in favour of uplifting serious youth offences, such as aggravated home invasion and aggravated carjacking, from the Children’s Court to the higher courts for those aged 16 years and older. There will also be a presumption that young offenders who damage property, escape or attempt to escape from a youth justice facility will serve their sentences on top of an existing period of detention regardless of age.

The legislation also implements a new youth control order which I know was the subject of debate in this place and was the subject of a reasoned amendment moved by the opposition in both places. The government maintains that the youth control order is a very important element when you consider this legislation in its totality — uplift to the higher courts, harsher sentences, presumption of accumulation and the like to ensure that there is also an option available to say to young people who are being dealt with for certain cohorts of offences that they can be sentenced to a period of education, training or employment to try and get those young people back on track and to become valuable members of society, rather than seeing them perpetually engaged in a cycle of violence, incarceration and recrimination over and over again. Surely all of us must see some value in trying to ensure that these people — those that are appropriate for this order — do not become members of a criminal class permanently incarcerated or permanently cycling through the system. That is the endeavour of the youth control order, and they can involve orders such as curfews and anti-association conditions.

This is a comprehensive piece of legislation. There are much harsher penalties and much harsher sanctions for young people in a range of circumstances, particularly those aged over 16 and particularly those who commit serious offences — they do risk having their matter dealt with in the higher courts. The amendment of the Legislative Council which provides for a review after three years is a sensible approach. The government supports and accepts that amendment. We urge the house to accept the amendments and the legislation as amended by the Legislative Council.

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — We will not be opposing the amendments today, but we find ourselves in a position where the government, in order to provide a sop to those who want to weaken the system, have presented the Parliament with a bill that purports to toughen up the system while undoing all of that work with the youth control order. Let me explain what the youth control order does in our system. Our children’s and youth justice system is geared towards therapeutic approaches to justice. So the presumption and primary objective is to try to find rehabilitative ways of treating criminal actions by people under 18 and people between the ages of 21 and 24. There are already in our system of youth justice sufficient orders to avoid custodial outcomes for wrongdoing.

We have youth attendance orders, probation orders and other diversionary programs. In fact it is actually very difficult under our youth justice system to face a custodial outcome. You have to have done something

particularly egregious, particularly violent, or to have repeatedly engaged in reoffending which has left the Children's Court or an adult court with no other choice but to impose a custodial sanction. So why do you need another mechanism to allow predominantly violent offenders to avoid a custodial setting? You have to ask the question.

If you need youth control orders, they are going to apply to people, by definition, who do not qualify for the very wide range of non-custodial orders that are already on the statutes. So all of the things that the government trumpets as the means to toughen up the system are not going to matter much when you have potentially dozens and possibly hundreds of people who will come through the youth justice system and secure a youth control order in circumstances where, without the youth control order, they would not have qualified for any of the other numerous non-custodial orders.

I simply want to put on record that we think this is an undesirable change. It defeats all of the efforts which we are happy to support in the bill that go towards dealing with the hardened type of offender who is resisting every effort to offer them a meaningful pathway to recovery ultimately through the youth justice system. That is going to be undone — and I perhaps get the politics. The politics for the government, I presume, are that in order to get this through without mayhem on its side — and when I say its side I do not just talk about the caucus; I talk also about the broad range of stakeholders who do not believe that we should have any custodial orders in any circumstances for any youth offenders, irrespective of the gravity of their violence — the government is offering on the one hand a toughening up of the system, which we are happy to support. We have some reservations about whether it will be effective, but we are happy to support them, but then on the other hand the government would defeat it through youth control orders.

I sincerely hope that we are not going to see offenders who are on youth control orders bear out the warnings we have ventilated in this place and in the other place. We have put that clearly on the record. We never thought there was a need for youth control orders. If anything, we think some of the conditions that attach to a youth control order should have been drafted to apply to the existing range of non-custodial orders, but as it is they are now going to attach to this new order. We hope and pray that we do not see people on these youth control orders run amok, because we have seen other people who are youth offenders who have gone through our system and, on the existing non-custodial orders, become engaged in quite heinous violent conduct that has left many people in our community terrorised,

including those who broke out from Malmesbury earlier this year.

So we will not oppose the amendment, but we sound that warning. With think a review is certainly desirable, but I suspect that a review may have been warranted earlier than the bill envisages. On that basis I conclude my remarks by saying that we will not oppose the amendment.

Motion agreed to.

OWNER DRIVERS AND FORESTRY CONTRACTORS AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Council's amendments

Message from Council relating to following amendments considered:

1. Clause 2, page 2, line 2, omit "September 2017" and insert "March 2018".
2. Clause 4, page 3, line 3, omit 'body.' and insert "body."
3. Clause 4, page 3 after line 3 insert—
 - '(2D) On the publication of a notice under subsection (2B), the alternative body specified in the notice is taken for the purposes of subsection (2A) to be a nominating body referred to in subsection (1).'
4. Clause 5, page 4, line 16, omit 'body.' and insert "body."
5. Clause 5, page 4, after line 16 insert—
 - '(2D) On the publication of a notice under subsection (2B), the alternative body specified in the notice is taken for the purposes of subsection (2A) to be a nominating body referred to in subsection (1).'

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Industrial Relations) — I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

The bill has a commencement date of 1 September 2017, which has now passed of course, so the amendment to clause 2 will alter this to 1 March 2018. The other amendments to clauses 4 and 5 clarify that if the member specifies a replacement body, then the new body has the same status as if it were named in the act. That is probably the extent of explanation that is required around these amendments.

The initial amendments to this bill were around making sure that the owner-driver sector, the committee — the council that oversees that — and the forestry

contractors council were relevant and up to date in terms of the naming of their membership. That was the major intent behind this, and I look forward in the future to talking further on the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act 2005 once we have commenced our current review of the act.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — The opposition supports these amendments by the Legislative Council. Indeed the major ones were ones that we initiated to make clear that when the minister did nominate an alternative body to take the place of a body specified in the act that replacement body then took on the status of a body named in the act to avoid the potential risk of any minister — be it the current minister or a future minister — having the capacity to replace an alternative body at will rather than because it had ceased to exist. That loophole has now been closed by those amendments, and that is a satisfactory outcome.

As the minister referred to in her closing remarks, the main issues in relation to owner-drivers and forestry contractors are those surrounding what the government may be doing in the future as to whether, for example, they are going to try to reintroduce the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal scheme of the commonwealth by a backdoor means.

Ms Hutchins — By legislation.

Mr CLARK — The community is very much looking forward, and the industry also is looking forward, to the government clarifying what it intends in that regard. I think I heard the minister say by way of interjection that the government is going to do it by legislation, and if the government is going to do that, then I think that is something that would be of very grave concern to many people who were pleased to see the abolition of the commonwealth Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal scheme, because it was a backdoor way of driving owner-drivers out of business in order to further union domination of the industry. It was not either a bona fide or a well-conceived measure directed towards addressing safety in the industry. Certainly on this side of the house we would welcome well-considered measures that enhance industry safety, but trying to drive one section out of business — trying to drive small owner-driver operators out of business — is not the way to go.

However, that is a matter for another day, and we await the government's clarification of its intentions in that regard. If the government is intending to try to reintroduce a Victorian version of the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal scheme, then the government should come out and say so, and the industry and the

community will know where we stand. But for the time being the opposition supports these amendments of the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

RENEWABLE ENERGY (JOBS AND INVESTMENT) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 24 August; motion of Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change).

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — I rise to speak on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. This is a bill that the government has certainly talked about for a fair time, and we have been eagerly awaiting some detail around it for some time. It has been announced, reannounced and reannounced. I must say that when we finally heard the bill was going to be introduced we were expecting something with a fair bit of detail around it. It is unfortunate to say that the bill is pretty much just a further media announcement in terms of where the government is on this stuff, and it certainly lacks a lot of detail in terms of the mechanics of the way the Victorian renewable energy target (VRET) will actually run.

This side of the house certainly believes we should have a very, very strong energy mix. We certainly support clean energy, and we support renewable energy. We support renewable energy that is underpinned by 24/7 baseload power. We believe, and we have said so all along, that we should have an energy system that is underpinned by good market forces. We have seen plenty of strong situations, and I will be talking a little bit about the solar industry in which the market has actually decided to take up renewables into the scheme. Particularly if you look at solar, we are seeing Victoria leading the way in household solar, where one in six households now have solar panels on their homes. But in situations like solar, which I will talk more about later, the uptake has actually increased where there has been less involvement by government and more opportunity for the market and households to determine the value, what will ultimately be the cost savings and therefore the commercial decision that has been made by many households.

But what we have here is a bill that is set to drive up energy prices and threaten energy security, and it is the government ideologically backing one energy source over others. This is an ideologically led government; it

has been from the very beginning. We have an ideological minister that is determined to cut down any baseload power, whether it be gas or whether it be coal, at the expense of renewables. As I said, we should have an energy mix and not be backing one energy source over another. That threatens security and threatens affordability. Certainly the coalition's plan is this, and we have said it time and time again: number one, we should have security — we need to ensure the lights stay on; number two, we need to ensure that it is affordable; and number three, we need to ensure that it is clean.

What this government is doing is effectively attacking the renewable energy industry, because it is siding up and threatening those that can least afford to pay their power bills and putting them up against the renewable energy market. Ultimately each and every Victorian wants to ensure that their bills are affordable. Each and every business wants to ensure that they can continue to employ people and that they are able to continue to keep their business running. I have travelled the state, and I have spoken to business after business that have now gotten to a point where they are absolutely at odds with this government. They are angry that this government is forcing up one energy source over another and ultimately sending power bills skyrocketing.

If you ever wanted an example of what this government is all about, I think one was about the third time that the Victorian renewable energy target was announced. It was announced when the government was involved in bringing Al Gore to Victoria at an expense of \$150 000 for a resilience conference and to talk about this Victorian renewable energy target — \$150 000 of taxpayers money used to bring a climate change celebrity to saddle up with the minister to announce the closure of Hazelwood and that they would be introducing a Victorian renewable energy target. We could all think about how many of those dollars could have gone to supporting those people on the edge in terms of their power bills and those that are struggling with affordability issues — low-income earners that are effectively bankrolling a celebrity at the expense of paying their own bills. All of us pay, taxpayers pay, at the expense of ideology.

Acting Speaker, do not believe me and do not believe the coalition. What does industry say? What do the commentators say about this particular target? Firstly, Matthew Warren from the Australian Energy Council said:

Victoria's electricity system is interconnected to other states as part of a national grid. Decisions made here affect other

states. That's why major policy measures to reduce emissions should be implemented at a national level.

Effectively what Matthew Warren and others are saying is that Victoria is connected to a national energy market and therefore should not be doing things like this at the expense of Victorians.

We have been advocating all along for federal targets. Certainly that is what we have been doing as a coalition. To have 'go it alone' targets at the expense of Victoria and Victorians is dangerous. It is dangerous according to industry; it is certainly dangerous to the future of security and affordability of our power system. Continuing on, Matthew Warren said:

We are yet to see the modelling that the Victorian government has used for its cost projections . . . We have learnt from South Australia that more renewables initially reduced prices but as they push out traditional, firm generation without equivalent replacement supply, wholesale prices have almost doubled.

I make this comment on two fronts. If you do not have a plan to transition out the baseload generation and you want to replace it with renewables that do not have the baseload of battery storage and others going forward, then you jeopardise the whole electricity system. That is not to say that we should not be moving towards renewables over time and replacing baseload generation, but it has to be done sensibly.

This government sat by and watched Hazelwood power station close within five months of notice. Not only did they watch it close, they gave it the final nail in the coffin by tripling the coal tax — the \$260 million coal tax effectively put the nail in the coffin of Hazelwood's closure. We would not be talking about the energy crisis today if this government had done something to ensure the lights stayed on in Hazelwood. It should have allowed the generator to operate until such time as the renewables kicked in. It should have waited until the mix of renewables, in terms of battery storage, was effectively proven in the market and allowed batteries to work.

Instead this government said, 'No, let's get rid of this as quickly as possible'. The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change — very, very quickly when she was in opposition — called for a closure of Hazelwood and in government has got her way, with Hazelwood closing. That has been the result.

I make mention of modelling because we have had nothing but dodgy modelling, and I am going to talk a little bit more about that later. We asked the minister's office for modelling; we have asked for this several times. We asked for it in the briefing and we were told

in the briefing, 'Yes, no problem. You will receive the modelling'. When the first reading of this bill was announced, there was a two-pager — a glorified press release — put out to say, 'Here is the modelling'. No-one believed any of that.

Then what did we have? We were told at the briefing almost two weeks ago that we would have the modelling. Well, guess what, Acting Speaker? We received the modelling — half an hour ago, so it is very hard for me to stand up here and be able to understand any of the things underpinning the modelling when they have only just flicked it over to us with half an hour's notice.

You would expect, for such an important announcement, that the government, which has been working on it for nearly two years, would have it at their beck and call, and they would just offer it to the market to have a look at to support their policy. But no, and that is because they are hiding something, and it will all be exposed.

Do you know what this government is determined to do? This government is determined to go straight down the path of South Australia. We have seen what happened in South Australia. They are now resorting to diesel to keep their lights on. If we are talking today about renewables and about clean energy, the last thing that the renewable energy market, our environmentalists and anyone who cares about the environment should want is for us to ensure security with diesel generators.

What we have seen with South Australia is epitomised by this headline in the *Australian*: "'Dirty" deeds with diesel generators done real quick, if not dirt cheap'. The article states:

Taxpayers in South Australia face being slugged tens of millions of dollars for dirty carbon dioxide-emitting diesel generators the Weatherill government wants shipped in by December to prevent pre-election blackouts.

They are expecting pre-election blackouts in South Australia. That is straight down the path that the Premier and his government want to send Victoria. Following on from South Australia, the Premier wants to outdo South Australia at the expense of every single Victorian and every single business with the cost and security of power. We have seen this before in terms of the cost:

It cost the Tasmanian government more than \$11 million a month to run 100 megawatt of diesel power generators early last year when its interconnection to the mainland was down and low dam levels affected its hydro-electric scheme.

We saw it in Tasmania, we are seeing it now for the summer in South Australia and we will be seeing it in Victoria.

What do others say? What does Tony Wood from the Grattan Institute say? He said:

...the policy was a 'nasty dog's breakfast', with dodgy modelling of energy bills based only on wholesale prices.

'No-one is debating the future need for more renewable energy in the system ...

We as a coalition are not debating that either. What we are debating is the modelling that underpins it and supporting one energy source over another at the expense of affordability and security. Tony Wood goes on to say:

... a national approach would consider the most efficient place to source that from ... It appears to me that the lesson of South Australia has been ignored by this policy.

What does Emma King from the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) say? She said that a renewable energy target was 'important and welcome' but:

... we shouldn't pretend the VRET will magically drive down prices.

...

We shouldn't be building a greener Victoria on the backs of people doing it tough.

What did the minister say about what the VRET would do? Instead of — pardon the pun — coming 'clean' on this and saying, 'Right, we understand this is going to cost Victorians money but we are focusing on the environment first and cost second, and we believe it is better for the environment to do this', that would be fine. There would be nothing wrong with that because that would at least position them in terms of where the Labor Party is.

That is how the Greens position themselves. Do you know what? I do not admire much about the Greens but the one thing I do admire about the Greens is that they stand by their own convictions. That is who they are, that is who they represent in terms of their party, and at least we understand where they are going.

We do not understand where the Labor Party is going on this. They do not support low income earners on this, they do not support industry with this, and now they are turning around and saying that it will save money. In fact when it was announced on 23 August, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change said the Victorian renewable energy target would save households \$30 a year. Only in January this year, a few

months earlier, the minister was quoted in the *Herald Sun* as saying that Victoria's ambitious renewable energy target would cost households up to \$520 each, based on government estimates. The article states:

Consumers are likely to pay through an extra charge on electricity bills for up to 20 years.

The minister went on to say that the impact of the Victorian renewable energy target on households would be 'modest', at 'no more than 50 cents per week over the life of the scheme'. The article continues:

She refused to release detailed modelling, citing current cabinet confidentiality ...

There is a bit of a pattern emerging here. Based on current household numbers that would mean a cost of about \$1.2 billion. So here we have a minister who on one hand in January says that the VRET is going to cost each household up to \$520 a year over the life of the scheme and then on the other hand says it is actually going to save households \$30 a year. Who do we believe?

We have also had a number of people say the same thing, as I have been stating, including the Australian Industry Group, and I quote:

Australia's peak industry lobby group fears Victoria's decision to go it alone and pursue a 40 per cent renewable energy target within eight years will push up prices that are already hurting business.

...

Tim Piper, Victorian head of the Australian Industry Group, said ... there was no clear pathway to reaching 40 per cent without imposing extra costs on energy users.

So again here we have the Australian Industry Group saying exactly that.

What does VCCI, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, say? Mark Stone has also said his members are hurting from skyrocketing energy bills:

The target must not put upward pressure on prices and put Victorian jobs at risk ...

Time and time again we are hearing from industry, we are hearing from organisations representing those who are doing it tough — the most vulnerable in terms of VCOSS — and we are effectively hearing it from a left-wing think tank, the Grattan Institute, suggesting that these policies are going to hurt all Victorians.

So what are the costs? We also heard that effectively the cost of this will actually put a hole in the state budget of \$250 million to \$350 million. Effectively whether Victorians will be paying this on their bills or

whether all Victorians will be paying this through the budget, there is a cost. It is not going to magically appear. It is not going to magically pay for itself. We are all going to pay for it.

There is no doubt that we are in an energy crisis right now — no doubt. This has been underpinned by the Labor Party, underpinned by Premier Andrews, who has stood by idly, watching base load close and pushing these sorts of targets in his left-wing agenda ahead of everything to save a few inner-city Greens votes. Again, with the likes of a by-election coming up and future elections coming up in these inner-city seats, he will spare nothing to actually do this. But one of the things that we have seen is the federal government commission the Finkel review, which had 50 recommendations. I know there has been a lot of talk in terms of the clean energy target that has not been supported, but to get 49 recommendations supported within a short period of time is a good thing.

But what does Alan Finkel, the chief scientist who did the review, say? He warned that the quick closure of more baseload power stations could cause supply chaos during peak demand. Alan Finkel said that we should not be looking at go-it-alone targets. He said that we should be looking at one target — a national energy market — not go-it-alone targets. The fact of the matter is that we will be putting Victoria at a disadvantage compared to other states. So we have New South Wales, no target; we have Western Australia, no target; we have South Australia going to an election and the coalition suggesting that they will scrap the target should they be elected; and we have Queensland, the same. But in the current environment we have New South Wales, which we are often compared to, with no target, and Victoria, which will have a target. So what we are suggesting is that companies should go and relocate themselves into New South Wales because we are going to effectively put a target in Victoria that will create affordability and security issues compared with the other states.

Certainly that is something that we, the coalition, do not support. We support, as we have said all along, federal targets. We do not support these go-it-alone state targets. It is a national problem that requires a national solution. What we need is this government to stop playing politics with people's jobs, stop playing politics when it comes to householders' power prices and start doing something to ensure that their policy, which was described by Tony Wood from the Grattan Institute as a dog's breakfast, will reduce power prices, rather than be an ideological target that is going to push up prices.

I said that I would talk about the solar industry, and I did want to draw attention to the solar industry. Now, in the past I have talked about renewables as being part of an energy revolution, and I have been quoted on that. I know there are people in the gallery that have been to events that I have been at, and I do believe that ultimately renewables will play that important part and the market will decide in ensuring that we get a good mix underpinned by affordability and reliability. Certainly the innovation of renewables will come to play — no question about that. I absolutely believe, hand on heart, that innovation will get us to that point. But the difficulty that I have is when the government intervene the way that they have been doing to try and pick winners, the government always get it wrong. They always get it wrong. This is not Labor versus the coalition, although many would say that we are a little bit better when it comes to managing finances. However, certainly when it comes to this sort of stuff I guarantee this government is heading into uncharted waters.

One example of that is the solar industry. With the solar industry, what we had was a big uptake of solar energy. Many people in recent times decided that they were going to take up solar. But we also had a very high target. In 2009 the Victorian Labor government introduced a premium feed-in tariff of 60 cents per kilowatt hour for 15 years. This was corrected in 2011 as a transitional feed-in tariff by the coalition to 25 cents a kilowatt. The coalition then brought in a minimum feed-in tariff in 2013 of 6 cents to 8 cents. What I wanted to say about this, which is very important, is that during that time Victoria saw a 33 per cent increase in solar connections for the first six months of 2012 compared to the same period in 2011, despite the feed-in tariff being reduced from 60 cents to 25 cents. So what we had was a reduction in the tariff and a reduction in government intervention but more people choosing to take up solar. What that says is that when governments interfere, every single taxpayer has to pay more. Those that do not have solar, the low-income earners and the renters, are all effectively subsidising the people in this instance who can afford to pay.

Certainly we should be encouraging people to uptake solar, but on the understanding that government have not got their hands in the pocket of every Victorian and every Australian. The cost of government subsidies in subsidising the haves with the have-nots with solar was \$14 billion — \$14 billion between the haves and the have-nots with subsidising solar. Again, this did not have to happen. Solar will be taken up without the ongoing subsidy. That is what we are suggesting.

I went to the clean energy conference — just on 18 months ago, I think it was — and I had an

opportunity to wander around to the exhibitors, many in the industry that were displaying their various renewable options. I spoke to a lot of battery providers. The one thing that battery providers said to me was, 'Whatever you do in terms of energy policy, do not go down the same path as what the solar industry did, with these huge subsidies, because we don't want an industry that is underpinned by government grants just for another government to pull the grants from underneath us because they are not sustainable and then for the industry to collapse as a result of this'. This is what the battery industry said to me: 'Learn from the mistakes of the solar industry'. So that is what we are suggesting here.

The target which has been set of 25 per cent by 2020 will certainly almost happen. A lot of industry sources have said that it will almost happen with or without a VRET. Again, that is a further example of market forces taking shape. However, the 40 per cent target from 2025 is where it gets really, really concerning. It gets concerning because something has to give. What will give is Yallourn W. We are hearing the energy council and others say that a baseload power station that has an end date of 2032 could come out early — as close as 2020, 2022, so 10 years early — taking another 22 per cent of energy out of the market. That is the same amount as Hazelwood — effectively Hazelwood all over again. What that does is it further impounds costs and it further impounds security issues.

I can tell you this about more government intervention in this game: if you are really a hand-on-heart, genuine, signed-up fan of the renewables industry, then you would not be wanting ongoing intervention by this government. I can walk you around to every industry group and to households. They are saying, 'For God's sake, don't give any more dough to the renewables industry group. All it's doing is pushing up prices'. That is what industry is saying, and that is what households are saying. That is why things have changed, and that is why now there are real concerns out there in terms of what this government are doing. They are pushing up energy prices; they are threatening security. The Australia Energy Market Operator is talking about 72 days of power shortages coming up. We are importing power rather than exporting power over the summer period. We have now had the industry and the regulator suggesting blackouts coming into summer.

This is horrendous for a state that was always underpinned by affordable power and by reliable power, a state that now has to rely on the likes of Tasmania and New South Wales. This is completely scandalous, and it is a situation the government owns fairly and squarely. They own it. They own this VRET

100 per cent, because we will not be supporting this. This will be a day that the Parliament will remember and that Victorians will remember for a long time, because it will be the day on which we will see a continued escalation of power prices, a continued security issue, a continued problem for all Victorians and a continued fight which never really had to be that way. We could be having an energy mix. We could be having renewables and a 24/7 baseload living hand in hand, moving towards a transition to clean energy. That is what we could be having — not underpinning, not putting up the gas industry and not putting up the coal industry against renewables, but a transition.

Bill Shorten does not believe this lot. Bill Shorten does not believe the Labor Party on this stuff. He has certainly not signed up to a go-it-alone target. Bill Shorten does not believe them in terms of what they have done with gas either. So the Labor Party in Victoria are on their own when it comes to this. The only reason they are doing it is probably the worst possible reason. I mentioned ideology as one thing, but they are doing it for a few seats — to win a few votes at the expense of each and every Victorian. That is what they are doing this for; make no mistake. They do not look after the working class. They do not support the working class, which at the moment are paying more for their energy bills than they ever have — and that is a disgrace. People cannot afford to actually keep their lights on and to keep warm in winter, and they will struggle with air conditioning over summer. Each and every Victorian can blame only one lot for this, and that is the Premier and his Labor mates, who have chosen ideology and a few inner-city seats at the expense of each and every Victorian's cost-of-living pressures with energy.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — Goodness, that was a struggle, was it not, to get through the full contribution? I know that he was desperate to use up all of his time. It was very difficult to get through it all. I did not know whether we could have much more of a rehash of the whole bill just to sort of fill the lack of substance and make it to the full quota of time than from those opposite.

