

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Tuesday, 21 February 2017

(Extract from book 2)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(from 10 November 2016)

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Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

Speaker:

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER

Deputy Speaker:

Mr D. A. NARDELLA

Acting Speakers:

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

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier:

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

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

The Hon. M. J. GUY

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

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Ms S. RYAN

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn ²	Polwarth	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent ³	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Ms Roma ¹	South-West Coast	LP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁴	Gippsland South	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
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Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
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Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
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Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
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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	Owens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

¹ Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ Elected 14 March 2015

⁵ Elected 31 October 2015

⁶ Resigned 2 February 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

Legislative Assembly committees

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

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

Joint committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Tuesday, 21 February 2017

The SPEAKER (Hon. Telmo Languiller) took the chair at 12.04 p.m. and read the prayer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The SPEAKER — Order! We acknowledge the traditional 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.

CONDOLENCES

Peter Stewart McArthur

The SPEAKER — Order! I advise the house of the death of Peter Stewart McArthur, member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Ringwood from 1976 to 1982.

I ask members to rise in their places as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

Honourable members stood in their places.

The SPEAKER — Order! I shall convey a message of sympathy from the house to the relatives of the late Peter Stewart McArthur.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Standing and sessional orders

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — If I may, by leave, it appears we have tragically lost five people today, and clearly there is still a lot we do not know. The Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Police, the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the Minister for Industry and Employment are right now being briefed at the state control centre. On behalf of the Premier and the government, the Parliament and the people of this state, I want to offer my condolences to their family and loved ones.

On days like this we also have to spare a thought for our first responders: the paramedics, police, firefighters and even ordinary civilians who, without a moment's hesitation, have all launched into action. We thank them for everything they do. The images we have seen this morning are harrowing. I, like many others in this place, have driven that stretch of the Tullamarine Freeway. It is all far too real and far too close for many of us. We will know more during the course of the day.

Given the Premier and a number of ministers have responsibilities that they are required to immediately attend to, the government, along with, I understand, the representatives of the Greens and the Independent member for Shepparton, felt it appropriate to adjust the regular business of the house, and it is for these reasons I seek to move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow:

- (1) the sitting of the house to be immediately suspended until 1.00 p.m today; and
- (2) there to be no questions without notice, ministers statements or constituency questions today.

Leave refused.

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — The Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister for Police, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Industry and Employment will all be absent from question time today in line with the previous statement I have just made to the house. I will answer questions on their behalf.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Youth justice centres

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Treasurer. Seven thousand Wyndham residents turned up to a public meeting to oppose your government's Werribee youth jail proposal. Labor mayor Henry Barlow was there. Federal Labor MP Joanne Ryan was there. Local community leaders were present. Treasurer, what was more important in your day for you to refuse to be there?

Mr Pakula — On a point of order, Speaker, it was not immediately apparent to me how the question in any way related to the minister's portfolio responsibilities — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Dandenong is warned. The Chair is on his feet. The Attorney-General is entitled to silence when attempting to make a point of order.

Mr Pakula — As the house is aware, it is not permissible to ask a question only in the guise of a minister's electorate responsibilities, so I would ask you

to offer the Leader of the Opposition an opportunity to rephrase his question and direct it to the Treasurer in his capacity as Treasurer.

Mr Clark — On the point of order, Speaker, the question related to what the Treasurer was doing that day. The Treasurer presumably had duties as Treasurer that day. It is asking him to respond, to account to this house and to the community for how he conducted himself in his capacities, including his capacity as Treasurer of this state, on that day, and he should account to the community for what he was doing as a minister of the Crown on that day.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, there are well-established practices of the house under *Rulings from the Chair* advising that matters that are not related to a minister's portfolio should be ruled out of order. The Attorney-General has made a very reasonable offer to the opposition through you, Speaker, that rather than reject the question outright, it perhaps should have the opportunity to rephrase the question to at least make an attempt to have it relevant to the Treasurer's portfolio, and I suggest the opposition should embrace that offer wholeheartedly.

Mr Hodgett — On the point of order, Speaker, the Treasurer was at the press conference that actually announced that this youth facility be built in Werribee, so I think that would be part of his duties of appropriating money. I ask you to rule the question in order.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair accepts the question strictly within the boundaries of the Treasurer's responsibilities. The Treasurer, as Treasurer, will respond to the question.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — Might I say that I take this opportunity to express my condolences and disappointment that the opposition have not allowed a break in these proceedings.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte will come to order. The Treasurer is entitled to silence when attempting to answer a substantive question as put by the Leader of the Opposition. Members of the opposition will allow the Treasurer to respond.