Let us just call out a few things early here in relation to the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. Let us just call out the hypocrisy of those opposite, who stood on the steps of Parliament calling on our previous government to back 60 cent tariffs and more. That is the actual truth of the matter, and those opposite are absolutely hypocritical in the way in which they deal with these matters.

There was some touching on some aspects as well. In relation to the modelling, that is also, of course, online. I say to the member for Caulfield on behalf of the government: it is not our job to explain policies to those opposite. If they do not understand them, if they do not have the wherewithal and the capacity to get online and work their way through the facts and the detail, that is an indictment of them and their lack of capacity to develop an understanding of or an empathy on policy. Of course we will get to what atrocities were committed in the renewable energy space when they were in government, the Baillieu government in particular. With wind farms, they drove investment and job opportunities out of Victoria into the hands of South Australia and other states in Australia.

We also need to touch on a couple of other aspects. In particular, of course New South Wales does have a zero emissions by 2050 target, just like Victoria does. That was not touched on by those opposite because of course they get their facts wrong all the time. There are no pass-through costs to consumers in this legislation. That is very clear.

We also need to touch on a couple of minor errors of fact that seem to be large areas of conversation for those opposite because they go to the heart of conflicting with their ideological predispositions. The visit by former Vice-President of the United States Al Gore was funded by the University of Melbourne and the City of Melbourne, which is of course run by a former Leader of the Opposition and a former member for Malvern, Robert Doyle. We were very happy to be engaged and involved in that process. We were very happy, as we have on many occasions, to provide a platform and an opportunity to other learned institutions like the University of Melbourne to provide those opportunities for international dignitaries who are leaders in the debates, discussions and policy development in relation to renewable energy. Certainly members of the government were engaged and involved in conversations and discussions with Mr Gore. But let us be very clear about the facts in relation to how that visit came about.

Let us also understand that if we are relying on those opposite to bring about the changes that the chief scientist has suggested and recommended to the federal government, the advocacy of those opposite is to handball every matter to their federal counterparts but behind the scenes give a nod and a wink to say, 'We're right behind you to do absolutely nothing'. The advocacy of those opposite and the level of influence they clearly do not have with their federal colleagues are clear for all to see. We have seen no action from the federal government. It is only when you see action here

in Victoria and action in South Australia and in other states that you see that it is a combined effort by the state parliaments to make sure that we hold the commonwealth to account. We will all work together for the interests of our constituents and our communities where the federal government fails, and those opposite are happy to just handball to Canberra and their mates up there, where they clearly have no influence. They are quite happy to allow them to do nothing and, in their own way, do nothing as well.

In a renewable energy sense more generally, back in July 2015 I went to Ararat with the Premier. I want to quote from an article in the *Herald Sun* titled 'Andrews defies Abbott in wind farm showdown':

Premier Daniel Andrews has urged the federal government to end its war against wind power by renewing the state government's commitment to building Australia's third biggest wind farm near Ararat.

'We are unashamedly pro-wind power', Mr Andrews said.

'If you are opposed to wind energy, clean energy then you are opposed to all the jobs that come with it'.

This is the clear difference between what the Andrews government is doing — the heavy lifting and the hard work of policy development — and what those opposite are doing.

Ms Staley — There are fewer jobs in Ararat than when they were elected.

Mr CARBINES — There will be fewer jobs for the member for Ripon in the next 12 months; we can be sure of that.

The visit to the Ararat wind farm reaffirmed 75 wind turbines would be built at the Dunneworthy property, and the project will employ some 285 workers. The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, with the Premier, has since been back there and seen the realisation of these projects.

When the people opposite want to talk about renewable energy, as the member for Caulfield sought to do, they need to be held to account for what they did last time they were in government in the policies they implemented. In relation to renewable energy and wind farms, let us go to an article of 30 August 2011 headed 'Baillieu's wind farm crackdown':

The clean energy industry has warned it will invest away from Victoria, potentially costing the state \$3 billion, after the Baillieu government announced Australia's most restrictive planning laws for wind farms.

That it is an absolute fact — that is exactly what happened — and South Australia said, 'Come on down;

come over here'. That was on 30 August 2011. This was seen as a victory for wind farm opponents. I remember seeing the maps. Households were able to veto wind turbines within 2 kilometres of their houses. They were banned in the Macedon Ranges, Yarra Valley and other places. Let us be very clear: these changes also led to the prohibition of wind farms within 5 kilometres of 21 Victorian regional cities. All that meant is we were saying, in 21 regional cities around Victoria, 'No investment, no clean energy jobs, no clean energy technology'. I wonder who the planning minister at the time was? It was the present Leader of the Opposition. He said the changes restored 'certainty and fairness' to local communities. The only certainty that it introduced was that there would be no more jobs, no more clean, renewable energy investment. That is the only certainty that it provided for those regional communities. Most of the state would have been blacked out by households that would have been able to veto wind farm investment in regional Victoria. That is what was going to happen. The maps that showed where these planning changes would apply virtually wiped out regional Victoria as a place to be the leaders and the drivers of renewable energy opportunities in Victoria.

The article continues:

The Clean Energy Council also said the change would cost hundreds of new jobs in regional areas and billions of dollars in investment.

It also says that the coalition policy would mean 50 to 70 per cent of proposals for wind farms, worth \$3.6 billion for Victoria, would not be developed. This is what happened. Pacific Hydro, the renewable energy company, was reported as saying that unfortunately these new wind farm energy rules would leave Victoria unable to develop these wind farm opportunities for regional Victorians. What we actually saw in the end was there were greater setbacks for dual coal and gas plants under our planning scheme than there were for wind farms under the coalition policy.

There will be a lot of detail touched on by my colleagues on this side of the house, but I really wanted to particularly make the point in relation to renewable energy policy areas such as wind farms that these provide opportunities not only for the environment and jobs but for regional communities to get engaged and involved in new opportunities. This is not only about bringing that investment and development to regional centres and the far-flung outskirts of regional Victoria in many ways but about an engagement with communities about where they can see the next opportunities in the years ahead.

The bill of course will legislate renewable energy generation targets till 2020 and 2025 to encourage investment, employment and technology development in renewable energy. When I visit schools in my electorate and we talk about the New Energy Jobs Fund, TAKE2 and the Climate Change Act 2017, schools in particular and new generations of Victorians are engaged by renewable energy. They want to know how they are going to be involved. That is where they are going to find work and opportunities. They are going to get involved in the technological developments of the future.

It is incumbent on Victorian governments and the Victorian Parliament to make sure that we provide the policy framework and the certainty that will drive and bring investment to Victoria and opportunities for people who want to work and study and invest in renewable energy, to set targets that are driven by improving our environment and sending a very clear message that we are prepared to do our share of the heavy lifting here in Victoria. We need to set a policy direction for others to follow and reaffirm our role as global citizens, not engage in the parochialism we see from those opposite. If we do not do that, we are letting down very many people in our community.

I commend the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. It builds on a lot of the work our government has done in terms of the Climate Change Act and other measures. I know it will have the support of this house.

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) — I rise to join the debate on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. I stop right there, because the Labor government have certainly taken it upon themselves, in a real pattern, to insert lines of spin in their bill titles. I say that because including the word ‘jobs’ in this title does not bring any certainty about new jobs. In fact the only certainty we can ascertain from the policy path that the Labor government is taking is the loss of jobs around Hazelwood. At the end of March we saw overnight more than 700 people lose their jobs as Hazelwood shut down as a direct result of this government’s tripling of coal royalties. The 700 people who lost their jobs overnight joined those making up the already 17 per cent unemployment rate in the City of Morwell and its surrounds. The fact that this government does not seem to really care about that is something that would certainly make the people of the Gippsland region never want to vote Labor again.

I move on to a quote from an ABC reporter, Nick Harmsen, in an article of 9 March this year. It starts by saying:

Australia is rapidly stumbling into a major energy crisis, and there’s little evidence to suggest ... governments can agree on the solutions to fix it.

...

To understand what’s coming, look no further than my home state of South Australia ... In South Australia, wholesale prices are regularly spiking to the market-allowed maximum of \$14 000 per megawatt hour.

Mr Harmsen goes on to say:

South Australia has its own renewable energy target but —

my words: like Victoria —

it’s mostly spin.

He finishes this long article by saying:

In recent months, it’s been hard to avoid the sniggers from colleagues and friends interstate about South Australia’s well-documented power woes.

His last line is:

They shouldn’t laugh too hard. They’re next.

Mr Harmsen is right. We are next. The Victorian government has put us on a path where, because of an ill-thought-out scheme put forward by a government more interested in media than reality, we are going to be faced with power blackouts and skyrocketing energy prices. This Victorian renewable energy target has been introduced with no robustness around its claims at all, and everyone can see through it. The very next day after the minister gave a press conference all the papers came out and said it. The *Herald Sun* said:

The sums just don’t add up.

You do not need to go through the article to understand just what the *Herald Sun* thought of that — the sums just do not add up. Another article says:

Dan’s gone power mad.

Grattan Institute energy program director —

The Grattan Institute, may I say, is a left-wing think tank set up by Kevin Rudd and funded in that setting up —

Tony Wood said the policy was a ‘nasty dog’s breakfast’, with dodgy modelling of energy bills based only on wholesale prices.

... ‘It appears to me that the lesson from South Australia has been ignored by this policy.’

The *Australian* states:

... the move has created tension in Canberra and unease among market observers, who perceive it has gone against energy market guidelines ...

This particular article by Samantha Hutchinson goes on to say:

Australian Energy Council chief executive Matthew Warren described Victoria's move as 'an act of desperation' ...

An article in the *Age* headed 'Renewable target to cost us, industry' says:

Australia's peak industry lobby group fears Victoria's decision to go it alone and pursue a 40 per cent renewable energy target within eight years will push up prices that are already hurting business.

...

Tim Piper ... said hitting the 25 per cent target within three years would be simple, but there was no clear pathway to reaching 40 per cent without imposing extra costs on energy users.

... to get to 40 per cent within another five years is going to require significant investment.

The *Australian Financial Review*, under the heading 'Vic Premier's low energy power play', states:

Victoria's Daniel Andrews refuses to heed the lessons of his fellow Labor left government in South Australia by announcing an ambitious plan to ensure that 40 per cent of the state's electricity be generated from renewables ... Like something out of the ABC television satire *Utopia*, he promises that this will 'drive down prices, attract billions of dollars of investment and create thousands of local jobs'.

Yet this government has been unable to show anyone how these jobs are going to be created and how this investment is going to happen. We all agree and we have been out there saying that we need a national target. A national target is the way to go.

I want to direct the house's attention to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) energy council communiqué dated 14 July, which states:

... energy ministers have agreed on a time line to implement 49 of the 50 recommendations ...

of the Finkel review. That particular communiqué was signed by both the Honourable Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and the Honourable Wade Noonan, Minister for Industry and Employment and Minister for Resources. What those two ministers agreed to, along with every other minister who looks after those portfolios in Australia, was amongst other things recommendation 7.3:

Taking a nationally consistent approach to energy policy ...

Taking a national approach, a consistent approach, to energy policy. How is it that after sitting around the COAG table on 14 July and signing off on a national approach the government can just a matter of months later walk in and say, 'No, we don't agree with the nationally consistent approach anymore; we're going to go it alone'. How can Australia's governments around this nation have any confidence that this government and these ministers can be listened to and trusted when in just a matter of months they are prepared to walk away from a communiqué that they had signed themselves?

It is one thing to mislead Victorian people — after three years of this government Victorians know they cannot trust a word that the Premier and his ministers say — and it is another thing to come into this house and constantly spout mistruths and mislead the house and mislead Victorians, but to go onto the national stage and sit around with your Labor colleagues in many cases but also with coalition governments and sign a communiqué saying you are committed to a nationally consistent approach and then come in three months later and say, 'You know what, our word does not mean a thing, we're just going to go it alone', says something about the integrity of this government.

If we want to talk about the integrity of this government, the member for Caulfield mentioned in his contribution that during the briefing this side of the house was promised that they would get the modelling before this debate happened. Typical weasel words of this government: yes, we did get the modelling before this debate started — 30 minutes before. We cannot have a proper informed debate in this place about the modelling — about the very basis on which the government is going down this particular policy pathway — if we cannot see what it is that they have used to justify this particular approach. Giving us the modelling half an hour before just shows how little confidence they have in the robustness of that modelling. It makes it very clear that they have no confidence, because they are not prepared to be open. They were not prepared to be transparent and show, before this debate began, not only those of us on this side of the house but the Victorian public that their figures do not add up.

The government did under pressure release a six-page document a couple of weeks ago which was put out by Ernst and Young (EY) which says —

Mr Paynter interjected.

Mr R. SMITH — The member for Bass is right, the amount of blank space would probably allow the ABC

cameramen to do a light check with most of this document.

On every single page, or on virtually every single page, EY distances itself from the modelling that is involved. It says:

The material contained below is the summary prepared by Victorian government —

and not EY at all. It also says:

This modelling is based on several input assumptions relating to future conditions, which may not necessarily represent actual or most likely future conditions. All modelled scenarios and assumptions underpinning those scenarios were chosen by the Victorian government.

...

These forecast price scenarios are specific to the assumptions chosen by the Victorian government across the scenarios.

This document is not worth the paper it is written on, and just shows again that there has been very little robustness around this particular policy pathway. The other thing that will not be mentioned by one person on the other side of this chamber is how much this will cost. We saw a similar situation when the government talked about carbon emission reduction in the Climate Change Bill 2010 when it was found out later on through independent modelling that the state of Victoria would be up for \$2.2 billion in international emissions offsets in order to make the targets they put forward, but that was never, never mentioned during the debate or indeed when the government first announced it.

The reality is that with the situation we find ourselves in costs are going up and the government is desperate to try to fix a situation they caused by tripling coal royalties and making Hazelwood shut down. They took 22 per cent of baseload power out of the market and left us with a significant problem. All you have to do is go back to South Australia. They are putting diesel power generators on this summer to avoid blackouts because of their investment in renewable energies.

The fact of the matter is that this bill is driven by Labor ideology. Labor ideology will always trump reality in the minds of those opposite. They will not care about the facts, they will not care about logic and they will not be open and transparent about modelling. Let me tell the Labor government something, let me tell the Premier and the minister something: ideology will not keep power prices down. Ideology will not keep the lights on when the power goes in summer this year. Victorians know that ideology is going to cause them to pay more and be in the dark more, and frankly Victorians just will not wear it.

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — I am very pleased to make a contribution on this very historic policy bill for Victoria, the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. I could not help listening to the former minister for the environment under the previous government, and it is now clear why this state went so far backwards when they were in charge. Clearly he has no understanding of the importance of this target.

I want to acknowledge the Yes 2 Renewables group, who are in the gallery. I want to actually refer to some comments that they sent to me today, because I think they sum up very nicely exactly what this bill means, what it means to our communities across Victoria and what it means to our environment. It goes right back of course to the Bracks Labor government's introduction of the state's first Victorian renewable energy target (VRET) in 2006 under former environment minister John Thwaites. He said at the time that it was a historic day 'for Victoria to assume its rightful place in leading the nation towards a sustainable energy future'.

Here we are again: a Victorian government, the Andrews Labor government, leading the nation when it comes to a sustainable energy future. This is what leadership looks like. This is about making sure that our Parliament enshrines the two renewable energy targets that we committed to when we came to government in 2014: 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025. We are enshrining them in law and giving the community the confidence of having a real energy plan for the future, despite the confusion, apathy, ignorance and lack of any form of progress at the national level.

We know the VRET will create 11 000 jobs. We know that; the modelling has been done. It will attract as much as \$9 billion in new investment and cut electricity sector emissions by up to 16 per cent by 2034–35. That means eight years of work for wind tower manufacturers Keppel Prince in Portland as well as cable manufacturing in Tottenham, transformers in Glen Waverley and Benalla, gearboxes in Bendigo and warehousing in Lyndhurst.

I acknowledge that the minister is in the house today. I want to thank her for bringing forward this legislation because I am really proud to stand here as a member of this government and talk to this bill. I have received many, many emails over the last little while from concerned constituents. I heard the member for Caulfield say that the community does not want the VRET. I have received hundreds of emails. I will read one of those to the house today:

Thanks for backing clean energy.

As a constituent in your local electorate, I am writing to communicate my support for a fast and fair transition to 100 per cent renewable energy.

Victoria has a new renewable energy action plan, complete with a renewable energy target, that could deliver 5400 megawatts of wind and solar by the year 2025.

I want to see legislation to support this policy passed in Parliament as soon as possible, so that we can begin building the clean energy of the future we urgently need.

Poll after poll shows that overwhelmingly the majority of Victorians support more renewable energy, as I do and as do my colleagues. The Victorian government has moved towards auctioning 1500 megawatts of clean energy to be built by 2020, and we want to see this target achieved in this term of government.

At the end of that email the constituent commented:

Australia is already feeling the effects of climate change, caused by human activity, particularly the burning of coal and gas. The VRET is an opportunity to cut climate pollution and secure a safe climate for all Victorians.

That is just one of many, many constituent letters that I have received over the last little while.

For future generations, for the sake of our children and their children, let us get on with the VRET, getting it through Parliament as quickly as possible. This bill is important because this is the first time such an ambitious renewable energy target has been enshrined in legislation anywhere in Australia. I encourage those opposite to consider the importance of this legislation and what it does mean for our future here in Victoria.

I am very pleased also to refer to the \$1 million that was recently announced by the government to establish a series of community power hubs in regional Victoria and to investigate the renewable energy potential of Bendigo's historic mine shafts. This is important for Bendigo. This is important for regional jobs. Our minister announced funding of \$900 000 for three two-year pilot community power hubs in Bendigo, Ballarat and of course in the Latrobe Valley. I am pleased that the Bendigo Sustainability Group will host the pilot in Bendigo so we are able to get on with generating up to 784 kilowatts an hour, boosting the reliability of the local power grid, creating local jobs and supporting the growth of local businesses.

One of the things that I want to particularly mention in relation to community-driven projects around renewable projects is of course a project that I am very proud of and one that I have spoken of many times in this house, and that is the Renewable Newstead project. Back in May 2015 the Andrews Labor government allocated \$200 000 in funding to Newstead 2021 to

prepare a business case and master plan for the town of Newstead so it can be powered by 100 per cent renewable energy. This funding was one of our government's first initiatives aimed at supporting renewable energy, and forms part of its bigger and broader action on renewable energy, which is where we are right now today. Newstead 2021 are working collaboratively with Powercor in the implementation of the business case and master plan, which will see the ability of all Newstead residents, irrespective of their income, to benefit from renewable energy.

I note that today a report was tabled in the Parliament by the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee. It says that community-driven projects need to be looked at more closely. What is important about the Newstead project is that it is providing a usable model for other Victorian towns that are aiming to transition to a fully renewable energy supply. That is what is so important about the renewable Newstead project. Obviously communities across my electorate are very pleased that this government is getting on with the VRET.

The other thing I want to mention is that we are facing a really challenging summer this year on a number of fronts. It will be hotter and it will be longer than the norm. Without spring rain, the risk of bushfires will be even more severe. The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has modelled a range of scenarios, but what we need to do is have measures in place to ensure that there is no risk to our electricity demand. Our renewable energy target and our investment in battery storage and energy efficiency are boosting supply, improving reliability and ensuring we have enough power to meet that demand. The report that came from AEMO also reiterates the lack of national energy policy from the Turnbull government, which is crippling investment and putting pressure on power prices.

In conclusion, the energy challenge facing us is one of a system undergoing its greatest transition in a century. How energy is supplied is changing. Market forces and a global trend of decarbonisation are driving a complete change in how electricity is generated and stored. So we have a challenge: how to grow it efficiently and effectively and how to integrate this without disruption to our network. This is happening all around the world, not just here in Victoria or in Australia. Governments that accept it, embrace it and plan and deliver on it will ensure the future welfare and prosperity for their societies. Governments that do not, like the Abbot-Turnbull government in Canberra, will indeed lead us to ruin.

Victoria will not follow them. Victoria will set our renewable energy target (RET). We will be leaders in this space. We will make sure that Victoria is a winner, and we will deliver for Victorians an energy system that is clean, affordable and reliable. It will not be easy — no-one said these things are easy; it is never easy — but we have to get on with doing something for our future generations. We cannot rely on the old ways.

Importantly, this RET will bring jobs to our regions, and I like nothing more than seeing people in my region having new jobs. Unfortunately we have a federal government that is riven by its own internal divisions and its inability to accept the science and economics mandate to shift to clean energy; that is so disappointing. But, without federal leadership, we know what needs to be done, and we are getting on with it.

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — I am very happy to rise today to speak in support of this bill, the Victorian renewable energy target (VRET) bill. I also have to say that I am a little relieved that the bill has finally come before the house. I was starting to worry that it might never come. I am very glad that it is here, because as we know a Victorian renewable energy target is an absolutely crucial piece of policy in the fight against climate change, in moving our energy away from coal towards renewables, to help lower power bills and also to help us fight pollution.

There are amendments I would like to make to this bill, and now, under standing orders, I wish to advise the house of these amendments to the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017 and request that they be circulated.

Greens amendments circulated by Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) under standing orders.

Ms SANDELL — I hope that we are able to make time to go into consideration in detail on this bill to allow these amendments to be formally moved, otherwise we will be moving them in the upper house. These amendments relate to prohibiting the burning of native forests as renewable energy, and I will address these later on in my speech.

The VRET was one of the top policy priorities that I took to the 2014 election, and I am really, really pleased to stand here and see it become a reality. I know there are many, many people who were involved. Some of them are in the chamber today, some of them are in the gallery and some of them are not here in this room, but there are so many people who worked to make this bill a reality, often fighting opposing forces that were quite powerful. You all know who you are. Thank you so much.

Today in my speech I want to give a little bit of the history of the campaign and of this bill, just as I did when I spoke on the bill to ban fracking and onshore unconventional gas in Victoria. I want to make sure the history of the campaign to get to this point is not lost, because while this government deserves a lot of the credit for bringing this bill —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — Order! The member for Melbourne has the call.

Mr Hibbins — You would eat cockroaches before you would give us any credit for this.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — Order! The member for Prahran is not helping his colleague, the member for Melbourne, who has the call.

Ms SANDELL — Thank you to the member for Prahran. That is indeed correct: the Labor Party would eat cockroaches before they would give the Greens any credit for this, but I am —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — Order! It is disorderly to respond to interjections, and I call the member for Melbourne.

Ms SANDELL — I am doing the right thing in acknowledging that this government has done the right thing by bringing this bill to the house. But let me say, they were encouraged, dare I say pushed, to do this by a community campaign. Many people who ran this community campaign are actually in the public gallery today, and the lion's share of the credit for bringing in this bill goes to the community campaign that made it happen. I want to make sure their contributions are on record in *Hansard* today, because rarely do they get acknowledged. When there is a plaque at a renewable energy plant I am sure it will say, 'The minister opened this project'; it will not say, 'and thank you to the community campaign that made it happen'.

Let me take you back to 2014. We had a state election looming. In the face of terrible policy uncertainty and very little action on climate change at a federal level, Friends of the Earth and the Yes 2 Renewables campaign identified the VRET as a very important policy to give certainty to the renewable energy industry and to help shift us to renewable energy and away from coal. They approached the Labor opposition, but they refused to commit to a VRET. Of course the Liberals and the National Party were absolutely nowhere when it came to renewable energy policy, and I see they are nowhere today because there are very few of them in the chamber.

I would like to congratulate Leigh Ewbank, Cam Walker and their team for this great campaign. They held rallies, they held public meetings, they contacted MPs and they never, ever let the Labor opposition rest. They followed them around to announcements and campaign events to highlight the importance of a VRET and to make sure that they could not forget this was a top priority for voters.

They met with me and of course I agreed that a VRET would be incredibly important. In fact it was Greens policy, so the Greens joined the campaign and I made the VRET one of the top issues for my 2014 campaign. I held forums, I spoke at rallies and events, and I encouraged supporters to contact MPs, started petitions and more.

Environment Victoria, while they did not directly campaign on a Victorian renewable energy target, were doorknocking in marginal seats and running a campaign to show Labor that renewable energy was in fact popular in the places that Labor seems to care about the most, which are the outer suburban marginal seats. So congratulations also go in particular to Jane Stabb, the lead organiser at Environment Victoria, and her team for this really important work.

I am sure the MP for Frankston and many others who were targeted by this campaign will get up and speak today about how great the VRET is, and that confirms the power of this campaign. These MPs in marginal seats know that their constituents support renewable energy, they know that it will help get them re-elected and they are doing the right thing by actually standing up for renewable energy because their constituents are asking them to, and I do wish that the Liberal Party would do the same in their seats.

However, despite all this campaigning leading up to the 2014 election and the fact that a VRET was in fact an eminently sensible policy, prior to the election the Labor Party would not commit to it. I have to say that I was pretty surprised by this. I could not believe that any party would go into an election without a decent renewable energy or climate change policy, but that is what happened in 2014. Neither the Liberals nor the Labor Party nor the National Party had a decent renewables policy going into that campaign, and that is a fact.

All of us in the movement knew that we only had one choice: we could not let Labor or Liberals get away with it. We could not let up the pressure once the new government came in. One of my very first acts as an MP was to host a renewables roundtable with industry leaders and renewable energy experts to talk about how we could band together to lobby the government and talk

about the policy change that was needed. We wanted to show the government that we were united in our need for a VRET. A very strong statement came out of that roundtable, and we received quite a bit of media coverage as well. But the government still refused to commit.

At first the government had an excuse; they hid behind the inaction of the federal government. They hid behind a provision in the federal renewable energy target legislation that said a state target could not be implemented if it clashed with the federal target. In fact this was just a smokescreen. I worked with energy policy experts at the University of Melbourne to do the policy work to show that there were many policy mechanisms that could be implemented by a state government to get around this provision in the federal legislation.

I wrote articles in places like *RenewEconomy*, talking about how this could be implemented practically so that our campaign really had some policy depth to it. I asked questions in Parliament, as many of you will remember, and we continued our public campaign with more rallies, more actions, more people contacting their MPs and the Yes 2 Renewables campaign continued to follow MPs around to announcements, including announcements for renewable energy projects like the project in Newstead that was mentioned, to make sure that Labor could not forget that they needed to commit to a VRET.

After many, many months of dithering and many, many months of delay the campaign finally triumphed and the government committed to a VRET. We did not know how high it was going to be and we were worried that it would be business as usual, so we continued to pressure the government to make sure that Labor knew they could not get away with just a business-as-usual target that did not bring about real change.

The campaign won. We are finally seeing a commitment to a VRET that is more than just business as usual — a VRET of 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025, which is a great outcome for jobs, a great outcome for health and a great outcome in terms of climate impacts. Along with the ban on fracking, this VRET bill is yet another example of what the climate movement can achieve when we campaign to hold the old parties to account. These targets will provide the market with the certainty that it needs to back new renewables in our state. We know that Victoria is already home to many renewable energy companies, wind and solar projects that can lower power bills and lift our response to climate change. And now we can build even more.

That is a little bit of history to the bill. Now I would like to talk in a little more detail about the bill. On this, I have to say that I was a little disappointed when I saw the bill. It sets a target, sure, but it does not actually set up any mechanism in the legislation for reaching the target. It is not actually going to compel a future government to do very much. Sure, the minister is compelled to report annually to Parliament on progress towards the targets and the government is required to gazette the minimum renewable energy that will be needed to meet the targets in 2017 and 2019. But beyond that, the government is essentially saying, 'Trust us, we will meet the targets. We'll do some reverse auctions, we'll build renewables. Don't worry, we'll meet the targets'.

Yes, the government has done some of this already, and that is good. Sure, we can just trust them to meet the targets and hope that simply being required to report progress to Parliament will be enough to compel them to actually meet the targets and do the work that is necessary. But I would feel, and I am sure the movement would feel, a lot more comfortable if there was something in this bill that required the government to actually conduct auctions for renewables projects, be they reverse auctions or some other mechanism to ensure that the target is met to provide the certainty we need. We know there are ways to do this legislatively if only the government had the will to do that.

With the closure of Hazelwood — through no action of this government, I really have to say, but due to a decision made by the owner of Hazelwood, Engie — our emissions should decrease. It will look like we are getting more energy from renewables as a percentage of the total, but that does not mean that we are doing anything to actively transition away from coal. In fact this government has no public plans to transition away from coal or to close any more coal stations, or even to stop giving public funds to coal projects.

In the 'Statement on Future Uses of Brown Coal', the Victorian Labor government says Victoria is 'open for business' for coal projects. It really is time to pull our money out of this dying industry and invest it in the future of our state, which can only be clean and renewable. My point is that we may actually meet the VRET target through the closure of Hazelwood and the renewables that are already in the system without this government having to do much else. A future government, especially if it is a Liberal-Nationals government, will probably do even less.

I note that there are no safeguards in this bill against the whims of future governments who may seek to dismantle this initiative. There are no penalties for

governments who fail to meet VRETs and that is a worry, given how much the Liberal and National parties seem to want to take us back to the dark ages when it comes to energy policy. I am pretty disappointed that the Liberal and National parties are not getting behind this legislation.

The time for denying the reality of climate change is simply over. Even from a purely economic standpoint, implementing a VRET will contribute to creating jobs in regional communities and providing drought-proof income for farmers. This will benefit Liberal and National constituencies the most, so it would be a huge disservice to their communities to vote against this bill.

Backing a VRET is far more economically responsible than committing to a blank cheque for more coal power in the Latrobe Valley, especially when coal not only produces climate impacts but serious health impacts on those who live near those coal plants and for the rest of us when it comes to the impact of climate change. Polls consistently show that conservative voters are in favour of action on climate change, so it makes no sense for the coalition in opposition to continue to advocate for inaction and denial.

The Leader of the Opposition's pledge to keep coal open 'no matter the cost' is essentially writing a blank cheque to an outdated and dying industry. This is an extremely reckless economic policy and I do not understand why the Liberal and National parties cannot get behind renewable energy. It simply makes sense. Also it is incredibly popular, and it is incredibly popular in marginal seats. These are outdated and completely irresponsible views, and I very much hope that voters punish them for it at the next election. I am sure they will.

Now I promised I would outline the proposed amendments to this bill and I will do that now. We are concerned that in this bill the definition of what constitutes an eligible renewable energy source is not adequately specified. The problem with this is that some industries will seek to include environmentally destructive and polluting energy sources, like burning our native forests as biomass, and say that is renewable energy when in fact that is not renewable energy at all. The logging industry is losing customers fast. We know that it is a dying industry, just like coal, and they are desperately seeking new customers for their product. They want a new market to open up; they have their eyes on burning native forests as renewable energy and really hope that that will become a new customer for them. But we are not going to let that happen.

To this end, we will be moving an amendment that adds a definition of renewable energy to this bill to specifically prohibit the burning of our native forests for biomass energy because it is not sustainable and will lead to further pressure to log our native forests.

Mr D. O'Brien interjected.

Ms SANDELL — The member for Gippsland South is interjecting. I think he misunderstands how trashing ecosystems is not something that is sustainable in the long term.

There are many places where we could put plantations and transition away from dated forest logging. It would be much better for our economy because native forest logging is a dying industry already, and forests are much better for our environment. These forests are home to many endangered species. This Labor government, supported by the Liberal Party and The Nationals, is logging them at an alarming rate and does not show any sign of stopping. We cannot let this bill sneakily include a provision to burn native forests for energy.

Mr Hibbins interjected.

Ms SANDELL — Heaven forbid that the Labor Party should support our amendments, but if they do not I hope they bring their own amendments that do exactly the same thing.

In conclusion, even though I have outlined some concerns with and flaws in this legislation, we will be supporting it. It sets a target, and that is what the Greens have been calling for. We see it as a huge win for all our supporters and for the climate movement who got us to this point. Once again, I would like to congratulate all of those people who were involved and I would urge those who are not supporting it to get on board. Coal is dying. Renewable energy is the future. Get on board the future or you will simply be left behind.

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. There is nothing better than hearing the Greens sing our praises, and I thank the members for Melbourne and Prahran for being here this afternoon. Let us not forget it is the Andrews Labor government that brought this legislation before the house. It is the Andrews Labor government that budgeted for this legislation and delivered Labor budgets, not Greens budgets. It is a government that has Labor ministers, not Greens ministers, and of course a Labor Premier.

This government — the Andrews Labor government — gets things done. We are a forward-thinking government willing to make those big decisions that secure our state's future and keep our state thriving both now and for future generations. This is a government that has not wasted a single day in office, because we on this side of the house know how important it is to use all of those tools afforded to us in government to make this state an even better one, whether it is building Melbourne Metro, removing those 50 level crossings, improving the Tullamarine and Monash freeways — all of the projects that are on the go in making this state better and stronger — or setting tangible, realistic and exciting renewable energy targets. This government — the Andrews Labor government — will always put people and jobs first.

The Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017, as we have heard this afternoon, enshrines in law our targets of 25 per cent renewable electricity by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025.

Mr Richardson — That is keeping the lights on.

Mr J. BULL — That is keeping the lights on, member for Mordialloc. What does that actually mean though? It means an investment, a real investment, in modern technology. It means an investment in modern jobs. It means a cleaner, healthier and safer environment for generations to come. That is something that each and every member of this side of the house, and in fact all members of the house, should want. The time has come for us in this place to make it clear that if we are to have an affordable, reliable and clean energy future, we must now plan for and grow our renewable energy sector.

I had the great opportunity in earlier years to study environmental science during my university days, and for a long time it has been clear to me that the world was moving in the direction of renewable energy. We know that renewables are the cheapest to build, we know that they are the fastest to build, we know that the banks believe in them, and we know that in every possible way, in every shape and form, renewable technologies make sense. Of course they are our future. On top of all those benefits that you do receive as a state and a nation, they are incredibly exciting. Whether it is wind, solar, tidal, geothermal, there is so much scope and so much opportunity to buy into these technologies and to get on and deliver these really exciting projects. Only those opposite, along with some of their mates in Canberra, would oppose some of these projects. I do say though, history will be the best judge. In five, 10, 15 or 20 years time, when these targets are set right around the world and renewables have created

thousands of jobs and in fact brought power prices down, I ask those opposite to come out and apologise.

We know that there are a whole range of opportunities in this space — a whole range of projects and a whole range of jobs, especially throughout rural and regional Victoria. I listened quite closely to the comments this afternoon of the shadow minister for energy and resources, the member for Caulfield, and I have to say they were some of the least inspiring that I have heard. Shadow minister, I do say to you: this is a very exciting space, and these new technologies are vital for jobs, a clean environment and many of those communities right across the state that need significant investment. The shadow minister said this has to be done sensibly. What could be more sensible than setting a target — a tangible and realistic target — investing in those right technologies and having a clear and tangible vision? That is exactly what the Andrews Labor government is focused on doing. We know that Victorians are sick and tired of hearing the drab doom and gloom from those opposite. Victorians want energy security of course at an affordable price and they want and need a clean environment — not just for today's generation but for generations to come.

I did have the great opportunity earlier this year to tour a local business, Fronius Australia, based in Tullamarine in my electorate. Fronius has 28 subsidiaries on four continents, as well as sales and service partners in more than 60 countries spanning every continent. They began in 1945, and at that time charging car batteries was something that could not be taken for granted. It was Günter Fronius who was unwilling to accept this. To begin with he repaired electrical appliances, and he built his first charger using 50 hertz of technology. In 1992 the decision was taken to focus on the future field of solar energy, which is where the company is today. They have three divisions: perfect welding, solar energy and perfect charging. These companies — if we take Fronius as an example and we look right across the state — have gone from strength to strength creating jobs, improving technologies and improving the communities that they are in through those job creations, but also by being a sustainable business — a business that improves the environment and is better for everyone. It is businesses like Fronius and hundreds more right across the state that will benefit from a renewable energy target.

Our target of 40 per cent by 2025 will deliver thousands more jobs, and we are hosting a renewable energy auction, as other members have mentioned this afternoon. To put it into context, an auction of up to 650 megawatts will deliver enough energy to power 389 000 households every year, or the equivalent of

Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, the Latrobe Valley and more. This alone will create 1250 construction jobs and 90 ongoing jobs as well as \$1.3 billion of additional renewable energy investment.

It is vital in this state that we embrace this transformation, the significant economic, environmental and social benefits that are available through this piece of legislation. This is a critical bill and it is an opportunity. That is why I go back to those disappointing comments by the shadow minister and the doom and gloom approach. We need to be leaders in this space. We need to be talking up this space. We need to be as excited by renewables as are so many of the fantastic businesses right across Victoria, and the Andrews Labor government is leading the charge.

Add to this that the Victorian renewable energy target is expected to reduce the average annual electricity bill for representative households by around \$29 per year, for medium businesses by around \$2500 per year and for large companies by around \$140 000 per year. These are significant price drops, and that is critical. We know this will happen the more wind and solar resources come online and onto the market. We have new wind farms near Horsham and the Mount Gellibrand wind farm near Colac that will also be up and running next year, supplying enough electricity to power over 80 000 Victorian homes. These are significant projects and significant investments.

Renewable energy is fast establishing itself as the cheapest and cleanest source of new electricity supply, and this is fantastic news both for job creation and for the environment. Billions of dollars of investment into Victoria will help to create up to 11 000 jobs, the majority of which will be in regional areas, which of course is fundamentally important for those smaller but just as important local economies. I think that is something those opposite should fully recognise, fully understand and completely support.

We know that these are critical projects to see the Victorian renewable energy target delivered. The Andrews Labor government is getting on with doing what is needed in this space. Our plan is out there, and we will deliver it. I want to take the opportunity to commend the Premier, the Treasurer and of course the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on having the vision, the determination and, most importantly, the passion and drive to see this done. This is a visionary piece of legislation, and I fully commend the Victorian renewable energy target and the bill to the house.

Mr M. O'BRIEN (Malvern) — Listening to the last two speakers — the Greens member for Melbourne and the Labor member for Sunbury — in relation to this renewable energy bill is like hearing two bald men squabble over a comb, both of them desperately trying to take credit for a policy which is ultimately about making energy more expensive and less reliable. This is a bill which is about making life harder for ordinary Victorians, because we have to understand the human cost of the moral and political vanity that is contained within this bill.

What about the human cost when this government tripled the tax on Hazelwood in one fell swoop and then forced it out of business? What about the human cost to those workers? What about the human cost to those thousand-odd workers in the Latrobe Valley who found themselves out of a job because Labor tripled the tax on the business?

When governments want to see less of something, they increase the tax on it. If you want to decrease smoking, you increase the tax on it. If you want to decrease drinking, you increase the tax on it. When you want to decrease electricity coming out of the Latrobe Valley, you increase the tax on it, which is exactly what Labor did. They tripled the tax on it — not doubled it. They tripled the tax on it, and what happened?

We had all the spin, all the rubbish and all the lies coming from the Labor government. They came out and said, 'Don't worry about Hazelwood closing down. It's going to be a blip'. They came out and said, 'It's only going to cost an extra 85 cents a week on the power bill'. Eighty-five cents a week was the promise that Labor made when their taxes closed down Hazelwood. They said, 'Don't worry about it. It's only going to be a 4 per cent increase'. That turned out to be utter tosh, utter rubbish.

We have seen bills skyrocketing in this state. I was down the road just the other day speaking to my local butcher a few doors down from me.

Ms Ward interjected.

Mr M. O'BRIEN — The member for Eltham is not even pretending to be upset about small businesses feeling pressure. She is laughing at it. She is joking about it. She thinks that small businesses facing trouble is something to be laughed about, because Labor does not care.

Ms Ward — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I do take offence at being grossly misrepresented by the member opposite. There is no question about anybody in this government laughing at the cost of energy bills.

In fact we are doing something about it. What is laughable is the member's hysteria over going to the butcher.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — Order! There is no point of order.

Mr M. O'BRIEN — They are very sensitive about laughing at the plight of small businesses over something that they have caused, and so they should be, because they are grubs. Walking down the road, about three doors down, I spoke to Marty, my local butcher, and I saw that one of the display fridges was off. There was no power on the display fridge and he had non-refrigerated products in there. I said, 'Why is that the case?'. He said, 'I can't afford to run the fridge anymore'. He said, 'It costs me \$500 a month to keep that fridge on. I can't justify the bills'. So he now turns the power off on some of his fridges. He now turns the lights off in the back of his shop. Labor and the Greens say, 'This is fantastic. Let's go back to the Stone Age. Let's try to get rid of electricity. It's far better for people to feel the moral pain of paying higher bills, because that saves the planet somehow' — what utter garbage.

You people need to start living in the real world, the real world where small businesses are struggling, the real world where households cannot pay their bills. That is the real world that I live in, that people on this side of the house live in. We are not green ideologues like the members of the Labor Party and the members of the Greens, because they put their ideology ahead of the needs of people, and that is what this side of the house will never do. They put ideology before consumers. They put ideology before businesses. They put ideology before keeping the lights on.

When we look at this bill before us we see that Labor is trying to say that renewable energy is about cutting your bill; it is about reducing prices. I refer to an article from the *Herald Sun* of 4 September, written by Matt Johnston and Rob Harris, with the heading 'Renewables auction a \$250 million slug'. The article says:

Victorian taxpayers will cough up hundreds of millions of dollars to help pay for the Andrews government's upcoming solar and wind farm auction.

The public subsidy was added to the scheme at the last minute to avoid passing on extra costs to household bills — which are already skyrocketing.

The move will punch a \$250-\$350 million hole in the state budget, and experts warn the full cost could be much higher.

We keep hearing all this rhetoric and spin from the Greens and the Labor Party about how renewables will save us money. If they are saving us money, why

are they punching a \$250 million to \$350 million hole in the state budget? If they are cheaper, why do you need to subsidise them? There is the answer. It is because they are garbage claims; they are absolute garbage claims. They are simply making taxpayers and power users pay through the nose for their own ideological vanity.

Ms Ward interjected.

Mr M. O'BRIEN — There is much whingeing and whining coming from the member for Eltham, and it betrays her own embarrassment at attacking small businesses and having no sympathy and no empathy for what this bill will do to them, and there is the same lack of sympathy and empathy for households. This is why this is a bad bill. It is why we will not only oppose it if this has the misfortune of passing this Parliament, but we will repeal it. Let me make that really clear: we will repeal it.

Mr Howard interjected.

Mr M. O'BRIEN — You would think that he was not going to retire. It is like he is trying to get everything out in the last few months.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — Order! The member for Malvern will refer to members by their appropriate title.

Mr M. O'BRIEN — I refer to the *Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market* from June 2017, otherwise known as the Finkel report — something which I thought members opposite have claimed they support. But what is it that the Finkel report actually says? At recommendation 3.2 it says:

The panel recommends that the Australian and state and territory governments agree to an emissions reduction trajectory for the national electricity market.

So Finkel clearly says that states should not go at it on their own. It says there should be an agreed national position. This bill is completely contradictory to the Finkel recommendations. How does the government sit here with a straight face and say, 'We support national approaches except when we don't'? What are the consequences of moving away from that uniform position? I refer to page 165, and I quote:

Targets in the electricity sector that are more ambitious than the 28 per cent reduction on 2005 levels by 2030 trajectory may have consequences for security, cost and reliability ...

This is what the chief scientist of this country is warning us. It is what he is saying to this Parliament

and to this ideologically obsessed government and their cheerleaders in the Greens. He is saying there will be consequences for security, cost and reliability of supply. If the Labor Party wants to put its own moral and political vanity ahead of the interests of a secure power supply, an affordable power supply and a reliable power supply, then that is their business, but we will not stand for it. We believe in an affordable, secure, fair and — yes — clean system.

When we were last in government we doubled funding for the energy technology innovation scheme. We doubled funding for it. When I was energy minister we invested in start-up pilots in wind, solar, geothermal and wave power. But what we will not stand for is this government putting blind ideology ahead of the interests of consumers, the interests of small business and the interests of people who are going to be hurt and damaged by this government's blind ideological obsession. This is a bad bill because it is about moral and political posturing that will hurt ordinary Victorians, hurt businesses and put people out of work. We will not stand for it, we will not support it and, when in government, we will repeal it.

Ms WARD (Eltham) — I have to say that was a shocking audition by the member for Malvern for the position of Leader of the Opposition, because I tell you what: I do not know how he is going to get that one vote. I would have thought that this would have been an opportunity for the member for Malvern to put forward an actual view — to put forward a pathway forward for this state when it comes to energy sustainability and energy affordability. Instead we got a 10-minute rant about not much at all. In fact it is amazing that he quoted the one recommendation from the Finkel report that the Turnbull government will not accept. They will not accept it. So why are you quoting something that your colleagues in the big house in Canberra will not even support? Sir, you are not going to get that one vote. Your struggle for leadership of the opposition has only just begun.

It is up to you and the people on your side of the house to actually find a way forward that does not have its head in the sand and that actually relies on the science and making sure that this state has a pathway forward into the future and good energy sources, affordable energy sources and clean energy. Those opposite want to rant and rave about ideology. Well, the ideology of the Labor Party is pretty clear. It is about jobs, and it is about sustainable jobs. This is exactly what this legislation will do.

Mr M. O'Brien — Tell the Hazelwood workers that.

Ms WARD — I thank the member opposite for raising Hazelwood, because where were you for four years? You were in hiding, disgracefully hiding away from the realities of Hazelwood. Were they able to bargain anything for Hazelwood? No, they were not. Were they able to repair Hazelwood? No, they were not. Were they able to find the \$1 billion to repair the structural damage on disabled services within Hazelwood? No, they were not. There is a French company, Engie, who do not want to keep Hazelwood going because it is not worth it. And why is it not worth it? Because coal is dying. It is becoming an increasingly inefficient —

Mr Wynne — They are closing all over the world.

Ms WARD — That is exactly right, member for Richmond. They are closing all over the world, just as they are closing in New South Wales. In five years they will be closing in New South Wales as well. It is becoming an inefficient energy source, which is why this government is investing in clean energy. Clean energy is going to give us the jobs of the future. This is not a culture war, member for Malvern, this is a desire for this state to be a sustainable state — sustainable for jobs, sustainable for the environment and sustainable for our economy.

For you lot over there to not see the realities of that is absolutely shameful. You should be ashamed that you are unable to actually understand the realities that we face in this state, in this country and on this planet. That you are so blinded by your culture wars that you do not understand the real implications of what you are saying is absolutely disgraceful. You should be deeply, deeply ashamed of the rubbish you members opposite make up about this issue, because it is people's lives that you are lying about. It is people's lives that you are not actually telling the full story about. A sustainable economy is one that will invest in sustainable energy, and for you lot not to see that is absolute madness.

Acting Speaker, I want to read you something from 1900. We are going to channel the member for Essendon here. He likes to delve into history, so let me go down that path as well. We are going to go to the *Argus* — the member for Richmond would know the *Argus* — and I quote:

The real truth is that when the motor comes into universal use life will not be worth living ... But to live in a city when motors have superseded horses will be like living in a cotton mill, with a boiler factory on one side and a merry-go-round with a steam organ on the other.

...

A horse does not like to run a man down if he can help it, but a machine of steel and brass will delight in killing people.

Well, I tell you what: the words in the *Argus* of 1900 are pretty similar to all of the speeches that we are hearing today from those opposite. Just as in 1900 the *Argus* freaked out over the use of the motor car, those opposite are freaking out over the use of clean energy. Why would they freak out about the money that we are investing in wind farms and the jobs that will be created?

I will tell you why those opposite are not embracing wind farms — it is because they did not embrace them when they were in government. In fact when in government those opposite cost people jobs. They cost 100 jobs in Portland because of their ridiculous policy when it came to wind farms. Why were they not ranting and raving about saving jobs when they were in government? When did they help rural and regional Victoria when they were in government? They were missing in action. They are absolutely disgraceful —

Mr Wynne interjected.

Ms WARD — Exactly right, member for Richmond. Let us hear from Roger Teal, who was a former worker. He was quoted in the *Age* as saying:

There's nothing left in town. There's no job opportunities, everything is in wind-down mode. This is another nail in the coffin for Portland ...

Where were the Liberal-Nationals government then? Where was their investment in economies and industries in regional and rural Victoria? They were missing in action.

Why were they missing in action? Because all they want to do is indulge in their stupid culture wars. They want to go on this ridiculous rant in support of coal when we want to support jobs. We want to look to the future and know where the future jobs are going to be, and they are in clean energy. It is as simple as that: jobs of the future are in clean energy. I really recommend that those on the other side get on board because, I tell you what, they are so far behind, it is just not funny; it is absolutely not funny.

I put the challenge out to the member for Malvern: if he wants to repeal this legislation, mate, knock yourself out. Bring it on, because I tell you what: the people of Victoria will see you for the fools that you are. It would be foolish to repeal this legislation. It would be foolish to say that clean jobs and clean energy are not important because it is absolutely about jobs. It is about creating jobs for our future.

That is why things are already happening in this state. We are creating jobs based on clean energy. That those opposite cannot even look at the numbers and understand what is going on is just insane. We have solar trams for Melbourne, and in Numurkah and Bannerton we have solar farms. Our tram network will be powered by new large-scale solar plants. We have announced the awarding of contracts for two large-scale solar plants to power Melbourne's tram network. That includes solar farms that will deliver \$150 million in new capital investment and 300 new jobs in regional Victoria during construction.

Mr Wynne — How many?

Ms WARD — Three hundred, member for Richmond. Bannerton Solar Park near Robinville in the Sunraysia district is expected to provide solar-powered electricity, while the Numurkah Solar Farm will also generate 38 megawatts.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms WARD — We have also begun construction of the Gellibrand wind farm. It is expected to generate electricity for more than 100 000 households. This is how we keep energy prices down — by investing in new, clean technology. For those opposite to not embrace science, to not embrace where we can go, to not embrace the future is the mark of a party that has lost its way, a party that has no soul, a party that has no substance, a party that does not look to tomorrow but can only look to the past, a party that can only look to that ancient Ford motor car that would have been travelling along Melbourne streets at about 14 to 15 miles per hour, pattering along, not wanting to scare the horses, not wanting to scare anybody else. That is exactly what the Liberal Party is — a shell of its former self. This boisterous party that used to look to the future, that used to look to innovation, that was not afraid of the new, that was not afraid of new challenges, this party that used to have some excitement about it is now just a shell. It is an empty shell —

Mr Wynne — A husk.

Ms WARD — Indeed it is an absolute husk, member for Richmond, because if it was more than that, it would see the potential of clean energy and the jobs that it creates. It would get on board with investment. It would get on board with creating new opportunities instead of creating dead opportunities. By pursuing this line about Hazelwood, that is exactly what they are doing. We know Hazelwood has no future. It would not matter which party was in government — Hazelwood was never going to have any future because

the company did not want to continue it. Those opposite should be ashamed.

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — I rise to make a contribution on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. Before starting the balance of my contribution, can someone please take up a collection to buy the member for Eltham an atlas of Victoria? Please buy the member for Eltham an atlas —

Mr Richardson — An atlas? What century are we in, brother? We are in the 21st century.

Mr WALSH — Because she obviously does not know how to use Google Maps. Perhaps she needs an atlas to know that it is 'Robinvale', not 'Robinville'. As someone who has probably never got out of Melbourne, the member needs to understand that there are a lot of towns out there and it is an insult to the people of Robinvale to call it 'Robinville'. Robinvale has a very proud history that goes back to World War I and the Cuttle family. What the member said was an insult to the people of Robinvale.

The bill before the house is one that the Liberals and Nationals oppose, and if elected to government would actually repeal. I am very happy to repeat that: we would repeal this bill. This is the most anti-jobs piece of legislation that has come before this house in a long time. We have seen a huge increase in power costs since Hazelwood closed, and we are putting at risk Victoria's competitive advantage, which has been there for generations.

The Latrobe Valley has powered Victoria for generations and it has the capacity to power it for generations into the future if we actually get the investment certainty and the policy settings right to make sure that there is investment in new generation: coal power plants. A high-efficiency, low-emission plant is what is needed in Victoria before another one of the power generators closes.

We have seen what has happened to power costs with the closure of Hazelwood. The member for Eltham talked about the number of jobs that have been created in the construction phase of some of the renewable energy projects. Let me say that we are not against renewable energy projects — renewable energy will be part of our power mix into the future — but until there is a way of making sure that there is reliable, affordable and sustainable baseload power, we need that investment in new coal generation into the future.

I have a group of food processors in northern Victoria that I have been working with for six to nine months now who are very, very concerned about their increased

energy costs. This group represents 10 000 jobs. That is 10 000 jobs that are there every year, year in, year out, and they say they represent \$3.2 billion of business turnover. They have been saying to me, 'If these energy costs are the future, we will be out of business'. Quite a few of these companies are multinationals. They have operations in other countries and they are saying, 'Our head offices are saying, "If this is the energy future for Victoria, we will take our manufacturing somewhere else in the world"'. We are talking about putting at risk tens of thousands of Victorian jobs that were developed and built on the back of reliable, affordable power supply in the Latrobe Valley over decades. Those jobs will be at risk into the future.

The discussion about blackouts is interesting. I got into a bit of a war of words with the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change in my local paper on 16 August. A spokesperson for the minister said Mr Walsh 'should stop making up his own facts', and that:

... Victoria would continue to be a net exporter of energy, despite Hazelwood's closure.

'The real experts in this field ... has confirmed that Victoria will have enough supply for this summer ...

That was on 16 August, when the minister was pooh-poohing the idea that we might have blackouts in this state. If you fast-forward to 12 September there is a report in the *Country News* where it says that:

Rolling blackouts could become a way of life in summer according to the Australian Energy Market Operator —

That is the same entity that the minister's spokesperson quoted as saying it was never, ever going to happen:

which is warning 4-hour blackouts could plague Victoria and South Australia for the next decade if more is not done to increase energy supply.

I think that just backs up my case that we do need to have investment in new coal generation in the Latrobe Valley.

That particular article in the *Country News* quotes Adam Jenkins, who is the president of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, on the issues about animal welfare and the implications when you cannot milk, you cannot clean your milk plant and you cannot cool your milk because of energy blackouts into the future. It is very well documented now that the things that the Andrews government and particularly the minister have been saying — that we will have plenty of power — have actually been proven to be totally wrong. It is the same as that mistruth by the Premier that power prices would only go up 4 per cent with the closure of

Hazelwood — an absolute mistruth. Some people that are a bit more frank with their language outside this place would say the Premier probably told a lie about that particular issue and that power prices have gone up by a lot more than 4 per cent.

You look at some examples, particularly around the health services: the Echuca hospital has seen a \$375 000 increase in their power costs and a \$104 000 increase in their gas costs, so a 50 per cent increase in gas and electricity. The Swan Hill hospital have had a \$318 000 increase in their power costs — a 78 per cent increase across that time. Kyabram and District Health Service in my electorate have had a \$166 500 increase in their power costs. Those costs are certainly up a lot more than 4 per cent, which was promised by the Premier.

To finish off I will go to this business that we cannot invest in coal here in Victoria. Senator John Williams, a federal National Party senator, asked the federal parliamentary library to do some research on what coal power plants are being built around the world at the moment. China has 299 new coal generation units under construction. India is building 132 new power plants. Australia's closest neighbour, Indonesia, is planning a further 32 coal power plants to generate power for that country. Nuclear countries such as Japan and South Africa are also increasing their exposure to coal power investments with 21 new plants between them. Vietnam is building 34 new coal power plants.

I am afraid that the policy and the legislation that we have before us in this house is effectively what I would call ostrich legislation. We will put our heads in the sand, we will pretend nothing is happening and the world will go past us. This government with this plan is in absolute denial about how you can ensure sustainable, reliable and affordable power for this state, and it will cost tens and tens of thousands of jobs. As other speakers and I have said, we oppose this particular legislation. We will repeal it if we have the opportunity in government after November next year. We support having a national target as the best way to manage these particular issues. We have a national electricity market; we need a national renewable energy target where everyone can work together. For Victoria to have one target, for New South Wales not to have a target, for Western Australia not to have a target and for South Australia to go the way they have — and we have seen what has happened to South Australia's reliability of energy supply over the last couple of years. We have seen the number of jobs that have been lost out of South Australia. We have seen —

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr WALSH — The member for Mordialloc needs to go and read and understand how power works, and he would know —

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr WALSH — No, it is not that it fell down. He would know that the system collapsed because it had too much reliance on renewable energy and not enough base load going into that system, and the whole system actually crashed around it. This legislation is not good for Victoria and it is not good for Victorian jobs, and we look forward to those on the other side seeing reason and maybe crossing the floor and voting against it. Knowing they will not, it is something that we will repeal.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) — I certainly wish to speak on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017 that is before the house at the moment, and I do so with no joy because it is somewhat sad that we are back to where we were some years ago in moving for the Victorian government to show leadership in the area of power generation by renewable energy. We know that back in the Bracks and Brumby days we were frustrated that under the John Howard federal government, despite years and years of advice from scientists from around the world that we need to show leadership in addressing climate change, that certainly was not happening. His government, like the later Abbott government and like those on the other side of the house, still do not get that unless we address climate change and show leadership on climate change there will be huge costs to the people of this state and to people across the country and around the world in years to come, as we know and as we keep hearing of the outcomes of gradually creeping global warning.

We know that there are extreme climate events that continually happen at a more regular rate and more extreme rate. Out of every one of them — whether it is the hurricanes that we are hearing about in North America at the moment, whether it is those dry summers that cause bushfires and so many other issues of climate extremes — there will be huge costs to the people of the world and the people of Victoria if we do not address climate change. We want to address that and at the same time ensure that we have a secure power supply in the years to come that is not going to add to climate change and is not going to add to carbon emissions. It is in fact going to use renewable clean energy to provide certainty to investors across this state to provide an ongoing source of power into the future.

It is so sad that our government at a national level still does not get it. A number of years ago I had the opportunity to go to Europe and have a look at what

they are doing there. I went to Spain, I went to Germany and I went to Denmark — countries where they do get it. We know that the European Economic Community (EEC) have put requirements upon all EEC members, but a number of them have gone way ahead of renewable energy targets. Denmark some years ago got past 50 per cent of its energy supply coming from renewables, and in Spain likewise. They have been investing strongly in wind, solar and a range of bioenergy and other sources of renewable energy so that they are more and more moving towards 100 per cent of their energy supply coming from renewables.

Where are we back in Australia? We are coming back, in 2017, to where state governments have to show leadership because the federal government simply will not. Back in the Bracks-Brumby days, to show leadership we introduced the Victorian renewable energy target (VRET). Fortunately then John Howard was voted out, the Rudd government came to power and we were able to hand over responsibility for the renewable energy target to the federal government. We moved from the VRET to the mandatory renewable energy target, so we had a renewable energy target across the country. That was a significant advance and what should have been happening all the time. Sadly we know that we now have a federal government that simply wants to deny the need to support investment in renewable energy and that wants to deny climate change issues. So here we are back again where our government needs to show leadership and show that we are going to establish our own renewable energy target. We are going to try to push from 17 per cent renewable energy at the moment up to 25 per cent by 2020 and up to 40 per cent in 2025.

It is so sad that after the Bracks-Brumby days not only did we still not have the federal Liberal government showing leadership but then under the Baillieu government what did they do with the progress that was being made? How many new wind power stations came on in the Baillieu-Napthine days? The answer is none. They killed them off immediately because they listened to those people who said, 'Oh, we don't want a wind turbine somewhere near us'. They allowed everybody who might live within 2 kilometres of a wind turbine to say, 'Oh, we don't want one'. Therefore we had no renewable energy in Victoria — no plan at all from the coalition in their four sad years of government.

So we are back here now, saying, 'Well, we've got to show leadership again. We need to give some proper signals to our wind energy'. As somebody who has a farm in Waubra, I did see the progress of the wind industry in my neighbourhood there, where we had 220 wind turbines established, many of which I can see

from my farmhouse there. I know that the wind industry has provided significant jobs not only in my area. I see the member for Ripon in the house. She knows how many jobs have been created in the Ripon area as a result of investment in the wind energy industry, and she knows none of it happened when her side of politics, the Liberals and The Nationals, were in government. It all came as a result of Labor's support for the alternative energy industry, which we are starting up again now, and it is pleasing for me to see that.

I was in Ballan last week and I went and talked with Goldwind, who are now about to establish the Moorabool wind farm, something that was proposed and permitted under the former Labor government but could not progress while the others were in power because there was no incentive to invest. Now we at last are going from permit to establishing a new wind farm soon in Moorabool and also the Lal Lal wind farm in Elaine and Yendon. Not only will they see our grid getting more energy and supplying power for people across the state but they will also supply significant jobs in regional Victoria. We saw Keppel Prince in Portland have to close down while the other side were in government, because there were no new wind farms being built. They were providing the towers for the Waubra wind farm and other wind farms. Now they are back producing towers again for those companies that are finally being able to invest in wind again.

As a result of this bill and actions that this government has already taken, we see significant new investment in renewables. We have got to keep that happening to get more energy supply. The other side simply want to go back to the dark ages, deny climate change and criticise us. The company that ran the Hazelwood power station said, 'We can't invest in this energy. We don't want to invest in dirty coal-fired power stations that have run through their lifetime'. They said, 'We want to get out of this because we want to be seen to be providing clean energy', and that is what they did. We know it is not appropriate and not economic to support dirty coal-fired power stations that have lived their lives and need serious investment just to keep them pumping out more greenhouse gases into the air.

We need to see sensible support, and that is why it is so sad to hear the other side crowing, saying they would do away with this, do away with these investment signals to companies producing solar and producing wind — producing renewable energy and investing in regional Victoria. To hear the Leader of the National Party proudly say, 'We'd do away with this', just shows they do not have a clue about investment in jobs, they do not have a clue about investing in new energy and they do not have a clue about dealing with

renewables and a pathway to a cleaner future, reducing global warming. That is why I am certainly pleased that this Labor government is in office. I would love to see one in office federally that would show leadership in the area of providing positive signals to renewable energy investors and dealing with climate change.

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — I am pleased to rise to speak on the Victorian renewable energy target (VRET) bill that has been outlined by previous speakers and that the Liberals and Nationals will certainly be opposing. That is not because we do not support renewable energy. I can speak for myself. I am very happy to support renewable energy. Indeed the proposal for an offshore wind farm off Port Albert in my own electorate, which would potentially create jobs, I would be very happy to support if it gets up — but if it can get up on its own merits. On the reasons that we are opposing this bill — and I will go through them in a bit more detail — effectively you can boil them down to the issues of price, the issues of reliability, the issues of national consistency with the recommendations of the Finkel report and the fallacy that this is all about new jobs.

As I said, I do not have any problem with renewable energy per se. In fact it should be part of the mix, and we should be moving through a transition in the future. But I have to comment on the wind farm issue, which comes up regularly. I appreciate that the member for Ripon, the member for South-West Coast and the member for Polwarth feel this issue more directly, but in my electorate of Gippsland South we have two wind farms at the moment and a few more planned. I have to point out to those opposite that not everyone welcomes them. I heard the member for Melbourne saying before that they can help droughtproof a farm. It is all well and good if the towers are on your farm. If they are next door, you tend to be a little less supportive of them.

I say this to those opposite, to those in the gallery and to those who are strongly encouraging us to build wind farms everywhere — because if this legislation goes through, we will see thousands and thousands more wind farms throughout the state. I have a solution: let us put a wind farm in Royal Park. Royal Park is a big, open area, and it has got lots of wind. Let us see what sort of response the community provides if we propose a wind farm for Royal Park. We could go further. We could suggest levelling whole areas of Brunswick and Richmond and establishing 100 hectares of solar farms. Let us see what happens if we propose that. It is very easy for people to sit in the inner city and say that we need more of this and we need more of that, but it is all out there. It does not affect Brunswick or Richmond or Northcote, but it does affect the farms and the people

who live in the Western District and in Gippsland. That is something that is lost by the mob over there. They say everyone loves renewable energy and wants to have it, but there are people who do not support this.

I want to talk about two of the major contentions that the Labor Party has made in respect of this legislation — that is, that it is about creating jobs and that it is about providing cheaper power.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr D. O'BRIEN — Let us have a look at the facts on this, member for Mordialloc. I just had a look at the weekly average spot prices on the Australian Energy Regulator website. In 2014 the average wholesale electricity spot price was around \$43 — \$43.44 if you want to be precise. In 2017 — and this is not surprising — since the closure of Hazelwood, the price has shot up. For the first six months of 2017 the average spot price was \$96.30. The wholesale price has literally almost doubled in three years. Surprise, surprise! When you take out 22 per cent of the state's baseload power — or the state's power per se — you see a spike in prices. Why has Hazelwood closed? Because this government tripled the coal royalty rate. Before everyone goes spare and starts tweeting at me, we all accept that it was going to close. It was going to close in 2025, but this government thought, 'Let's just get in early and cream a bit of cash off with an increase in the royalty'. Lo and behold, that foreign company that we have heard so much about just happened to make the decision to suddenly close Hazelwood about eight years earlier than it was planning to, at a cost, I might add, of 750 direct jobs in the Latrobe Valley, over 1000 in the region and more to come, I fear. Let us dismiss this idea that cheaper prices will occur, because coal still provides cheaper prices as it is now.

I then go to the levelised cost of electricity and what we can expect in the future, because we keep hearing the government say that this VRET will bring prices down. I went to the Finkel report to have a look at the levelised cost of electricity. These are both current prices and predictions for the future. There is a table in appendix A to the Finkel report that highlights that in 2020 wind will cost an average of \$92 per megawatt hour, solar thermal with storage will be \$172 and supercritical coal — if we actually had a supercritical coal plant in Australia — would cost \$76. So in 2020 supercritical coal — so new coal — would still be cheaper. In 2050 supercritical coal would cost \$75 per megawatt hour, and wind would cost \$70. It will be 33 years before wind will be cheaper than supercritical coal. It is not me saying that; that is Australia's chief

scientist, Alan Finkel, saying that in his report. It is in appendix A; members should have a look at it.

If we look at solar photovoltaic with storage and solar thermal with storage, those figures are even higher. We should bear in mind that current coal in the Latrobe Valley costs only about \$30 to \$40 per megawatt hour because of the sunk costs that have been achieved there already. With respect to the notion that suddenly energy will be cheaper, we do not believe it, and I am sure that is why the minister has failed to release the modelling that she says backs up her claim of a \$30 a year reduction in prices. If it is true, put it out there and let us have a look at it.

I want to also talk about the claims that coal is disappearing. We heard the member for Eltham talking about that before. She said all around the world coal-fired plants are shutting down. Funnily enough, just last week a federal parliamentary library report that looked at this was released. An article on that report says:

New electricity generated by coal-fired plants will outstrip that which was retired in 2015 and 2016 by a factor of five —

that is, new coal is still being built.

... China has 299 new coal generation units under construction ...

India is building 132, a further 32 are planned in Indonesia and more are being built in other countries. Japan is moving away from nuclear — and I am sure many people in here would support a move away from nuclear — and building 45 new high-efficiency, low-emissions coal-powered plants. Guess which country will be providing the feedstock for these plants? Yes, that is right; it will be Australia. It is a fallacy that the world is moving away from coal. Indeed the US Energy Information Administration said in a report released just yesterday that whilst coal's share of energy will fall and renewables will grow in the years to 2040, coal will still remain a very large part of the world's energy mix.

I go back to this issue of coal going away. I want to give a special mention to AGL, because it has been the poster boy for those on the other side of this debate, who say even coal companies like AGL are getting out. On the radio the other day I heard AGL being defended against attacks by the 'hate media' and the Turnbull government because they are doing the right thing, apparently. AGL says, 'We're getting out of coal'. They have glossy ads on TV saying that. By when? By 2050. This issue is so critical to a company like AGL that they are getting out in 2050. That is when the Loy

Yang power station will cease to exist; it will be at the end of its useful life.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr D. O'BRIEN — Spare me the bleating about AGL, because if they were seriously committed to getting out of coal, they would be doing it now and not waiting till 2050.

The Leader of The Nationals announced last week that we think there should be a new coal-fired power station proposed for the Latrobe Valley. That is backed up by a report by the Committee for Gippsland chief executive and the Minerals Council of Australia, which investigated a new high-efficiency, low-emissions coal technology. That report estimates that given the cheap price of brown coal in Victoria and also the existing transmission network benefits we have in the valley, it could produce power at \$55 to \$65 per megawatt hour. That is one of the reasons we oppose this legislation.

I am not saying that coal is the be-all and end-all — I absolutely agree that renewables will be part of the mix — but I go back to the original point that the member for Malvern made. If renewables are so much cheaper, why do we need this legislation? Why do we need a state government subsidy for these renewals if they are so much cheaper? The answer is that it is a fallacy. It is not true, and that is why we are opposing this legislation.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — It is a great pleasure to rise to speak on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. I count my lucky stars that I get to follow the member for Gippsland South. There could not have been a better opportunity than to follow his wisdom and his insight, because it is a bit like *deja vu* in here today. It is a bit like *deja vu* from a previous life when I was an adviser to a federal Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. We have heard it all before. This song has played before. This tune is being played out by The Nationals again. I thought we could go back to the Stone Age of five years ago when The Nationals were still struggling for any sort of policy credibility. I go back to November 2012, when the member for Gippsland South was the chief of staff for Barnaby Joyce, the then federal Leader of the National Party in the Senate. I wonder if he rolled out the zinger or if his mates rolled out the zinger that a lamb roast would cost \$100 because of a carbon price. I thought, 'That is a bit steep, that is a bit stiff, 100 bucks for a lamb roast'. Barnaby Joyce went on to say that a lamb would cost as much as a house — that you would be getting involved

in that commodity. That was Barnaby Joyce's zinger, and who has been his chief of staff? His policy cred —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr RICHARDSON — He is walking away now, the member for Gippsland South! He helped him with his policy zingers. I got on Coles online to see what the going market rate is for a lamb chop or a roast lamb, and it is \$24 a kilo. That fear zinger went well, did it not? We are here again. Victoria is going to fall down. Everything is going to turn to ruin. We have heard it all before. Guess what? The market is asking for a signal. I met with a business that employs people in Victoria in the renewable energy sector. They are based in Silicon Valley. They are in California employing thousands of people. They said clearly to me that a year now in renewable energy is like dog years: it is equivalent to seven years. One year is like seven years in the renewable energy sector. It is significant, it is changing and it is substantial. Victoria cannot sit back and not put in the signal to the market to create that certainty.

The Leader of The Nationals said that we should not put in a renewable energy target in the absence of such policy certainty. Where has that got us to now? Where has policy inertia, where has the lack of a credible national plan, got us? Doing nothing has got us in this position. Doing nothing is putting pressure on families and on prices. We are talking in years here. Those opposite are talking about years. We are talking about setting up our state for decades to come. We have the potential in Victoria to be first movers. We have the potential to attract the jobs and attract the investment that will underpin our state's prosperity. To not do it and to not differentiate our economy, to not differentiate our jobs market, is a failure in policy-making in Victoria. Thankfully as we stand here today the Andrews Labor government is governing and is putting in that policy certainty. Yes, coal is still part of the mix, but just like in New South Wales with the Liddell power plant, we see struggles across the board. You will not hear those opposite going after their coalition colleagues in New South Wales who have been awfully quiet on where they stand on Liddell. Why? Because it is a similar circumstance.

We have banks and we have international investors not wanting to buy power plants. Why is that? Why are big super funds and why are big pension funds — international funds that want to underpin the prosperity in retirement of their people — not investing? That is a signal that there is transition. It could not be any more obvious that there is a niche here and a niche for Victoria. We need to take the action and be involved. If we rely on yesterday's technologies to underpin our

prosperity, then we are going to see more jobs lost. We have already seen over the last couple of decades significant rises in power prices. We need to look towards the future in creating jobs. Some of these investments are just astonishing. The extra 650 megawatts that are going to be put into the system, creating more than 1200 jobs and potentially powering hundreds of thousands of homes — that is where we need to be.

What are the opportunities for our regional and rural communities? I take the member for Gippsland South's point about communities not wanting various wind farms and technologies and the like. We need to consult and we need to work with communities, but there are opportunities for people who have less productive land to get into renewable energy. There is an opportunity now to look at the potential of solar farms and wind farms particularly where people are getting smashed by the drought and where they are barely able to make ends meet. How many federal and state tax concessions and policies do we have to just try to keep farming competitive? This is an opportunity —

Mr D. O'Brien — None at all. What are you talking about?

Mr RICHARDSON — Your fed mates, about spreading across tax income. During the sustainability of local government inquiry we heard from farmers about some of the federal supports that are in place. If you want to belt your federal mates about the policies they have, that is your call. Go for your life, because we will line up with you right there.

But some of those farming practices may not be productive in 30 years time with rising temperatures and harder climates. So why do we not put in place the opportunity for these landowners to differentiate, for these landowners to diversify and for these landowners to potentially sell their land to pension funds and to superannuation funds and to build the solar plants and build the wind plants that will underpin our prosperity?

Those opposite have a track record that is deplorable. They backed away from wind farms on ideological grounds. It was not based on science and it was not based on evidence. Now is the chance to harness those new technologies and to really lift our opportunities. If we do not do that, we are failing the next generation of Victorians, who will be struggling more. We have already got cost-of-living pressures with housing affordability. We have already got cost-of-living challenges with electricity and gas. Those opposite put forward almost troglodyte campaigns to basically bury their heads in the sand. The member for Malvern had a

chance to put forward a credible policy, but all he put forward today was an either/or.

At least the member for Gippsland South acknowledged that renewable energy has an important place in the market. The member for Malvern put forward an us or them perspective, but it is transitioning. And guess what? Who would have thought that the federal government and the state opposition would be putting forward an interventionist-type program and buying old assets that are declining and that the private sector will not lend money to and superannuation funds and pension funds internationally will not put their money into? That is a signal that we need to transition; it cannot be any clearer, and that is exactly what the Andrews Labor government is doing.

We are looking towards renewable energy targets by 2025 and then beyond to 2040. That should be a time when most current members of Parliament will no longer be in this place, and we have an obligation to try to set up our communities for the future. The political rhetoric goes back to that time when the member for Gippsland South's old boss up in Canberra said that lamb roasts would be a hundred bucks. Now we have the member for Caulfield putting forward the proposition that the lights will not stay on. It is the same rhetoric; they are the same backward policies.

Show us some ticker. Show us what you are about. Show us that you are talking about the market — a new exciting adventure. One of the key growth areas in Victoria that we are trying to harness is the renewable energy sector. Where is your policy? The opposition have not come up with anything other than that they do not like wind farms. They might have a bet each way on solar and a rainwater tank if they feel so inclined, but beyond that there is nothing. There is no signal. Their policy statement going forward to 2018 is void. It says, 'We'll back coal', and that is about it. They say, 'We'll back coal again and maybe we'll even back some clean coal while we're there; we might have another go at that' — that is absolute garbage. That is absolute bollocks.

Give us something. Because we are not talking about just the next election; we are talking about 2025, when the next generation of Victorians will already be struggling with the cost of living and the pressures that will be put on their communities. We are talking about 2040, when a lot of us here will be out of this place and some of us will have grandchildren. Put forward a policy that is credible. Put forward something for Victorians and join us in the challenge, because it is an exciting industry. I reiterate what I said about the

business based in Silicon Valley with 7000 employees, because it stuck with me. The person who is their representative in Australia said to me. 'One year for the solar industry is the equivalent of seven years, like seven dog years'. It is transitioning and it is changing, and we need to get behind and invest in it. Victoria should be a first mover, because there is so much opportunity to create employment for the future.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — I rise to speak on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. Like my other Liberal colleagues I oppose this bill and will vote against it. This bill will legislate the previously announced Victorian renewable energy targets, and in doing so will absolutely mean that Victoria continues to have the highest growth in power prices across Australia. If we are elected in 2018, we will abolish the Victorian renewable energy target to stop energy prices from rising even further. The Liberal Party stands for cheaper reliable power.

I will start with some local effects in Ripon. Many other people in this debate have discussed Ripon; it seems to be of some interest to many on the other side. I have been consulting with a number of businesses and health services across Ripon. I will start with the East Wimmera Health Service, which covers St Arnaud, Donald and Charlton. The CEO of that health service advised me that in the previous 12 months they had seen an increase of 50 per cent in their energy charges. That is \$150 000 extra in power prices. I note that that \$150 000 extra has not been replaced by the state government; it has not been added to their budget. When we look at the East Grampians Health Service, which is in Ararat where I live, the CEO of that hospital service has said that their power prices are going up 100 per cent — from \$200 000 to a total of \$400 000. Again the government has not seen fit to put in additional funding to cover these power price increases. That is on the government side.

If we look at some private employers, in Ararat we have Gason. In the local press a week or so ago they noted that not containing energy prices is going to put employment at risk. They are a manufacturer. Mr Pye, their CEO, said 'Energy prices seem to be out of control'. Another major employer in Ararat, and one that is kicking great goals in terms of their business being able to attract new business, is AME Systems. I spoke this week with the CEO of AME Systems, Nick Carthew, and he told me that despite the company investing very heavily in new technologies — solar, changing their lighting, light-emitting diodes, all of that sort of thing — their power prices are still increasing rapidly. They have done all the things they were told to do in terms of reducing their energy usage, but they cannot even outstrip power

price rises through that. Businesses are hurting, employment in Ripon is hurting.

If we look at renewable energy in Ripon, at the moment we host 247 wind turbines. They are at Challicum Hills, Ararat, Coonooer Bridge, Chepstowe and Waubra. I note that the member for Buninyong, who lives near Waubra, said there were 220 wind turbines. There are actually 128 turbines at Waubra. We are already hosting 247 turbines and we have a further 280 turbines on the drawing board, with planning permission, including the very large Stockyard Hill Wind Farm. I note that will bring the total installed wind farm towers at Ripon to 527 towers. Many of these towers, the newer ones in particular, are the size of the Sofitel. We are talking about 527 towers across Ripon. The people of Ripon are certainly doing their share in terms of renewable energy.

There are of course benefits that come from wind farms, and the major benefits go to host landholders. They indeed do gain a benefit. They support wind towers on their properties because it gives them another source of income when times are hard. But the number of landholders who host wind farms is very low out of the total proportion of landholders. We have some very big winners and many, many losers. The other benefits are to council, as wind farm owners pay rates to the council.

But it is a complete and utter furphy that all of this wind energy installed and coming in Ripon is creating jobs in Ripon, because if we look at the most recent labour force statistics for Ripon — they are from the March quarter — since December 2014 when the Andrews Labor government was elected, the labour force in Ararat has gone backwards by 599 people and the labour force in Stawell is down by 699 people. That is the labour force data. If we prefer to use the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force data, which takes in the north-west Victorian region — that takes in Ararat, Stawell, St Arnaud, Donald and Charlton — 9494 fewer people have jobs in that region than had them under the last government. We are not seeing benefits to our region from wind energy.

Emma King from the Victorian Council of Social Service noted that we should not be building a greener Victoria on the backs of people doing it tough. The communities of Ripon include some of the lowest income communities in Victoria, and they are paying extraordinarily high power prices and facing extraordinarily bad employment prospects. Business cannot afford to put them on because they are also paying high power prices. Our communities are seeing

the impact of these flawed policies already, and this bill today will just further exacerbate those problems.

I notice that it is not only Liberals who do not like these policies. I note that Martin Ferguson, a former federal Labor cabinet minister, has said that if renewable energy was the cheapest source of power, it would get there on its merits and would not need to be subsidised in the way that this bill and others seek to do. More recently, Graham Richardson, a life member of the Labor Party and also a former Labor federal cabinet minister, said last week, 'There is an elitist cruelty about Labor's energy policy'.

Even your own former cabinet ministers recognise that this bill actually creates unemployment, hurts vulnerable people and does not add to reducing greenhouse gases. As the minister herself has said — she has told us over and over again — Yallourn is not going to close. This will supposedly be some nirvana whereby we get additional energy into the grid but Yallourn does not close. Well, that means there is actually no reduction in emissions; there is no benefit to the environment.

If the issue here is that we are trying to reduce emissions to a lower emissions future, coal has to close, yet those on the other side have told us repeatedly that coal is not going to close. Of course they have to tell us that because if coal closes, the prices go up like they did when Hazelwood closed, and they know that. We keep being told that all this extra supply will come in and all these additional wind farms, many of which will be in Ripon, will bring the supply into the grid, but you do not get rid of emissions unless you close coal. It is very simple. It is undeniable: you cannot reduce Victoria's emissions without closing a coal-fired power station.

That is the only way that this government can get to the outrageous targets they are putting in this bill. It is why we do not support this bill. We stand up for the vulnerable in this community, we stand up for employers and, unlike Labor, we stand up for cheap energy. This bill delivers none of those things. It hurts the vulnerable, and it hurts those who currently do not put their heaters on during winter — those who stay in bed because they cannot heat their homes. That is Labor's energy policy. That is what it is delivering to Ripon. The people of Ripon reject this; they utterly reject this. They want cheaper power and they want jobs, unlike what this government is, as I said, attempting to foist on them.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — I could not be prouder to stand up here as a member of this progressive Labor government and talk on the

Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. I could not be prouder because it is an initiative that we promised and that we are now delivering.

I just want to outline what the bill is, which is fairly clear from the minister's second-reading speech. This bill enshrines in law our target of 25 per cent of electricity in Victoria coming from renewable energy by 2020. We are now at about 17 per cent, so that is a target that is achievable, and we have a 40 per cent target by 2025. The minister herself has said that that is a bold target, but we need to be bold. We have not got time to waste. The second aspect is that the minister will be responsible for setting the minimum generation capacity needed to meet these targets. Thirdly, and very transparently, we will report to the Parliament annually on meeting these targets. So this is no halfway measure; this is a real commitment to clean energy for Victoria's future.

It is a commitment that is backed up by funds — money. It is not just a title. It is actually backed up by significant investment, including the auction scheme that has been discussed. To put it in context, an auction of up to 650 megawatts will deliver enough electricity to power around 389 000 households every year or the energy to power Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Latrobe Valley and more, as others have discussed. This alone — just that initiative alone, that 650 megawatts — will create 1250 construction jobs and 90 ongoing jobs as well as \$1.3 billion of additional renewable energy investment. Our target of 40 per cent by 2025 will deliver thousands more jobs. We know that it will bring on much-needed supply and drive down prices. That is economics 101: more supply, and diversity of supply, leads to security and leads to lower prices. Surely those opposite, who claim the economic management mantle, would understand that. So this is not just a policy announcement. This is one that is well thought out and robustly supported through investment and funds.

I just want to deal with a couple of fallacies, but before I deal with those I want to address the amendment proposed by the Greens member for Melbourne. That amendment is unnecessary. This bill already provides a mechanism under section 10 for the minister to exempt anything, including native timber, from the Victorian renewable energy target. This is not a new thing. The minister fully intends on using that to exempt native timber. It is a longstanding policy of this proud party, the Labor Party, and this government to exempt native timber from similar schemes.

I want to also deal with some of the fallacies on the other side. I think it was the Leader of The Nationals who quoted selectively from the Finkel report about

how Victoria should not go it alone. Obviously the Finkel report says something to that effect; however, the Finkel report also talks about what is best practice. It is a profoundly important report that I am sure Professor Finkel, a very, very hardworking, intelligent and innovative Australian who I have had the pleasure of meeting several times, would have thought would be acted on by the government when it received it. I do not want to put words in his mouth, but I would imagine he would not have dreamt in a million years of the monumental lack of leadership by the national government of this country. Of course he was not going to anticipate that they would not do anything. Had he anticipated it, he might have decided to put an 'NB', 'note before': 'Do not go it alone unless you absolutely have to, because no-one else is doing anything'. I am not putting words into the mouth of Professor Finkel, but for God's sake, stop selectively quoting a report that is of such profound importance. We are going it alone because the national government of this country is in absolute abrogation of its responsibilities.

I also want to address the issue of the Chicken Little argument exactly as the member for Mordialloc spoke about it in terms of running around and saying, 'The sky's going to fall in', referring to the carbon price. Countless reports after that came out saying, 'No, it didn't have the impact that the then scaremongering federal opposition had proposed'. But it reminds me of a debate in the 1980s — I think I was in uni or maybe in high school, I cannot remember — about tariffs. It took a Labor government nationally to really make a difference in terms of trade barriers in this country. If we were relying on that side of politics, we would hear all the same scaremongering about jobs and a whole range of other economic crises to befall us should we open up our economy. Of course the outcome of that is generally a positive one in terms of the opening up of our economy.

Similarly, the comment by, I think, the member for Ripon, when she was quoting an energy council spokesman, who happens to be a former Labor MP. It is his right to seek employment where he may seek it, however, she quotes him as having said that if renewable energy stacks up, it will get there itself. Do you know what that means to me? It means that the member for Ripon was effectively saying that of the women on her team — there are only two women on the front bench on the Liberal-Nationals coalition side of this chamber — none have the capacity to get there on their own.

That is absolutely ridiculous. As the member for Mordialloc said, as a government you have to invest, you have to signal to the market what your priorities

are. You have to intervene to make a difference. You have to intervene because it will not get there by itself. It will take a long time.

Yes, the economics stack up; they are cheaper. Yes, they are easier to set up. But transitioning an economy, which is an old economy, to a new economy will take far, far longer if it were not for an innovative government. That is what we are doing. The interesting thing is that those opposite cannot have it both ways. They either say, 'No, no, we'll continue to burn coal for 150 years to come', or they do something about it. They are doing neither. They are pretending they are sort of half interested in clean energy, but they are actually not doing anything about it.

Sorry, they are doing one thing. I could not believe my ears when the shadow minister, the member for Caulfield, came into the chamber a couple of weeks ago and said, 'Open up the cheque book'. This appeared in an article in the *Age* or *Herald Sun*. He said, 'Open up the cheque book and buy Hazelwood'. That is the equivalent of saying bank fees have increased, so let us go and buy back the Commonwealth Bank rather than making a difference in bank fees through a royal commission or some other initiative. The Socialist Alternative would be proud of the member for Caulfield.

The contrast between the two parties could not be greater. I could not be prouder than to stand here as a member of this government, with the minister in the chamber, doing something bold — something absolutely necessary, but bold. It was not done by the Greens or by the coalition. The Labor Party is the original green, environmental party — the one that actually achieves something because it has executive power. Future generations in Victoria have to rely on us to pick up the pieces from the extremes on both sides. It could not be clearer in terms of the profound effect that we can have on the future of this country and future generations than by the bold steps we are taking today.

It is not just us saying that. I know that a colleague, the member for Gippsland South, selectively quoted AGL. But the AGL CEO, as was stated earlier, has clearly said that the reality is, the best way to bring down prices is to increase the electricity supply, which is why we are investing in new generation and supporting a clean energy target to unlock additional supply. It is not brain surgery.

We have made a commitment to the Victorian people that we will set some bold targets for clean energy and create jobs while we are doing it. We have come to power and we are now delivering on that commitment,

not just with a bill, but with investment and with industry support. We are a change agent, as the member for Mordialloc said, a market signaller for something as profoundly important as this. It is my absolute pleasure to support the bill. I commend the minister on her incredibly hard and innovative work. Under this minister and this government, this economy and this environment are in very safe hands.

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — I am pleased to join the debate on this renewable energy bill. I might just comment in passing that in fact the abbreviation ‘NB’ does not refer to ‘note before’. It refers to ‘nota bene’ which, as you indicate, Acting Speaker McGuire, you appreciate, as do I, means ‘note well’, a translation from the Latin. I think we should certainly note well the comments of the minister in the second-reading speech where she talked about a proposal that was both ‘ambitious and achievable’. I think the minister must have been taking some advice from that legendary senior public servant, Sir Humphrey Appleby, because it is certainly an ambitious target. Indeed this plan is so ambitious that it is totally and utterly unachievable. But unfortunately in the process it is a direct attack on energy affordability, and it is a direct attack on energy reliability.

Will the intensity of emissions be reduced? Of course they will — but at what cost? We know that the impact on households of the cost of energy is already considerable. In December 2014, when this government came to power, the wholesale spot price for electricity was about \$40 a megawatt hour. But by July this year, as the ABC reported, that price had gone up in Victoria to \$104.92. We were only behind Tasmania at \$114.27 and South Australia at \$115.93. The price was up \$64.92 a megawatt hour or up 160 per cent. As the energy analyst Paul McArdle said, it is a gut-wrenching level for the vast majority of electricity users. It is certainly that, because price rises of this magnitude are enormously disruptive. They are an enormous hit on our economy. They might be bearable if there were an alternative energy source, if there were somewhere else consumers could go to source energy.

But of course we know that there have been issues with gas prices as well. They were up 7.8 per cent in March. They kept going up in the June quarter. Indeed the government have confirmed that even if their inquiry finds that the extraction of conventional onshore gas is entirely safe, they will not be lifting the moratorium until 2020. What does that mean? It means that to all intents and purposes there will be no new gas supplies brought on-stream until 2025 at the earliest. So eight years from now is the earliest possible time when we can get new gas on-stream and, as a consequence, there is no alternative to take the pressure off electricity prices.

We have heard a lot about what is driving the price increases and of course we know that the government claims that the closure of Hazelwood had nothing to do with them. They have clean hands entirely. We also know that that is complete and utter rubbish. The coal royalty levy was trebled in 2016–17 — in the budget in May last year — with the intent of raising an extra \$252 million. Of that \$252 million, Hazelwood alone was expected to come up with \$87.5 million. If a power station is not as profitable as it might be — it does need a bit of work, as was completely acknowledged — slapping a tax of \$87.5 million on it is hardly the way to keep it open. That power station, as we know, provided more than 20 per cent of Victoria’s energy, and the \$87.5 million tax undoubtedly had an impact.

We need investment in energy and we need it now, but we need it to be reliable and we need it to be low cost. Yet the government through this bill is proposing to support the most unreliable power sources yet invented — power sources that remain uncompetitive and are at this point in time totally unreliable. This is the sort of energy plan that you would bring forward if your end goal was to kill off manufacturing in this state. This is the sort of plan that you would bring forward if you wanted to bring the Victorian economy to its knees. That is exactly the sort of plan that we have before us, yet the government promised to fight for every job. That was clearly a promise that was jettisoned upon taking office, because we have heard precious little of that in the last three years.

I want to hark back to the Treasurer’s effort at rewriting history during question time today. If we look at the actual Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures from December 2014, we see that in New South Wales in December 2014 the unemployment rate was 5.9 per cent and in Victoria it was 6.5 per cent. If we flick forward to the most recent ABS labour force figures, we see that in New South Wales the unemployment rate is 5 per cent and in Victoria it is 6.1 per cent. So since December 2014 New South Wales has managed to drop its unemployment rate by almost a full percentage point. Victoria in the same period could not even manage half a percentage point. And despite the Treasurer’s posturing today, Victorian unemployment has been higher than the national average for 12 months in a row. So we cannot possibly say that the jobs market in Victoria is rosy. It is not, and it is just nonsense to suggest it is. Yet we have this bill before us today, a bill that is a direct attack on jobs, a direct attack on the prosperity of the state, and in fact it is a direct attack on Victorian workers — the very Victorian workers that this government claims to speak for.

The detail of the bill is relatively straightforward. Renewable energy is defined as solar and wind or anything else the minister may choose to declare, with no constraints. It does not have to go to the executive council. It does not have to go back to the Parliament. It is anything the minister may declare. So the Parliament is actually being asked to agree to a bill which will permit the minister to declare brown coal as a renewable energy source. That is what the bill that is before us today permits. The minister can declare that the power generated by Loy Yang A, Loy Yang B and Yallourn is all from a renewable source, because there are absolutely no constraints around that definition. There is nothing in the bill that would prevent such a declaration, and clearly that is complete and utter nonsense.

Part 2 of the bill sets out the targets for 2020 and 2025, the reporting requirements, the annual reporting to Parliament and the need to make a capacity determination — in other words, to ensure that the capacity to achieve the targets the government has set is there. And that capacity of course depends on whether the plants that are installed are in fact generating electricity. There may well be twice the installed capacity needed to achieve the targets that have been set, but if the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining they are generating zip.

Again I make the point that the targets set out in the bill are percentages generated by renewable energy sources; the capacity determinations similarly are percentages of renewable energy sources. The minister and the minister alone can declare anything, anything at all, to be a renewable energy source. Not only is this a flawed bill, as Tony Wood of the Grattan Institute has confirmed, but its policy framework is bad. So this is a flawed bill driven by a flawed policy framework.

I do not contest the reality of anthropogenic climate change, and it would seem prudent to put in place measures that mitigate as far as possible the effects of that change, if for no other reason than it is sensible to manage that risk prudently. But this is not a plan for transition. This is a flawed bill driven by a flawed policy. It is a bill that is a direct attack on energy affordability, it is a direct attack on energy reliability and, worst of all, it is a direct attack on Victorian jobs. It is a bill that should not be supported.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to make a contribution on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. This is an important bill that is before the house, and it is important because of the fact that the economy is undergoing significant change. I pick up on the point that the member for Mornington

made about manufacturing. One of the reasons why I think that Victoria traditionally was the home for manufacturing, apart from the protectionist tendencies of Alfred Deakin, was of course the availability, affordability and reliability of baseload coal-fired power stations that were built as part of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV). When those assets were constructed there were not any real constraints per se; there was a recognition that it was the role of the state to provide affordable energy and the state made those necessary investments, although a lot of it was debt-funded, and a lot of the debt that the Cain government inherited in 1982 came back to a lot of that debt sitting on the state's balance sheet.

Certainly in terms of Loy Yang B, which was under construction in the early 1990s, there was a realisation that the state was running out of funding — this was under the Kirner government — and there was not an agreement to lift the debt ratio off the state, which led to the co-investment by Edison Mission into 49 per cent of Loy Yang B. That was really the only time when there was a significant change of policy in relation to baseload energy supplies. What we now know as a consequence of science is that we understand and appreciate that although brown coal is cleaner than black coal — cleaner in the sense that it does not have the sulphides in it — it has got a far higher water content, and therefore it produces far more CO₂ emissions than black coal. Therefore the science is absolutely clear: there is a higher rate of CO₂ emissions as a consequence of brown coal.

I listened to the member for Mornington's contribution and, to paraphrase the member, he indicated that we need low-cost energy, we need it to be reliable and we need it now, and that what is before the house is a flawed policy. What I would say to the member for Mornington is that if we look at where we are currently, you cannot get finance for a baseload coal-fired power station. These are capital-intensive investments. You are not going to go to a bank and ask for \$100 000 to build a baseload coal-fired power station. You are going to ask for \$2 billion, \$3 billion or \$4 billion. And if you are a bank, and we are talking about a private sector, commercial enterprise that is going to loan \$4 billion, that is going to seek payment terms of, say, 30 years or 40 years, which is the life of an asset, the interest payment bill, even if you were looking at, say, 5 per cent, is going to be in excess of \$5 million per month every month for 40 years. The reality is that there is not a bank that would write that loan.

Mr D. O'Brien interjected.

Mr PEARSON — I note the interjection from the member for Gippsland South, who made his contribution talking about more coal-fired power stations coming on-stream at a global level, most of which are in China.

Mr D. O'Brien — Forty-five in Japan.

Mr PEARSON — I would hazard a guess that those would be funded by the People's Republic of China. They would be state funded. I suppose the question is: does the member for Gippsland South suggest that what we should be doing is recreating the State Electricity Commission of Victoria? Does the member for Gippsland South want the state to be the lender of last resort yet again and be providing taxpayer funds to provide baseload coal-fired power stations? I do not think that is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds.

Mr D. O'Brien — What are you doing with this bill? Providing taxpayer funds.

Mr PEARSON — The member for Gippsland South said we are providing taxpayer funds. I know the member for Gippsland South is studying economics. I am going to introduce a term — I am not sure the member for Gippsland South has heard this or not — but I say to the member for Gippsland South that you run the risk of creating a stranded asset. I will explain to the member for Gippsland South what that is. That is where you invest taxpayer funds or funds from the private sector to create and build an asset which cannot be harvested, which cannot be realised — it is stranded. That is the risk you run if you turn around and say, as a state, 'We're going to put billions of dollars into a stranded asset'. If the state, however, is investing in new technology, if the state is investing and encouraging the private sector to invest in that form of new technology, then it will not be a stranded asset.

Mr D. O'Brien — How stranded are the wind turbines when the wind is not blowing?

Mr PEARSON — The member for Gippsland South talks about wind farms being stranded when the wind is not blowing. I would say to the member for Gippsland South that what we are talking about is having a portfolio of assets. You have got baseload coal-fired power stations like Loy Yang A and Loy Yang B, which have got a life span probably up until about 2050; and associated with that you have gas peaking plants, which are very efficient and can be turned on or turned off within 20 minutes. Associated with that you would have wind farms and you would have solar photovoltaics (PV), and you would end up having solar PV on people's homes with battery packs

on the side. Therefore you would reduce the requirements to have the poles and wires distribution businesses further enhanced, because effectively you can have individual homes that can fulfil that function.

The reality is that what we are finding with this level of technological innovation and change in consumer behaviour is that energy consumption on a per capita basis has fallen significantly in Victoria, notwithstanding the fact that we have had population increases. I asked the parliamentary library to prepare some work on this. Our usage on a per capita basis peaked in 2005–06, when we were using 282 gigajoules per person. The latest data is for 2014–15, and it is 237 gigajoules per person, and we are seeing that trend drop down on an annualised basis. The reality is that despite the fact we have got population growth occurring, we are actually using less power on a per capita basis. This is a function of the fact that we are trying to have a more diversified approach to resource management.

You could turn around and do what the member for Gippsland South has suggested and say, 'Let's recreate the SECV. Let's go out to the gates at Hazelwood. Let's open it up, let the state take over the running of Hazelwood'.

Mr D. O'Brien — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, for the record the member is misleading the house. At no stage did I suggest recreating the SECV.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McGuire) — There is no point of order.

Mr PEARSON — Thank you, Acting Speaker, for your guidance. My point is that we can turn around and have a situation where we can try to seek the state's intervention and continue to have a laissez faire approach to baseload coal-fired power stations, recognising the fact that the private sector will not invest. We could turn around and say, 'Let the state government make those sorts of investments because no-one else will'. Climate change is a reality, it is occurring and we need to respond. If the choice is to say, 'Let's not respond; let's bury our heads in the sand and hope it will all be fine', then we are going to face a day of reckoning when we might be compelled to do so, where we have to do so under international obligations or treaty obligations or where there are other penalties imposed because of the fact that we cannot continue to use these assets. Moreover, where would that leave the economy then, because you would be looking at a very hard landing.

I have no doubt that this is extremely challenging for the communities down on the ground in the Latrobe Valley. I understand and I appreciate the fact that this is very difficult, but that is why we are making these sorts of investments. That is why we are trying to work with communities to try to transition them to a soft landing. You cannot be in denial that climate change is real. It is happening, and we have to make our best endeavours to diversify our energy supply to ensure that we have got a variety of energy sources so that the economy can keep functioning.

I am not suggesting for a moment that in the short to medium term you are going to see the closure of baseload coal-fired power stations; they will continue to be part of the solution for the medium to longer term. It is about making sure that we have a diversified mix, that we have a cleaner and greener economy and that we are moving forward to a soft landing rather than the hard landing that would occur for the state if we followed the policies of those opposite. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I rise to make a contribution on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. Right up front, let me say that I support renewables. There are solar panels on my roof at home, and there is a Fisher and Paykel washing machine in bits, as I am trying my first effort at building a wind turbine. If anyone has got a weekend to spare, I am struggling with a couple of bits and pieces.

However, in supporting renewables what I want to talk about is how we do it, and it is not by setting a renewable energy target, because that gives you drop-dead barriers as you are making this change. This transition will be difficult. We have got to balance the cost of living, the cost to industry and the effect on our economies, and a step wrong in this change process will be a catastrophe. It is a catastrophe that we cannot afford in Victoria, and we should not be taking that risk.

As that target increases that risk of catastrophe, we also have to live with it. For many people that is the high cost of energy. They worry about how they will pay their power bill, how they will stay warm in winter and how they will stay cool in summer. We have a market of supply and demand, and we have removed 22 per cent of that — being Hazelwood — out of the supply market. This has an effect, but that is gone and we cannot go back. I agree with that. However, with Yallourn originally scheduled to have a life to 2032, if we are to meet this target, I have a concern that we will have to close it in 2025, and that is a huge gap to fill.

This is where I do not want us to be playing catch-up in the supply and demand equation. We are looking at what has happened by taking Hazelwood out before we had reliable supply to replace it. We will have recovered from that by 2025, but to do it again will again support that catastrophe. It is a huge gap to fill. There is gas capacity out there, but the cost of gas is higher. This is one of those unforeseen things that we did not see coming when we all started to talk about renewables, but it is here and we have to deal with it.

There has been a huge investment in gas capacity. At 3 o'clock today the Victorian power market was \$87 a megawatt hour, and we were importing energy into Victoria. Yet there are gas generators that are not running. The demand in Victoria was about 5200 megawatts. We have the capacity for 7600, but the generators are idle and cold. That tells us that obviously the economics are not working for those. Meanwhile people still find that their power bills continue to rise. I think there is the risk of putting supply and demand out of balance, and that damages our economies and damages our families.

We also cannot ignore the grid, its configuration and its capacity. We know that our wind resources tend to be in southern and western Victoria. Our solar resources are in the north of Victoria. But we have got to look at our grid capacity and the ability to move this power around. If you travel from Melbourne to the Latrobe Valley and you look out the window as you are driving down that way or taking the train, you will see large numbers of pylons with a lot of wires hanging off them. If we are going to cease getting our power from coal and getting our energy from southern, western or north-west Victoria, we are going to have to have the capacity to move that energy to Melbourne. The federal government have an inquiry that is running on just that, and I look forward to seeing what they have to say about our grid capacity. But it is a huge cost to reconfigure the grid, and who is going to pay for that? The consumer does not want to, and the government cannot afford to.

The mayor of Mildura was quoted in the *Sunraysia Daily* as saying there were \$1.6 billion worth of solar projects before council, but the total capacity of the grid to manage that power and move that power back to Melbourne is a big issue. With the current grid system north-west Victoria can only supply back what it is designed to supply north-west Victoria — that is Mildura — some capacity for Broken Hill and some for South Australia via an interconnector. But all north-west Victoria can do under the current grid is probably to supply a population of about three times that of Mildura. That is not going to supply Melbourne.

I have asked AusNet Services to give me some supply facts on this, but they have not got back to me on that yet. Perhaps what the member for Gippsland East spoke about might be the answer — that is, to have suburban generation; to bring wind farms into Melbourne, closer to where the distribution asset is and to where the demand is, and to even bring solar into Melbourne. Otherwise I do not know how we are going to afford the grid capacity to bring all that power into Victoria because of who has to pay.

So you cannot just plug in megawatts of power anywhere in the grid. In this day and age we do need to keep that grid extremely stable. The eastern Australian energy grid could be considered the world's largest machine, a machine that we cannot do without and we cannot afford to damage. That is why we need to tread carefully with this. Sometimes people sort of forget all of this complexity and just go for where they want to be. But if we cannot afford to do that without damaging our economy, then we have a major risk factor to be managed. What I say to people is that if you cannot afford to save, then you are really going to struggle with paying for energy over time. The time for people struggling to pay their power bills is their next bill. They are not interested in two years, five years, 20 years or 50 years; they are worried about how they are going to pay their bill next week.

There has been quite a lot of talk about the role of coal, and there is a role for coal in stabilising our system over this transition. We have heard a lot about what the federal parliamentary library has done. I will not reiterate that, but it certainly does show us that the rest of the world is busy with coal. They must be doing that for a good reason, and we do not want to jump too soon. That is another area that was mentioned. In some ways I see a similarity to what we are doing here in trying to take a leap of faith. Back in the 1980s the horticulture industry was asked to take a leap of faith into free trade. We jumped ahead of the rest of the world, and it had a huge impact on Mildura's economy. It took 25 years to recover from that. Everybody had to change. The resilience of that community was amazing, but many people gave up.

Taking a leap of faith in setting a target that could cause economic damage and take longer to recover from, I think, is just simply too big a risk. There are other technologies out there that can help with this. There are batteries, and there is hydrogen. But at this stage do we want to take a risk on these technologies becoming affordable before we risk stabilising the grid? All our coal plants will be out by 2050. The rest of the world is obviously planning to overlap with at least some coal

capacity beyond 2050 with what they are building. Do we want to take that risk?

So let us look at the transition to renewables. We are going to do it. We are going to transfer to it. In 100 years time students of history will be studying how we did this, and we will be judged in hindsight. We do need to do this sensibly, but to do it other than sensibly will damage our economy, damage people's lives and cost jobs. So setting targets is not the right way. We need to transition at a pace that everybody can afford, that everybody is confident with and that will deliver the outcomes of a stable and modern economy. But to set these targets I think has a risk of turning the best of intentions for change into a catastrophe. If we have a catastrophe, we might not pick ourselves up from it for a generation, and that will be a harsh judgement of history. So let us just take a deep breath, have a good look at what we want to do and work out how to do it without causing the side effects that we all fear so much. We are better than this, we can do this, but to have a drop-dead target invites us to drop dead.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — I am immensely proud to speak on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017 today. Firstly, there is nothing to fear here except the inactivity by those opposite. This bill will re-establish Victoria as the leader in renewable energy development, and that is thanks to the Andrews Labor government. This bill will also grow jobs. For the first time in Australia, this bill will lock into law our renewable energy targets — 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025 — and create a solid plan to achieve those targets.

Let me say to those opposite that any threat by them to repeal this legislation and thus repeal these renewable energy targets is grossly irresponsible and completely negligent. Those opposite are putting their ideology ahead of households and businesses; they are putting their ideology ahead of the welfare of future Victorians and ahead of clean energy and climate. That those opposite can go so far as to say that they will repeal this legislation just shows how out of touch they are and what kind of fear campaign they are prepared to run. To those opposite I say: doing nothing is not an option.

We are legislating our own state-based renewable energy targets because we are a government that is taking decisive action on clean energy. We are absolutely sick and tired of the policy paralysis and lack of leadership shown by the federal Liberal government on the issue of energy generation and energy prices and the head-in-the-sand approach that we have seen today from those opposite. It is up to us here in Victoria, it is up to the Andrews Labor government, to make sure that

we are doing everything we can to generate the energy we need to create jobs and ultimately to drive down electricity prices. Rather than criticising our decisive action, boosting our renewable energy production is and should be accepted by the federal Liberal government and those opposite as being entirely consistent with Australia's broader national objectives on one of the most pressing issues facing us for all time — that is of course climate change.

What is the government doing with this bill? We are giving confidence to our renewable energy sector to invest in renewable energy projects, and just as importantly we are giving confidence to the renewable energy sector to invest in the jobs that are needed to secure our clean energy future. By mandating renewable energy targets, we are helping to propel clean energy projects beyond the innovation stage into the commercial development phase. Renewable energy targets, as we know, will also help to assist some of our more established technologies, such as wind and solar, further along the cost curve, making them more efficient, growing economies of scale and ultimately bringing down energy prices.

The Andrews Labor government is taking a major step forward for our communities, for businesses and for the renewable energy industry. This really should be seen for what it is: an immense opportunity for us all. It will grow our economy, create thousands of jobs and preserve our future energy security. It is also important that we are going to be moving away from high-emissions power generation to cleaner renewable energy to help us meet the emissions reduction commitments that we made under the global climate agreement negotiated in Paris several years ago. Not only is this best for our environment but it will also be best for electricity and energy prices and jobs creation, which we are so positive about here in Victoria.

The main purposes of the bill are twofold: to establish the renewable energy targets for Victoria and to support schemes to achieve those targets. As I mentioned, by 2020 our target will be for 25 per cent of electricity generated in Victoria to be generated by means of facilities that generate electricity utilising renewable energy sources or converting renewable energy sources into electricity. By 2025 that percentage will increase to 40 per cent.

What is important is that under the bill the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change will be required to report to Parliament each year on how we are tracking in meeting our renewable energy targets and on the performance of various schemes in achieving those targets. The minister will be required to

specify the minimum amounts of renewable energy generation capacity required to meet the targets. For the 2020 target the minister must specify this soon — by 31 December. For the 2025 target the minister must specify the level of renewable energy generation capacity needed by 31 December 2019.

As we have heard, these targets are ambitious, and frankly so they should be. They reflect the decisive action the Andrews Labor government is taking to promote certainty in the industry and to encourage essential and significant investment in our renewables sector. They also reflect the government's most pressing and important priority: to ensure that all Victorians benefit from a renewable, affordable, reliable and secure energy system in the future. It is important that we are seen to be taking steps now, and I am very pleased to say that that is exactly what we are doing.

As we have heard, we will be holding reverse auctions under the Victorian renewable energy auction scheme. Under this scheme renewable energy project proponents will bid for long-term agreements. In doing so they are going to be judged against criteria that will take into account the contribution to local economic development, job creation and community engagement, and the impact on the electricity network infrastructure. The first auction, which is quite exciting, is up very soon, and it is for 650 megawatts of new renewable projects. This is expected to put us well and truly on the path of meeting our 2020 target of 25 per cent renewables. Expressions of interest for the reverse auction will open shortly. This is significant. The amount of 650 megawatts is enough to power 389 000 homes or the combined residential areas of Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and the Latrobe Valley.

With this bill we are making sure Victoria is in a prime position to win investment in our renewables sector and, importantly, to grow jobs. This is a great result for all Victorians. We know that renewable energy is already the cheapest and cleanest source of energy supply, and as Victoria generates more energy from renewable sources and as our energy supply increases, down will come electricity prices for all Victorian households and businesses.

I say to those opposite: do not let your ideology get in the way of common sense on this most important issue. Do not dig your heels in. The Victorian renewable energy targets are a significant component of Victoria's response to climate change. They also represent policy certainty for our renewables industry and are a significant part of job creation for Victorians. Ultimately they will bring about lower prices for Victorian households and businesses.

I would like to commend the Premier and the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change for the outstanding leadership they have shown in transitioning Victoria to a renewable energy economy and in relieving the financial burden of electricity prices on Victorian families and businesses. It is absolutely imperative for Victoria's future prosperity that we embrace the transformation to renewable energy and share in the significant environmental, social and economic benefits that it can provide for all Victorians. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) — I rise to speak on this bill, which will establish renewable energy targets for Victoria and support schemes to achieve these targets. From the outset I want to make it clear: I have nothing against wind energy or renewables. If I did, I would have objected to the Woolsthorpe wind farm, which will sit right on the boundary of my property. I would have objected again when the proposed height change went before the panel, which will mean I will be looking right out my window at wind farms.

Renewables form an important part of the energy generation mix. Whilst it may be true that more supply will eventually decrease energy prices, businesses and households in my electorate cannot wait for new wind projects to come online. They are feeling the pinch right now from rising energy bills. This bill will do nothing to alleviate the energy price rises we are seeing now. There is nothing immediate about this. It is all well and good to say increased supply lowers prices, but when will we see the increased supply? It will not be within weeks or months; it will be years.

I will not be supporting this bill. I am sure that Twitter will be lighting up with Friends of the Earth tweeting that I do not care about jobs in my electorate. That could not be further from the truth. I do want this government to support jobs in my electorate, but not just the new positions this bill may create. I want them to support the thousands of people already employed in my electorate that rely on affordable and reliable energy to keep their businesses operating and people in jobs. At places like Portland Aluminium, which needs a steady load of baseload power at affordable costs to keep 600 people directly employed and to support a further 2000 jobs in the wider south-west region, we have seen what happens when there is a lack of reliable energy supply at the smelter. We have been on a knife's edge as we waited to see if the plant would reopen. We do not want this again.

But it will not just be large employers that need reliable energy supply. Every dairy farm in South-West Coast

and every wool producer needs a reliable energy supply to make sure they can milk their cows, cool their milk, shear their sheep and press bales of wool. Many of these farms are not just owner-operated; they have staff. That means jobs. The restaurants, cafes and hospitality places, which also employ large numbers of people need to be able to keep the lights on to run their businesses — rising power costs for them risks their businesses closing, people being out of work and damaging the tourism industry. A hospital in my electorate has seen a \$266 000 increase on its annual power bill. That is an 80 per cent power price rise. If there is no extra funding from the department to help cover these costs, they will be looking at cutting services. As the CEO put it, if we are talking about \$266 000, then potentially that is wages — that is at least three nursing positions that would have to go.

I just want to reiterate that I have nothing against renewable energy, but at the moment it simply cannot provide the baseload power we need to be able to keep the lights on, and this bill does nothing to address the immediate concerns of lack of energy supply. In my electorate we had the biggest wind farm in the southern hemisphere at Macarthur, owned by AGL. It is a 140-turbine wind farm over 5500 hectares with a name-plate capacity of 420 megawatts. While the wind farm may be the biggest in the country, in the last 12 months it has been the worst performing of any wind farm in the state and among the worst in the country.

According to an article in *RenewEconomy* published in August, when the wind farm was first announced in 2010:

... it was tipped to deliver a capacity factor of around 35 per cent.

Not of the state's needs, not of the region's needs, but 35 per cent of the 420-megawatt capacity that it is designed to produce.

It opened in early 2013, but in 2016–17, it delivered a capacity factor of just 23 per cent.

AGL's explanation for this is very interesting. In response to *RenewEconomy's* queries, a spokesman said:

The performance of the Macarthur wind farm in the financial year 2017 was primarily affected by planned outages and poor wind conditions ...

Poor wind conditions — confirming that when the wind does not blow there is no energy being produced, proving that we are not able to rely solely on renewable energy as a baseload power source yet, baseload being the energy needed to satisfy minimum power demand on

the energy grid: that is, having power whenever we want it, not when the wind blows or when the sun shines.

Renewables alone are not able to provide the baseload power we need to be able to keep the lights on, businesses operating and people in jobs. We need to continue to ensure we have enough of that baseload power to account for the percentage of time that wind farms are not generating. Surely the aim of having windfarm projects is to reduce emissions, but how is that going to be achieved when we are keeping existing coal and gas-fired power stations open? The reality is it will not. While renewables are worthy sources of generation, the fact remains we have to have a coal or gas-fired power station to provide that baseload power. There is no other way yet.

How many turbines will need to be constructed to provide the energy comparable to a coal or gas-fired power station? And what will our landscape look like in the process? In my electorate, and more specifically in my home community, there are three wind farms proposed. The real issue with this came when it became clear that, while there were three separate developments, they almost link up and create one long line of wind farms. Many properties that were only going to have turbines on one side of their property, as new developments are proposed, will now have them on three sides of their homes. In Hawkesdale there will be turbines 180 metres tall just a kilometre from the edge of the town.

Last time I spoke on this matter in the chamber, I spoke about people being offered trees to help screen the giant turbines from their homes. How do you block the view of something the size of a skyscraper in a wide open paddock that is towering above a single-storey home? The community is feeling let down by the planning process and that is something I think we need to look at very closely. A holistic approach needs to be taken when approving wind farms, and permits need to be looked at in relation to the landscape, proximity to other wind turbines and the ability to contribute to the energy balance needs.

If we approve them on a one-by-one basis, we will end up with a situation where the lush green landscape is saturated with concrete and metal structures that are as tall as city skyscrapers. The reason South-West Coast is being saturated with wind projects is not because we have plenty of wind alone; it is because we have easy access to the grid via the high voltage lines. I am told there are landscapes further north of my electorate which are perfect for wind farm developments, but because there is no access to basic energy infrastructure — namely poles and wires — they are

immediately ruled out. I know it sounds like I am anti-wind farms, but I truly am not. But I do support a process to ensure that wind farm applications are well considered and properly planned.

Getting back to the energy generation mix, the three wind farms being proposed near my home — Ryan Corner, Woolsthorpe and Hawkesdale — will have a combined total of 102 turbines with a combined capacity somewhere around 240 megawatts. But as we have seen with Macarthur, the actual amount produced is likely to be considerably lower. By comparison, Loy Yang A and B have a combined nameplate capacity of 3300 megawatts, so if we were to replace that with renewables, how many wind towers would we need?

After the announcement of this plan there was plenty of media coverage lamenting the go-it-alone nature of this policy and highlighting that the government spin failed to take into account several factors. In the *Australian Financial Review* of 28 August, energy program director at the Grattan Institute Tony Wood pointed out that while the government is claiming this will cut costs for consumers, the government's calculations do not include payments the government will make to generators, the additional costs to grid connections and the cost associated with the intermittency of wind and solar generation.

Right now in Victoria we have 18 major wind farms operating, with a total of 676 turbines with a maximum power output of 1489 megawatts. There are wind farms under construction, with a total of 77 wind turbines being added, adding a maximum of 132 megawatts to the grid. Then of course there are the approved but not operational wind farms that will add another 956 turbines with a maximum of 2659 megawatts. Add them all together and you have 1700 turbines and 4280 megawatts — a very long way off the 3 million megawatts needed to reach targets. I reiterate: even then the power can only produce a percentage of what is needed. I understand there are differing forms of renewable energy, but there are not any significant ones with the wind power comparable to base or anywhere need significant to help.

The concern of my community is that the wide-open spaces they now enjoy will soon be saturated. While wind farms are an important part of the energy generation mix, going it alone with ambitious targets like these are nothing but attempts to politically pointscore in electorates where Labor is facing an uphill battle to defeat the Greens. The science of getting it right has not been considered. The minister has indicated in this house that people can expect their energy bills to go down by 2035, but that comment, like

this bill, provides absolutely no relief for businesses and households. While I am anything but anti-wind farm or renewable energy, I cannot support this bill on the basis that it is doing nothing to help now.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — You might like to table the essay next time. One of the disappointments of experiencing a parliamentary career over three election cycles now is to see the wasted time that has been associated with energy policy in this country, to see the federal government and state governments — primarily those opposite when they were in power — put energy policy on the backburner and use it, and I quote the member for South-West Coast, for political pointsoring instead of concentrating on developing a comprehensive, futuristic policy so that people can access energy in an accessible and affordable way and with a very strong spotlight on what is going to provide energy in a very efficient and environmentally sensitive way for everyone in the future.

I find it one of the most disappointing aspects of the political landscape that we are now in to see the federal government asking energy providers to come into a room, sit down and have the Prime Minister wagging his finger at them and telling them they need to do something differently is in fact a substitute for good energy policy.

What we have here today is actually an excellent piece of legislation that is a reincarnation of what we had. At the start of my parliamentary career, when the Bracks Labor government introduced the state's first Victorian renewable energy target (VRET) scheme in 2006, John Thwaites, the environment minister, said, 'If not us, who? If not now, when?'. Today, with this excellent piece of legislation — with a very strong eye on the future, I must say — that is being debated and will hopefully become law, we have before us a minister, who is sitting in the house, who is taking up the mantle of providing leadership in forming a good energy policy for Victoria.

This legislation is about creating jobs and providing a clear pathway for future energy needs — especially around renewable energy — and it is also about driving down prices. Those opposite — the caveman from Caulfield and other people — would like to think that it is about the opposite, but I have got to say that that is exactly what is wrong with the debate in this house and in other places and forums, especially at the federal level. We are getting caught up with debates around climate change. They are being infiltrated with some really weird ideas from people who are not scientists. We are getting lobbied by vested interests — that is, the

big coal industries that spend millions of dollars on lobbying politicians and other authorities to make sure that idiotic policies like 'Let's keep Hazelwood power station' come from those opposite.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms GRALEY — Actually, you did. The member for Mornington said just before, 'It just needs a little bit of work on it' — Hazelwood, the dirtiest power station in the world, just needs a bit of work on it.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms GRALEY — Well, I have got to tell you what the Prime Minister said about Hazelwood:

... the closure of Hazelwood is a decision of the owner, Engie. It's a commercial decision that they have taken ...

and:

... the responsibility here is fundamentally that of the owners, Engie —

this is the Liberal Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Turnbull, speaking —

and of course they have made a decision about this plant which is the oldest coal-fired power station in Australia and has been slated to close for a very long time.

Just for those opposite who may think it just needs a little bit of work on it:

The cost of keeping it running runs into hundreds of millions and the cost of rehabilitation, which obviously a new owner would have to take over, is approaching a billion dollars.

Which new owner is going to get a bank to back them? Tell me which bank, which financial institution, is going to come down and open the Hazelwood power station. I do not know where you are going to find a bank that is going to give you a billion dollars to reopen the dirtiest power station in Australia.

I would like to take umbrage at what the member for Ripon said. She is concerned about vulnerable people. What did she say? She said that she is concerned about their capacity to pay power bills. I spend a lot of time helping people trying to work out how they are going to pay power bills. We are not oblivious to those concerns. People come to our offices and they ask for help.

I would like to draw your attention to the Victorian Council of Social Service, which some people across the chamber have selectively quoted. They said:

... people facing poverty or disadvantage will need extra help navigating our changing energy landscape ...

That is true — not being scared, not being frightened and certainly not being patronised by the member for Ripon. Listen up:

However, these valid concerns shouldn't be used by opponents of clean energy to keep Victoria locked in the past.

Yes, locked in the past, certainly where those opposite are. For those opposite, who will not support this legislation, who are arguing against it with very spurious and very expensive arguments:

Those calling for the abandonment of the VRET because of any hardship it might cause to vulnerable people are missing the point.

Yes, you are missing the point yet again.

I would like to refer to some people who are actually saying some sensible things about what is going on here. I refer to the CEO of the Clean Energy Council. You might not like him as much as your mates in the coal industry, but he has said some very worthy words, and those opposite should take notice of them. This is what he said:

This announcement and these commitments will turbocharge the renewable energy industry in Victoria. It will deliver billions of dollars —

whilst those opposite want to go and waste a billion dollars that no bank is going to give them, mind you; maybe they would like get some of their mates in the coal industry to throw in the money themselves —

worth of investment and thousands of jobs to regional and rural parts of this state.

I have heard a lot of those opposite from rural communities saying this is not going to be a jobs boost. This is the CEO of the Clean Energy Council saying that it will be, and it is not just him. The managing director of WestWind Energy — and I know the member for South-West Coast has got a bit of a problem with wind farms; she is not against them, but she spent 5 minutes of her speech bagging them — said:

It's going to be beneficial for the Central Highlands region because there will be more energy generation and more jobs ...

And:

With this announcement the time frame from (developing wind farm proposals) to seeing turbines on the ground will be significantly shortened.

For those who are worried about us not having enough energy, this is actually about getting it done quicker, and you are against that too, so what is going on there?

I am not ashamed of quoting from people from green groups or Yes 2 Renewables. I will just finish my contribution by referring to something that Yes 2 Renewables said:

The VRET will create 10 000 jobs, attract as much as \$9 billion in new investment, and cut electricity sector emissions by up to 16 per cent by 2034–35. That means eight years of work for wind tower manufacturers Keppel Prince in Portland —

say 'thank you' —

as well as cable manufacturing in Tottenham, transformers in Glen Waverley and Benalla, gearboxes in Bendigo and warehousing in Lyndhurst.

Crucially, it is the only plan in the country to secure investment in new renewable generation and put downward pressure on prices to lift the burden on inflated power bills.

This is an excellent bill. I commend the minister for bringing it to the house and I say to those opposite, 'Get out of your caves and support it'. They should get on board, stop opposing it and stop these despicable arguments that they have propagated. You wasted your time in government; we are certainly not doing that. Get on board, support the bill and support Victoria's future.

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) — I rise this afternoon like one of the 220-metre steel-and-concrete towers littered across one of the most beautiful, pristine landscapes in the world — the world's second-largest volcanic plain — to make as much noise as one of those things, because the bill before us today, the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017, is nothing more than a Northcote by-election sound bite.

That is all it is. It has been put up to try and win a seat that you are flat out trying to save. That is what this is about because no-one who seriously thinks they are in charge of running a modern, First World economy — no-one who is serious about providing jobs, opportunity and a First World economy — would want to give away baseload electricity and forfeit that for the feel-good, tram-travelling, latte-drinking set in Northcote.

Let us look at today from 8 o'clock this morning to 4 o'clock this afternoon. What was Australia's largest wind farm producing? I can tell you, Acting Speaker Pearson, how we the people of Victoria would be faring if these clog-wearing wind farm fanatics across the chamber had their way in this great state of Victoria. This is what we would have had from 8 o'clock this morning — the Macarthur wind farm, slated in all the propaganda that we get day-in, day-out on renewable energy as powering 173 000 homes. Guess what?

Today that marvellous piece of government and private investment, subsidised by our taxes, which was supposed to provide 420 megawatts, only supplied 85 megawatts — 20 per cent.

With all that infrastructure, it is like constructing a 50-storey building, only letting people go in the first 10 floors and leaving the rest to waste, but paying the full cost of rates, taxes and turning the lights and air conditioning on, without being able to use it. That is what the figures showed today. It did not power 173 000 homes, but 34 600 homes. The whole point of wind energy is that you sprinkle it all over the countryside, and of course that is half the problem, but that is seen as the solution. The green movement and everyone who will be criticising these comments today will tell me, 'But all you have to do is build wind farms everywhere, and the more wind farms you have, the more baseload power you have'.

Let us go to another spot. Let us go to Portland. It is just down the road, out a bit further, on the sea. In fact I do not think anyone has ever gone to Portland and not had their dog blown off the chain. From 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. today the Portland wind farm is supposed to produce 195 megawatts — 125 000 homes. The propaganda tells us everyone in Western Victoria would be electrified with that great set-up.

What did it produce today? For the whole day it averaged 61.25 megawatts — that is, 38 750 out of the 125 000 homes. Just to throw another one in, Oakland Hill wind farm was at 26 per cent today. In the great state of Victoria, a policy and an energy position that we are rocketing towards at a great rate of knots is slated to have been powering 28 000 homes. Guess what? Only 8000 of them were being powered by that — 28 per cent. That means if we were to rely on what the government is telling us about its renewable energy targets, just in western Victoria alone, 245 300 homes out of 336 000 would not have had the power turned on today.

If we want to know what not having the power turned on means to businesses and communities, let us look at what happened on Saturday at Lorne, a great little town in my electorate. All the bike-riding fraternity came down to Lorne for A Metre Matters. They came down to Lorne for the biggest cycling festival in the country; 5500 people descended on Lorne for the day. It was going to be a brilliant weekend for the traders and the restaurateurs. They had had a quiet three months of winter with not many crowds around. Every hotel was booked out, every piece of accommodation booked. Guess what happened at 6.05 p.m. on Saturday, with 5500 visitors in a little country town?

Mr Paynter — Don't tell me the lights went out.

Mr RIORDAN — The lights went out. There was no infrastructure to manage the fact that at the same time everyone finished riding their bikes, took their lycra off, had a shower, turned the heater on and — bang! — popped the fuse. Poor little Lorne was without any power at all until after midnight.

The whole economic benefit was lost. It cost the pub alone \$60 000. Just for our friends over the way who are used to swanning around in suburbs and do not need to worry about power because they will just go to the next one if the power goes off, it does not work like that in a country town. When the power goes out, there are no automatic teller machines and no EFTPOS machines. Doors do not open and restaurants cannot operate. The cumulative damage to that little town was in excess of a quarter of a million dollars in one night. That is money that the town will never recoup. People's lives were really affected, and that is because of poor energy policy. That is what the state has to look forward to this summer as we rocket towards not understanding that our economy cannot survive when the lights go out.

So why is this ringing so true across western Victoria when we can see enormous investment going hell for leather and promoted by government? It is really selling a pup. We are going out and saying to landowners, 'Look, things get tough in agriculture, so you need to take these wind farm opportunities because if you take these up, it will solve all your problems on the farm. It will be marvellous'. A lot of people in western Victoria think back a little bit and say, 'This sounds a bit like those managed investment schemes and blue gums that we all got suckered into about five or six years ago'. What happened there? These blue gums were going to be fantastic. They were going to solve all your farming problems. You were going to be able to go and buy a house on the coast and retire from farming and the revenue would roll in.

What is going to happen with these wind farms, do we think? On average, from the ones I have experienced across Polwarth, we have the guy who wants the permit. Some two-bit overseas company comes in, and they do all the running around and they sell. They have got steak knives. They drive around in Renaults — probably hybrid Renaults — with steak knives in the boot and probably a couple of subscriptions to *Reader's Digest*. They run around knocking on doors, telling people, 'You will have an income stream for the rest of your life if you sign up to this'. They like that, and then they sell that package onto someone else. They make a quick few million dollars out of that, and they move to the next

guy. The next guy says, 'Well, you know, they were the promises the last guy made, but I am not sure we can contribute to that as well. We are going to change. We are going to make the towers a little bit taller. We might take a few off you, and you might not get quite as much money'. That is how the whole thing will operate when the wind farm starts, because these things have a 25-year life and we know what happens with limited life expectancy in any industrial equipment: of course you never want to be the last man standing when it comes to owning these things. So we can see and the people can see that down the track it is going the same way as the managed investment schemes.

What this policy does is it puts all the eggs in one basket. The state of Victoria needs good, solid, reliable energy targets. It does not need ridiculous energy targets. This is a ridiculous energy target. It is unrealistic, and it ignores the fact that we are not in Denmark and we are not in Germany. If we hear one more quoted example about how wonderful wind turbines are in the Danish countryside and the German countryside — I have been to these places and I can tell you that I have not seen anywhere in Europe wind farms done the way that we are doing them here in this great state of Victoria. We are building massive industrial systems from one end of the state to the other. We will pay a price for it. It is affecting communities, and it needs to be done better.

This policy, this bill that we are talking about today, talks nothing about the human impact of creating this renewable energy target. It does not talk about how it is going to work in communities, and it does not offer real long-term solutions to the other renewal options. We know renewable energy needs to be part of our energy system, but at the same time we have to keep the lights on and we have to keep Victoria operating. As it stands, I cannot support this bill.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — Historians will look back on this period of politics in developed countries like here and the US, and particularly they will look to conservative parties and what they were doing around the two greatest challenges that every other part of the world had actually gone and made a difference in because they were forward looking. They will think, 'What on earth were the conservative parties in the US and Australia thinking around energy and around marriage equality? They were looking backwards; they were not looking forwards'. Even the Conservatives, the Tories, in the UK accept these two tenets: they accept that marriage equality should exist and they actually accept that we need change in our energy markets and that climate change is real, unlike those troglodytes across the way.

Mr Riordan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson) — The member for Polwarth!

Ms GREEN — There have been some very, very funny cartoons that are rightly pointing out the hilarity and the stupidity and the squandering of opportunity that is occurring because of the denial of those opposite of the need for change in our energy mix. One of the funniest ones, I thought, was on *Insiders* on Sunday morning. 'Those great lefties on the ABC, we should get rid of them', they will say on the other side. They had this pet rock, this bit of dirty old coal, and they said, 'This is Malcolm's little friend' — the pet rock — 'this piece of black, dirty coal'. That is what those opposite say we should stick with. They say, 'Do not look to innovation. Do not look to anything that is going to create new jobs or support innovation. Let us look in the rear-view mirror'. How have we heard those opposite describe anyone who does not hold their view? Latte sipping, clog wearing — these are some of the criticisms that have been made.

When this lot on the other side have interfered in the market or when they have promoted the market in our essential services — has that not gone well! They talk about the needs of regional communities and how regional communities need secure energy. I actually remember when the Kennett government sold off gas and fuel in the 1990s. I actually remember that, my community remembers that and lots of places across regional Victoria remember that. When they sold off the Gas and Fuel Corporation, towns like Bairnsdale were so close to the gas fields of Bass Strait and so close to the Longford plant. They had laid the mains down the centre of Bairnsdale, and the community and those businesses down there — businesses like Patties Foods that are known across this country and across this state — were going to benefit from cheaper energy. Home owners had bought new gas stoves and new heaters because the mains were laid right down the main street. But when those energy experts opposite sold off the Gas and Fuel Corporation, they had not envisaged that the network might ever need to expand. There was nothing in the sale of the Gas and Fuel Corporation to private energy companies that encouraged innovation in the market and encouraged the expansion of the network. It took until 2005, 2006, some 15 to 20 years later, before some communities got an expansion in the gas network to actually take advantage of reticulated gas.

We have also seen the same sort of thing with the lack of innovation. They sold off Telstra and did not think at all about new technology and about how communities would access information into the future. Now these

rear-view drivers are trying to tell the community, 'Don't support a VRET'. Well, we do support a Victorian renewable energy target (VRET) on this side of the house. Opposition members are trying to say, 'You won't put a wind turbine in Royal Park'. Well, no, we will not, because there is a wind atlas which tells you the most appropriate parts of the state where wind energy is going to work. The same applies with solar. There are parts of the state and elsewhere in this country where solar is a better option. There are also parts of the state where with grain production, for example, organics would be useful — that is, reusing the stubble. Instead of contributing to greenhouse emissions by burning the stubble, when the crop is harvested you actually cut the stubble and reuse it in pellets to heat our hospitals and our schools. That is about innovation, and that is why you need a VRET.

Opposition members are saying that we are not listening and not thinking about small communities. They will try and say that South Australia is all stuffed. Well, it is not all stuffed. I visited Tanunda immediately after the serious fires that they had a couple of years back, and in the town Wohlers, a fantastic, very successful South Australian-based homewares company, have invested \$350 000 in solar panels and batteries that will power half the commercial township of Tanunda. It is about the size of Kilmore, Leongatha, Stawell or Ararat — those sort of towns. Now that is innovation. That means the owner of Wohlers can become his own energy retailer and actually provide certainty of supply to Tanunda's commercial heart. It also means that next time there is a major fire and mains power is cut, the commercial centre will be able to protect itself from fire. So Wohlers is protecting jobs, protecting that community and protecting lives and property. Also, there is money in communities saying that they are carbon neutral; tourists worldwide are really interested in that.

Unlike what those opposite say — that a VRET is bad for small communities in regional Victoria — it could be the saviour of many towns in regional Victoria. Not only would it save them from bushfires but it would also give them security of supply. Hospitality businesses often tell me that the biggest problem they have is interruptions to supply, and it is not because there is not enough around. These things happen, and it causes them to lose foodstuffs, to lose business. Imagine if they had a guaranteed supply, whether it is a backup supply or whether it takes them off grid with a combination of solar, wind and organics — reusing the food leftovers that might occur in hospitality businesses. The government has funded a project in Hepburn shire with five other neighbouring shires. They are using an organic digester that will diminish

emissions, and it will mean they can be turned into gas and reused in that community. That is what tourist communities will be able to do.

The future is not about looking backwards and looking at coal; it is actually looking at a diversity of energy options. A diversity of energy options is the best way that you can protect supply in this state, it is the best way you can grow jobs and it means that we are ready for the future. We are completely different to those opposite. I agree with the member for Narre Warren South, who said in her contribution that it is a shame that 10 years on we are having to put the same legislation through again because those opposite scrapped it, just like their friends in Canberra will not have a national renewable energy target. We will in this state because we are forward looking, we are about jobs and we are about innovation. We are not going to be about throwing glib accusations and taunts about this being an inner-city focused policy. It absolutely is not. It is great for small communities, it is great for regional Victoria, it is great for household budgets and jobs and it is about the future.

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) — It is my melancholy duty to rise to speak on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017 — the kill jobs bill, the kill household budgets bill, the killing bill for Victoria's cheap energy future. Our great past was built on cheap and reliable energy from the Latrobe Valley, the great legacy of Sir John Monash. This is economic vandalism writ large from a group of turkeys that have simply no understanding about what they are doing to this great state and indeed to our national energy market.

The Finkel review makes it very clear that state renewable energy targets are undesirable and market distorting and cut across the primary reason we have the Council of Australian Governments, which is for a nationally consistent energy policy. The Labor states of Queensland and Western Australia have agreed that there ought to be a national approach to reducing emissions. The simple fact is that the genius, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, thinks that she knows better than Professor Finkel, the federal government, Labor state governments around the country and indeed what makes common sense — that for a country such as Australia to have different renewable energy targets and indeed different energy policies amongst the states is frankly inane and market distorting, will be at great cost to consumers and will undermine energy security.

Even the Grattan Institute makes these observations:

Actions by state or territory governments to subsidise renewable energy are poor policy choices ...

...

Unilateral actions by state or territory governments when there are existing or pending federal policies in the same area will almost certainly result in either conflict or higher cost with no net environmental benefit.

The Grattan Institute are not normally advocates for the centre right or free market economics. I have found the Grattan Institute to be most reasonable and most centrist in most of its policy deliberations, and it has made it very clear —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — It is not an ideological think tank at all. It has made it very clear that this is a stupid policy. Why? Because it is driven by politics. It is driven by the politics of inner-urban Melbourne. We have a Northcote election, which we know the Labor Party are terrified of losing. We know that they are desperate for us to run a candidate, and we will not be. The simple fact is that to hold back the Green scourge, which I have made many mentions of in this place over many years — and I note my friend the member for Mordialloc is chortling away there up the back — you do not sacrifice Victoria's manufacturing future, the future of household budgets or the livelihoods of Victorians for a few votes in Brunswick, Northcote, Richmond and indeed Melbourne.

The basic modelling for the Victorian renewable energy target is a sham. Ernst & Young highlighted in this report that the assumptions dictated by Labor were inadequate:

If investment in network infrastructure were required to facilitate renewable generation development, this would likely lead to increases in retail electricity prices ...

Do you hear that? Increases in retail electricity prices. This is your sham modelling that you released this afternoon: increased prices through higher network charges.

... if the increased penetration of renewable generation results in a more rapid retirement of existing generators, this could result in increased concentration in the wholesale market and could provide opportunities for generators to exploit incidences of transient market power. This has not been considered in the modelling.

The great princes and princesses of the working classes have sacrificed household budgets and the people they purport to be representing in this place on the high altar of green politics, green preferences and the peccadilloes of the chattering classes in the cafes of Richmond and Brunswick. We joke about this on this side of the house. The member for Polwarth made a wonderful

contribution quite correctly mocking the clog-wearing — what did you call it?

Mr Riordan — The clog-wearing windmill lovers.

Mr T. SMITH — Yes, the clog-wearing windmill lovers.

All of us in this chamber have not, I can imagine, had too many difficulties paying our energy bills. But for those folk who really do battle in the height of winter and the height of summer to pay their energy bills, vulnerable individuals who require government to have a mind for their welfare — the people the Labor Party used to represent, can I say — they have been simply forgotten in an ideological quest to be the greenest and the meanest government in this country. This is a crackers government obsessed with green ideology, obsessed with out-greening the Greens.

I simply say to this government: you have reduced our energy security by presiding over the closure of Hazelwood. Twenty-two per cent of our energy security went out the window on your watch, and you will be reminded every single day between now and the next election by the Liberal and National parties that on your watch 22 per cent of our grid went out the window. The only way — and this has come from the Committee for Gippsland, GHD and a whole host of reputable sources — that you will reach your renewable energy target of 40 per cent by 2025, which is just frankly insane, is by closing Yallourn, another 20 per cent of our energy grid.

Shame on you, Labor, for sacrificing this great state's energy security, the livelihoods of manufacturing workers and the working poor that you are meant to be representing but you are not. Only the Liberal and National parties are acting on behalf of all Victorians — the economy across our great state, the economy of manufacturers, of energy workers and of farmers.

We would not have a farming industry without cheap energy. I have heard countless stories around the state from farmers who are genuinely struggling to run their operations, particularly dairy farmers in the member for Polwarth's electorate, the member for South-West Coast's electorate and in the member for Benambra's electorate. These are stories from real people running real businesses.

We hear this time and time again from the Labor Party, who will say, 'This is great; this is our vision of modernity'. Well, my vision of modernity is not a Victoria that frankly cannot keep the lights on. We can have debates about climate change and our energy future, but that ought to be done in Canberra; this is not

a place for that. The role of the state is to keep the lights on, to provide energy security and to provide baseload power for consumers, manufacturers and business because, at the moment, with population growth growing like we have never seen before — 146 000 people came to this state last year — and you cutting 20 per cent of our energy grid, what do you think is going to happen as demand increases, not just from business but from people alone, when you are continuously cutting baseload power?

To conclude, the thing that I find so disturbing about the point at which Hazelwood closed early because you taxed them out of existence — and indeed you did not lobby the French company, Engie, to stay here — is that there were three perfectly good turbines that could have been kept open for years to come, and you did nothing about that.

But the point that I find so incredibly annoying and indeed disappointing is that you have sacrificed our energy security because of votes. I just think that is so morally reprehensible on so many different levels. When inevitably there are blackouts this summer, and people, particularly the aged, are sitting in their homes and cannot keep themselves cool and there are genuine health impacts because of that, it will be your fault. You will be held to pay for your trespasses against the Victorian people, and I think the way you have behaved is contemptible and ought to be called as such.

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) — I begin by quoting from the *Age* Columbia University professor and Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz:

... if rich high-emitting countries such as Australia and the United States don't eventually come to the table, companies should be subject to a cross-border carbon tax.

This is an indication of how seriously climate change is considered in some quarters. Professor Stiglitz is not anti-business. Rather, he wants everyone to share from advances in technology and economic growth in a sustainable way. The evidence is clear. The facts are in. The banks, industries and energy companies here and around the world are investing in renewables and storage, and integrating them into the mix.

The opposition suggests that a national approach is the only way forward, though they are not great supporters of renewable and clean energy — of course they are not comfortable in admitting that. How humorous it is for the opposition to say that renewable energy policy is ideologically driven when the rest of the world is adapting sustainable energy policies. Obviously the opposition cannot comprehend the change, this futuristic position, being conservatives.

A national approach may well be the best way to deal with the issue. However, the problem is that the federal government has failed to develop a national energy policy that provides a reasonable balance between conventional coal and gas-fired sources and renewables within a framework that satisfies Australia's international emissions reduction obligations. Everyone from the Australian Industry Group to the National Farmers Federation and the Clean Energy Council is calling for the federal government to provide the certainty required for investors to invest in new-generation capacity and help bring down energy prices. It is anybody's guess why the federal government has dragged their feet for such a long period of time.

The federal government did not have an energy policy or any forward planning. That is why the Prime Minister had to beg AGL to extend the use-by date for the Liddell power station and extend its operation for another five years from the planned closure date. It is no different to the Hazelwood power station, which passed its use-by date and the owners decided to close it in spite of the opposition's dishonest claims. No lender will provide long-term loans to the Hazelwood and Liddell power stations past their use-by dates.

The Prime Minister's request was declined. AGL CEO Andy Vesey emphasised the need for targets to help to increase supply. He said:

The reality is the best way to bring down prices is to increase electricity supply, which is why we are investing in new generation and support a clean energy target to unlock additional supply.

Recently the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, the Treasurer, Scott Morrison, and the Minister for the Environment and Energy, Josh Frydenberg, met with eight power companies — Energy Australia, Momentum Energy, Simply Energy, Alinta Energy, Origin Energy, AGL, the Australian Energy Council and Snowy Hydro. While the meeting was supposed to focus on retail power prices, according to sources in the meeting, 'the point was made more than once that a clean energy target was needed to give the sector certainty to invest'.

Australia ranks equal 15th overall in a new World Bank scorecard on sustainable energy. We are tied with five other countries in the tail-end group of wealthy OECD countries. We know that we will be waiting a very long time for the Turnbull government to show leadership on this, so Victoria is not going to wait for them. The Victorian opposition has no energy or climate policy either. It took almost three years for the shadow energy spokesman to ask his first question. It took them three

years to realise that, as a result of the inaction of their mates in Canberra, investment in new energy has collapsed in Australia. The time has come for us to take action if we want to have an affordable, reliable and clean energy future.

The renewables sector plays an important role in reaching that objective. Therefore we need to grow our renewables sector. The renewables are the cheapest to build and the fastest to build. This makes sense on every possible level, both economic and environmental. No doubt they are our future. We know that with the right support from government and the right policy settings Victoria can lead the world. In this day and age we are in a world that is making an extraordinary transition towards renewable energy. At least 67 countries have renewable energy policy targets of some type. In Europe 28 European Union member states and eight Energy Community contracting parties have legally binding renewable energy targets. The European Union baseline target is 20 per cent by 2020. The bill before the house means a target of 25 per cent renewable electricity by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025 will soon be enshrined in law.

The Victorian government has established the Victorian renewable energy auction scheme to support achievement of the Victorian renewable energy target. In October 2017 the first auction will be open for bids under the Victorian renewable energy auction scheme. Under this option the Victorian government will award commercial contracts in support of up to 650 megawatts of new renewable energy generation. Victoria is holding the largest renewable energy auction in Australia. To put it into context, an auction of up to 650 megawatts will deliver enough electricity to power around 389 000 households every year, or the energy to power Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, the Latrobe Valley and more.

The main purposes of the bill are to establish renewable energy targets for Victoria and support schemes to achieve targets under the bill. Enshrining the targets in the legislation will provide certainty for investment, employment and technology development in renewable energy in Victoria. Updated modelling forecasts bringing forward 5150 megawatts of new renewable energy capacity by 2027 would deliver around 9050 additional two-year construction jobs, 750 ongoing jobs and up to \$7.2 billion of additional renewable energy investment. Bringing forward 3400 megawatts of new renewable energy capacity by 2025 is also forecast to deliver significant economic benefits to the state, including around 6050 additional two-year construction jobs, 490 ongoing jobs and up to \$5.1 billion of additional renewable energy investment.

The first auction of up to 650 megawatts is forecast to deliver up to 1250 additional two-year construction jobs, 90 ongoing jobs and up to \$1.3 billion of additional renewable energy investment. Under each of the scenarios modelled the new generation capacity brought into the market will improve energy security for Victorians and put downward pressure on wholesale prices, thus saving Victorians money on energy bills.

Enshrining the targets in the legislation will provide certainty for investment, employment and technology development in renewable energy in Victoria. The amount of new renewable energy capacity required to meet the targets will depend on several factors, including changes in Victoria's existing generation mix, federal government policy and Victoria's electricity demand. The long-term wholesale electricity price forecasts underpinning the Victorian government's recent modelling of the Victorian renewable energy target scheme are quite similar to those reported by the Finkel review. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — I rise this evening to speak on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. From a Morwell electorate perspective, the title of this bill is an anomaly for our community as it talks about jobs and investment. In actual fact the reverse has happened in our community with respect to energy generation, capacity, investment and indeed jobs.

This is not to take anything away from renewable energy. I am a big supporter of renewable energy, and it certainly has a place in our energy mix, not only in Victoria but nationwide. There are plenty of great examples of businesses, companies and organisations who are doing some great work within the renewable energy space. I am sure the member for Gippsland South would agree with me as we have a company based in Traralgon and in Mirboo North — Gippsland Solar — that has experienced enormous growth in capacity and is doing some wonderful things with respect to solar. There are examples of that with regards to other renewable energy sources, whether it be wind or other opportunities that might exist in the future.

But I think what is forgotten on many occasions is the fact that we sometimes neglect the importance of baseload power. I am the first to concede that in the future renewables and baseload power will go hand in hand, but it is a difficult conversation and something that technically and engineering-wise is not really possible right here and now. That makes this a very difficult space for decision-makers and policymakers with regards to energy security, energy prices and indeed employment in these particular sectors.

My concern with the bill is that I believe it consigns us to the potential of another South Australia. I know those on the other side would disagree with that, but having had the opportunity to visit and talk to many people, groups, organisations and businesses in South Australia over the past 12 months, it has been nothing short of a disaster over there. Many of the policies that were adopted by the South Australian state government I fear are now being adopted by this government, and we simply cannot afford to let that happen. The notion of what has happened in South Australia, with the closure of coal-fired power stations and even gas-fired power stations and the total reliance on renewables in that state, certainly has come at a great cost to many businesses and households in South Australia.

We should not forget the fact though that whilst that has happened in South Australia it has really been the interconnector from Victoria, and indeed the Latrobe Valley, that has kept the power on in many cases in South Australia over that time. Again it comes back to my point that I made earlier about having that baseload power capacity in our system.

The problem with South Australia of course was the fact that they had so much intermittent energy that the whole system fell apart on occasions. Imagine where they would be without Victoria and the Latrobe Valley supplying that power through an interconnector during that particular time. But having had a chat to many businesses, groups and organisations in South Australia about how they were feeling about the situation, it was one of just feeling absolutely helpless — I was going to say powerless, pardon the pun — about the situation where what we had seen was a significant spike in energy prices for businesses and householders, and security of supply being threatened on occasion.

Yes, I know people will point to a significant storm that happened in that state, but nonetheless South Australia has had to put in place a whole range of new initiatives and measures to ensure that they try and keep their power prices down but also retain security of supply. So policy-making and legislation is critically important in what we do.

From a local point of view, and I know I have spoken about this many times, as have members on this side of the house today during the debate, the closure of Hazelwood has had a significant impact. I think it is all too easy for people to say, 'Oh well, we will close down a coal-fired power station, and by the way there are going to be all of these renewable energy jobs around'. That may well be the case in some circumstances, but they do not always relate to the community.

From my perspective, if Hazelwood power station in the Latrobe Valley has closed down, where are the renewable jobs for people in my community? Yes, they might pop up in other smaller communities or communities around the state — that is granted. But the problem we have is we have had a massive loss of jobs within one community and they are not being replaced. That has had a massive impact upon many workers, contractors, families and businesses in my community.

Granted again, yes, we have the worker transfer scheme — as the minister walks into the chamber, good timing — that might be doing some good work, but the reality of the situation is that there are still a substantial amount of workers — hundreds of workers and contractors — who do not have work. I spoke to two of them just last week. One of them is a contractor who had worked at Hazelwood for 20-odd years. His situation is that he has had to go interstate and has been in South Australia, coincidentally, for work and away from family, and not on the same conditions or pay. Life is very difficult for him. He is one of many people who are experiencing those same issues at the moment.

We have also spoken previously about the coal royalty. It is absolutely insane that just last year we saw a \$252 million increase in coal royalties for Latrobe Valley generators, and that has had a massive impact. No matter what anybody says on the other side, those coal royalties did have an impact; the company itself conceded that was the fact. One has to wonder what the impact might be on other generators as well.

Others have spoken about wholesale prices. Again, on a recent visit out to one of the power stations, their wholesale prices have at least doubled and, more than that, on many occasions when you have a look at the market, there is no way of controlling that for consumers. Consumers are the ones at the end of day who have to pick that up. In recent times of course there has been much debate on security of supply and what that means and the notion of businesses and companies having to acquire generators, which is just absolutely nonsensical in this day and age. Somebody said earlier — and I must say I cannot remember who said it — that renewable energy is going to be the saviour of many smaller regional towns.

Mr Burgess — The member for Yan Yean.

Mr NORTHE — The member for Yan Yean — it was too. Again this is this philosophical view, this easy answer to questions, that is simply not the fact within my community. We have actually lost hundreds and hundreds of jobs as a consequence of policy and decisions that have been made. My fear is that Yallourn

power station also has a limited life, and unless we start to replace that baseload power that we have already lost with Hazelwood power station — and are going to lose with Yallourn power station most likely going offline within the next 10 years — my firm belief is that we do need to look at and start to build and construct a new coal-fired power station in the Latrobe Valley using the newest technologies.

We have seen that in Germany just in the last five years they have built new coal-fired power stations over there. Why? Because they are able to use new technology in the high-efficiency, low-emission plants. They know it is one of the cheapest forms of producing electricity, and we can do it in a much more environmentally friendly way in the future than we had been able to do. So for the sake of security of supply and for the sake of prices for businesses and householders in Victoria, those are some of the deliberate considerations that we should be considering as part of our overall energy mix.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — I am pleased to have the opportunity to contribute on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017 today. In the 1980s Shepparton thought it was a pretty amazing place because it decided to call itself the solar city. I think probably it turns out we might have been 40 years before our time and did not really act on it in any significant ways. Not a lot of investment went into solar at that time, but it was very much the image of our city that we had more sunlight than probably anywhere else in the world and that we would be an amazing place and would have the capacity to produce large amounts of solar. So it was always on the radar, and it is only now in more recent years that we have had the opportunity to see, just in recent weeks, the opportunity for a solar farm to be built just north of Numurkah at Wunghnu. That will supply about 38 megawatts to apparently power trams in Melbourne, but it will actually have a capacity of 100 megawatts, so presumably the rest will be going into the grid. Similarly, local government in the Greater Shepparton region is looking at potential options for further solar farms within the region, and there are a number of proposals across northern Victoria that no doubt will look to take advantage of the sorts of opportunities that legislation like this might offer.

Before I got elected to Parliament we went solar in our legal office. It was a small regional legal firm, but we decided to take up the options that were there for us about five or six years ago and put solar energy across the whole office. It was very pleasing not to get bills anymore, so it was a good investment from a business perspective for us to do that. We were the sort of

business that could actually achieve results by doing it, but there are many other businesses that are now significantly under threat because of the cost of energy in our region and indeed across the state and across the country.

From my point of view I see it as a major failure over the last 10 years of both parties at a federal and state level not to have been able to hit on a policy that creates certainty for our energy markets and for the businesses that work in this area. It seems to me in some ways that the states have actually been compelled to take some steps. There has been no leadership at the federal level, so we have got states now setting their own renewable energy targets. It could be argued that they perhaps are taking a leadership role and that when the federal government finally does set on a policy that is understandable, that is clear, that gives really strong signals to everyone, the states will perhaps join in more to hopefully see a much more concerted and conforming policy across the whole of the country.

It seems to me that renewables will definitely be a part of the mix. They are already a part of the mix, and it is really disappointing to see the high level of politicisation of the argument around all of this. I was watching *Q&A* briefly on Monday night — last night — and noticed the absolute endeavour that the parties engage in to mudsling at each other and to blame each other for the position that we find each other in and very often the significant lack of clarity around what we ought to be doing. So when a proposition is put forward that seeks to address some of the issues, you really want to look at it hard and see whether it is going to benefit us.

Renewable energy — like, for instance, wind and solar — is only valuable when the sun shines and the wind blows, so a really significant part of the mix, particularly in renewables, is that there are some renewables that are being funded which will provide stability into the system and will be able to meet demand when that demand is called upon. Businesses need to be able to access energy when they need it just like they need their employees to come to work when they are needed, so for businesses to run they have to have certainty around their ability to access energy at particular times. So hydro-electricity, battery storage, biomass — these all need to be put into the mix and funded so that we get a sufficiently weighted system. There can be no doubt that coal and gas are still very much a part of what we will need to provide for our state's needs in the near future.

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) says billions of dollars of investment is needed to ensure

stability in the grid. AEMO is responsible for operating Australia's largest gas and electricity market and power systems, and it recognises that we are now going through unprecedented transformational times. It is not just happening to us here; it is happening all across the world. The challenges are immense, and we have to face up to them if we are going to survive as a country, if our businesses are going to survive and if we are going to actually maintain employment let alone increase it.

One of the things AEMO has identified in recent reports is the need for interconnectivity between the states — interconnectivity of the grid so that there can be much more sharing of power in times of need. I think this bill will see investment particularly in more wind and solar, and that is a concern I have. I have said I think we have got to be very careful that we make sure other renewables are invested in which do provide that stability that we very clearly need. To some extent I am satisfied that the government is thinking about this. I looked at the second-reading speech by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and in it she said:

Energy security will also be a key feature of actions to meet the targets in this bill, and weighting will be provided to projects and new technologies that add to overall security.

Weighting is a really important feature of what we need to consider in this so that the various sources of energy that are coming together are sufficient to provide for the needs of our community.

In my region just earlier this year we had federal Senator Canavan visiting a number of businesses in our area. He visited Gouge drycleaners, a company that employs about 150 people in regional Victoria, providing cleaning services for linen across a range of hospitals and other institutions. They have been faced with an increase of \$300 000 in their energy bill just for this year. For a business of that size that is indeed very challenging.

A lot of the reasons that have been put down to that relate to gas supply. The federal government has criticised Victoria for its refusal to engage in sufficient gas exploration and development. I recall that not long ago we all voted on the anti-fracking bill here. While I am happy to have supported that bill, I do question the point in time at which we now need to look at reviewing access to onshore gas supplies for conventional gas exploration and development.

There is no doubt we are in a position now where we are exporting our gas in huge quantities and it is cheaper for us to buy back our own gas from another

country. It is absolutely extraordinary that we, a country so energy rich in so many ways, find ourselves in a position where we are fixing up the ports to allow in ships that will bring back gas that we have exported somewhere else at a lower price. In my opinion it is incomprehensible that we could find ourselves in such a situation. I think we will find ourselves in situations in the forthcoming summer where we will have blackouts across the state. That sort of thing will not be forgotten in November 2018 when we all face elections. It is something that will make people very angry.

I reflect on the fact that just recently during the hurricane in America over eight elderly people died in nursing homes because the power went out and there was no-one there to care for them. It is quite frightening to think of the possible consequences in our community of the long-term loss of power. That is extreme, but just the cost of power is now becoming very burdensome and difficult for vulnerable people in our community. So at this stage I await further discussion on the bill.

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) — It is a pleasure to rise and speak on the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017. Before getting into what I have to say in any great detail, I think it is apt to say that the opposition fully supports a move to renewables, but only fools would move to renewables before there is anything to back them up with. That is really the nub of the problem that we are facing here in Victoria. We are looking at having blackouts this coming summer that are not only going to expose businesses and families but also the most vulnerable in our community. That really is an unforgivable situation, particularly when you consider that this government is motivated almost totally by politics and ideology. In its attempt to hold onto seats that have been challenged by the Greens, it is trying to out-green the Greens. In doing so it is putting Victoria, its economy, its families and its most vulnerable at very severe risk.

Victoria was built on available, reasonably priced energy, and we built a great economy. We were a great manufacturing state, but slowly but surely those things have been whittled down due to a variety of reasons. Now I think this state is facing one of its greatest challenges, and that challenge is at the moment being personified by this government with its ideological bent towards moving us to renewables regardless of the cost to our economy, to our state and to our families. That is really an unforgivable situation for a state government to find itself in, but this is not the first time this government or this brand of government has done such a thing to an economy. We only have to look back at the Cain and Kirner years to understand that there is already a record of a Labor government in Victoria

destroying an economy and putting its people at great risk through making ridiculous decisions. They really amount to what can only be best described as economic vandals. Over the last century, as I say, Victoria really has built a wonderful economy based on cheap and reliable energy. In one fell swoop this government intends to remove that.

We should not mince words about why Hazelwood was closed and who closed it. Hazelwood was closed only because this government wanted it closed. It was clearly its policy. It was saying it was going to introduce the Victorian renewable energy target, which was going to have a massive impact on Hazelwood. It tripled coal royalties. What organisation could afford to triple their coal royalties in one hit like that? And if that was not enough, in November last year the Treasurer was dispatched to see Engie in France, and then in three weeks Engie announced that they were going to close Hazelwood. What a surprise! This government is getting done what it wants, and that is to do anything it can to stay in power.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Nepean Highway–Wilsons Road, Mornington

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — (13 073) I raise an adjournment matter this evening for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. In raising this matter I am asking the minister to take such action as is necessary to advance the construction of traffic signals at the intersection of Nepean Highway and Wilsons Road in Mornington. This is a step which will not only improve traffic at the intersection but also significantly improve public transport and bus services in Mornington. In 2009 Connell Wagner undertook the Frankston-Mornington Peninsula bus service review. That report made a number of recommendations to extend and improve bus services themselves and also for the implementation of some infrastructure improvements.

In terms of the Mornington electorate there were two major infrastructure projects proposed. The first was the construction of a bus interchange at Barkly Street in Mornington. That work was undertaken by the Napthine government, and has greatly improved conditions for passengers using the services from central Mornington. The intersection works at Wilsons Road have always been considered a similar priority,

but were expected to be a subsequent step to the construction of the transport interchange. I would suggest that seeing as we are now almost eight years on from the presentation of that report, the time for the project has come.

Recently I asked the minister to undertake traffic counts in Main Street, Mornington. It is a narrow road and it is now quite congested. The plan has always been to use Tanti Avenue and Wilsons Road, which run parallel to Main Street in Mornington, as alternative routes. That has been partly implemented in terms of the bus service, but it cannot be fully implemented until these intersection works are undertaken.

We have a population which is growing significantly — not at the same speed as Casey, Cardinia or Wyndham, but relatively quickly. But unlike the growth areas, the Peninsula is not a greenfield site; it is very much a matter of retrofitting existing infrastructure. The improvements to bus services that will flow from the installation of traffic signals at this intersection are very much that — retrofitting the infrastructure to make it work more efficiently and to serve the public better.

I ask the minister to take my request seriously. Perhaps he may be able to squeeze some funding out of the Minister for Public Transport. Who knows? But certainly it is desirable to have the construction of those signals advanced as quickly as possible.

Lalor and District Men's Shed

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) — (13 074) I rise to raise a matter for the Minister for Education regarding the Lalor and District Men's Shed and formalising its current lease arrangements with the Department of Education and Training. The action I seek is that the minister arrange for a representative of the minister and department to meet with representatives of the men's shed to discuss how it can be done.

This men's shed is a well-organised, generous and vibrant organisation. I commend the president, Douglass George, and secretary Jim Kerin, the many committee members, both past and present, and members for all their dedication and hard work.

A long-term lease is necessary because without it this shed is unable to access the current support and grants provided by the Andrews Labor government for other sheds. The shed is in desperate need of upgrades to toilets, air conditioning and furnishings, which I know the Labor government is very keen to address but cannot without the lease being organised.

Regional and rural roads

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — (13 075) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Police, and the action I seek from the minister is: fix country roads and save country lives and do not bring in a 70-kilometre-per-hour speed limit on country gravel roads. I have had a lot of feedback on this issue since it became public, and I would just like to put a small sample of that on the record tonight. J. Emeny of Warrnambool said:

Stay the same — you cap council rates, but then expect them to fix the roads with reduced funding. Help fix the roads, not lower speed limits!

Jamie Bell from Warracknabeal said:

Absolutely not lower. Why should we accept lower speed limits simply because the government will not spend the money to repair them? We pay our taxes and have little public transport options, so we have to use our cars.

Tori Ficarra from Woorinen said:

No, it's not the speed as much as the roads need more maintenance. Bit like our sealed roads, they are becoming more dangerous every year. All VicRoads do is put up slow down signs.

Tony Foster from Ballarat said:

Another typical kneejerk reaction to fool Melburnians into thinking that they are actually doing something.

Barb Hockley said:

How about just fixing the country roads? Victoria does not start and finish in Melbourne.

Russell Butler from Shepparton said:

No! Fix the damn roads! Reducing speed limits in place of repairing roads is just lazy and incompetent management.

One of the classics is Toby Johnstone from Longwood, who said:

Don't be so bloody ridiculous, Grandma! Imbecile — join the Greens if you think that way!

Tannum Foley from Strathallan said:

Why change them? They're fine. The only thing that needs change is maintenance on the roads.

A similar comment from Calvin Gleeson from Rushworth, who said:

I am guessing Mr Andrews doesn't commute to and from work each day on country roads.

There is a very strong feeling in country Victoria that we do not want a 70-kilometre speed limit on gravel roads. We actually just want the roads fixed.

Jack Daniel from Warracknabeal has the last word:

Bloody terrible! I drive 90 000 to 100 000 kilometres in three states and the roads around my area are the worst I drive on.

Country people actually want their roads fixed. They would like the country roads and bridges program to be brought back in to help shires fix those country gravel roads and maintain their road infrastructure rather than having a speed limit of 70 kilometres put on those roads. I think this will actually force people to break the speed limit because I know a lot of people are going to actively go against that rule and do more than 70 kilometres on those roads. I cannot see how it is going to be a good use of police resources to put a policeman on a road that might have five cars a day to see if someone speeds out there. I urge the minister not to bring in the 70-kilometre speed limit but to actually put some money into fixing those roads instead.

Moorpanyal Park beach project

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) — (13 076) My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I ask that she take action to ensure that the Moorpanyal Park beach project is completed by the 2017–18 summer. The works for the park beach project are funded by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and managed by the City of Greater Geelong. A DELWP media release was issued in July, advising that works would be starting in the coming weeks and that they would be completed by the end of August. The works are now expected to start in the coming weeks. The much-needed Moorpanyal Park beach project must be completed as soon as possible so more people can enjoy our beautiful coastline coming into summer.

Frankston railway line car parking

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — (13 077) I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is for the minister to work with relevant stakeholders in relation to the provision of more parking on the Frankston line at a number of points, including proximate to the new Southland station, at Cheltenham and at Mentone.

Under the grade separation works which are underway, the only parking that will be provided is replacement car parking for those car parks that have been lost. At a time when Melbourne's population is projected to

double between now and 2050, this is a short-term view of what could be done. Even if there is massive provision of car parking, I might add, it will not meet the needs of everyone, if the city of Melbourne grows at the rate it currently is.

There is outstanding opportunity, nevertheless, in addition to multilevel car parking in Mentone and Cheltenham, to look at further car parking on the gas and fuel land, which is between Highett railway station and Southland. There is an access point under the Highett structure plan along the railway line. If that route was expanded, it may provide an excellent opportunity at minimal cost to provide a conduit for the workers at Southland, who currently look like being hit with a parking fee to park at Southland to go to work, and also for railway commuters who may wish to establish a different parking point to travel to the city from, which could include the Highett railway station. The Gas and Fuel land was originally a 9-hectare tract of land which has been remediated and forms an excellent area. It is currently in the hands of the Minister for Finance.

In addition to providing for further car parking there is also an imperative to provide for more public open space and more community space, which forms part of any development. It should not comprise development that goes to the border of the land. There should be good setbacks, in some cases up to 15 metres, to provide for vegetation.

The key point I wish to raise is the opportunity for increased car parking along the Frankston line, pursuant to a petition that I ran last year, calling for more car parking at Cheltenham and Mentone stations. In recent times there has been a campaign for more car parking to reduce the impact on residential properties in the Pennydale precinct, the Cheltenham west part of my electorate, as well as provide parking for shoppers and workers.

Cornish College

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — (13 078) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the minister to visit Cornish College in Bangholme, off River End Road, to get an update on their future needs and priorities. Cornish College is the creation of the former Cornish campus of St Leonard's College, a school that was at the brink some six years ago. The school community came together and campaigned heavily to ensure that this school, which is dedicated to sustainability and best environmental outputs, would be there for future generations. Without that community support and the community coming together this would not be possible.

Some six years on we now have Cornish College under the stewardship of Vicki Steer and her business manager, Martin Massey. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the wonderful contribution of the former principal, Kerry Bolger, who was an extraordinary educator and a wonderful leader during this campaign.

Cornish College is growing, its student population is now over 700. It is a very exciting time with the recent launch of its master plan. I thought it would be a great opportunity for the Minister for Education to get an update on this wonderful school, the education offering they provide, the focus on sustainability and how that links into enhancing some of the future leaders in our community going forward.

South Yarra Primary School

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) — (13 079) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and I raise it on behalf of the South Yarra Primary School community. The action I seek from the minister is to address both the immediate and long-term issues faced by overcrowding at South Yarra Primary School.

Enrolments at South Yarra primary are skyrocketing, and the school is bursting at the seams. Whilst there have been new multistorey portables installed, there still is a need for more classrooms. To find room for the extra students, I believe the multipurpose room and the library are having to be used for classrooms. There is a concern from the school community that after-school care services may no longer be available. Several parents have contacted me suggesting that Fawkner Park could be used for portables in the near term to relieve that immediate pressure on the school. Certainly I would urge the minister to get in touch with Melbourne City Council to see if that is feasible.

Whilst South Yarra primary sits on a very small footprint, it does have a capacity to expand vertically. Certainly what is needed is a plan to increase capacity on the existing site and to develop the existing grounds. The school zone also needs to be reduced. There are simply too many enrolments coming from the existing zone for the school to handle. With a new school being built in South Melbourne and existing capacity at Windsor, certainly there is scope to reduce the school boundary.

Finally, there does need to be a long-term approach to school capacity within the Prahran electorate. As more and more families move into the area or choose to raise their families in the area, as I have, we will need more

capacity in our primary schools, particularly given that they will now have access to what I believe will be a high-quality public high school, I might add. I call on the minister to make public all the projected enrolments for schools within the Prahran area and to work with the school community so we can have the confidence that local students will get the school facilities that we need.

White Night Ballarat

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — (13 080) My adjournment is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. The action I seek is for the minister to work with the local tourism sector to encourage more people from other parts of Victoria to come to White Night in Ballarat in 2018 and stay a day or two to experience more of what Ballarat has to offer. We had such a great event this year. You could not get a bed anywhere near Ballarat, with more than 40 000 people attending White Night, and 2018 can be bigger and better. I would encourage the minister to join me in working with tourism operators to make the 2018 White Night as successful as possible for our local businesses and community.

Ballarat Turf Club

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — (13 081) My adjournment is to the Minister for Racing, and the action I seek is that he expresses his support for an all-weather synthetic track at the Ballarat Turf Club. I understand that a decision is imminent in relation to where a new synthetic track would go in country Victoria, and while this is a decision for Racing Victoria, the minister has, in my view, a duty to let the industry and the people of Ripon know whether he supports the Ballarat Turf Club gaining this important infrastructure.

Recently the shadow minister and I met with the CEO of Ballarat Turf Club, Lachlan McKenzie, and leading Ballarat Turf Club trainer Darren Weir. They are clearly very supportive of this project, and some of the reasons they have given for why Ballarat would be the best choice are that it brings together all-weather trials, the building of Ballarat as a premium country training venue and it being a venue for relocated racing meetings. The other options being considered for the synthetic track are either good for race meetings or good for training, but they cannot do both. Ballarat Turf Club is the only one that delivers it all.

Ballarat Turf Club is of course home to Australia's leading trainer, Darren Weir. There are other leading trainers, including Robert Smerden, Dan O'Sullivan and Henry Dwyer, and recently in the last period it has attracted Matt Cumani and Archie Alexander. The

Ballarat Turf Club is the heart of western Victorian racing and the lead facility for the region. This would be a great addition to racing in western Victoria, and I urge the minister to express his support for it.

Taylor's–Kings roads, Delahey

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) — (13 082) The adjournment matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek from the minister is to provide an update on the progress of works to remove the deadly roundabout at Taylor's and Kings roads in St Albans. This roundabout is a very central transport hub for the west. We have over 25 000 vehicles passing through each day. It has also, through the RACV Redspot Survey, been named the seventh worst intersection in Victoria.

Thanks to the Andrews Labor government, with funding of \$6.1 million we are now installing traffic lights, safer pedestrian crossings and bike lanes so that commuters, motorists and pedestrians can have safe access and navigate their way through this very busy intersection. The works began this year, and I have seen firsthand the progress of some of those works. I know that the St Albans community is very eagerly awaiting the completion of this vital project, not only for the community of St Albans; it is also on the border of the electorates of Sydenham and Kororoit, so it really is a central hub for a number of electorates in the west. I know that the St Albans community would appreciate an update of the progress of the works.

Responses

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — The member for Murray Plains may be just a bit confused. I am actually not the roads minister and I do not have any revenue in relation to roads at all. What I would say is that the Minister for Roads and Road Safety is investing significantly in regional roads and in upgrading roads to provide additional protection on our rural and regional roads across the state. Secondly, what I will say, though, is that because of the record number of police that we are funding and recruiting, we will actually enable additional highway patrol capacity because we will have these additional recruits who will be able to assist in the two-up policy.

The other thing I would just point out to the member for Murray Plains is that this is not my suggestion. The issue around having a community debate about the loss of lives on country roads, particularly unsealed council roads, has been raised by the assistant commissioner for road policing command and also at the behest of a couple of Victorian regional councils that have come to

the police and said, 'We're really concerned about the number of deaths on some of our country roads'. It is country people who are dying and being injured on those roads. Assistant Commissioner Doug Fryer, those councils and the local police are looking at a trial.

I think it is very reasonable that there be a community discussion about this. I think my comments have been that this is about a trial. You have got to take communities with you and it has to be owned by the community, but at the end of the day we have to save lives on our roads.

A number of other members have raised a range of issues with a number of ministers. I will pass those issues on.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The house now stands adjourned until tomorrow.

House adjourned 7.21 p.m.