Mr PALLAS — If you fall a little short on integrity, you will fall a long way short on leadership.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair must be able to hear the Treasurer. A question was put and was heard in silence. Conversely, the Chair expects the Treasurer to be extended the same courtesy and be able to respond to the substantive question as put by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr PALLAS — I take great pride in the community that I represent, and I do that because, unlike those opposite, we have made investment after investment in the community. There was nothing from those opposite for four long, wasted years. My community languished while you essentially went around parading a misdirection of state resources away from those who needed it most. When it comes to consultation, let me tell you this: when a community seeks to be engaged, I am more than willing to discuss these issues with my community. Already I was present when a decision was made by the government and announced by the government that some 16 sites had been considered and one was now identified as the preferred location. That being the case — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer to be heard in silence when responding to the question as put by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr PALLAS — Of course if you consult with the world, you are consulting with nobody. It was our view that it is important to consult directly with the community. It is also important that those people who want to raise a legitimate concern by way of protest have the right to do it. Let me say that a provocative act would be to have attended that meeting in circumstances — —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Treasurer has had plenty of opportunity to set a context to his answer, but I remind you that it was a very specific question about what he was doing on that day that prevented him from attending the public meeting in his constituency. I ask you to bring him back to answering that question.

Mr Pakula — On the point of order, Speaker, as I understood the Treasurer's remarks, he was literally halfway through a sentence where he was about to explain why he was not there.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer was being responsive to the question. I remind the opposition that preambles and other commentary made when putting a question are part of the question.

Mr PALLAS — Of course, as Treasurer of the state, I must necessarily look after the whole interests of the state. That is a necessary requirement, but it is also necessary, and might I say something that I place great value upon, that I engage with my community around issues of concern to them, and I intend to do it. But I do not intend to do it in circumstances where it would be seen as a provocative act in what was a protest meeting.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) was given evidence last week that your government has been considering a new youth jail since October, with one of the possible locations being in your own electorate. Treasurer, when did you first know that Werribee was being considered for this new prison, and why did you keep this hidden from your own constituents?

Ms Allan — On a point of order, Speaker, I renew the point of order that was made earlier by the Attorney-General.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair cannot hear the Leader of the House. The house will come to order and allow the Leader of the House to contribute on a point of order, in silence.

Ms Allan — There are clear requirements in *Rulings from the Chair* that require the opposition to make their questions relevant to the relevant minister's portfolio. This question does not comply with that ruling. However, rather than have it ruled out of order, the government would like to offer the opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to rephrase his question. The reference to PAEC, I believe, goes to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services' appearance at PAEC, which was not related to the Treasurer's portfolio, and the opposition should rephrase their question.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Malvern is entitled to silence when attempting to make a point of order.

Mr M. O'Brien — On the point of order, Speaker, the Treasurer has been part of the decision-making process over the location of this new youth supermax jail. I asked the Treasurer about this very issue in the last question time in terms of when he knew about what the other options were for its location. The Treasurer answered — at least the Treasurer purported to

answer — the question. The Treasurer did not seek to avoid the question, nor did any of his colleagues. If it was in order last week, it is in order today.

The SPEAKER — Order! The question is in order. The Treasurer will respond to the supplementary question as put by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I became aware of this matter only a matter of weeks ago. In fact — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition asked a supplementary question and should extend the courtesy to the Treasurer and allow him to respond to that supplementary question. The Treasurer will be heard, in silence.

The Treasurer has concluded his answer.

Ministers statements: level crossings

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I am delighted to provide an update to the house on the substantial progress that the Andrews Labor government is making on removing the 50 most dangerous and congested level crossings across Melbourne. Ten of these congested deathtraps have already gone and 10 are under construction, with another seven due to start during the course of this year. We have removed level crossings in the north-west of the city and in the east and the south of Melbourne and, as I said, construction is underway of course on the Dandenong corridor to remove all nine level crossings between Dandenong and the city.

Yesterday we announced the removal of two level crossings at Charman Road in Cheltenham and Park Road. The Park Road level crossing removal is in addition to what we had already committed to for that community, and of course there is the removal of the level crossing at Balcombe Road in Mentone. As we announced yesterday, the removal of these level crossings will lead to a lowered rail line and include two brand-new stations at both Mentone and Cheltenham. We will reinstate the third track at Cheltenham, which means we can run more trains along the Frankston corridor.

Of course this comes hot on the heels of the announcement we made a couple of weeks ago at Lower Plenty Road at Rosanna, which also involves removing that level crossing with a rail bridge construction and building a brand-new station as well at Rosanna.

This work is going on right across the state and is creating hundreds and hundreds of jobs in the construction industry. That is also having wider benefits in those local communities as the local tradies go in and have a coffee and a sandwich and shop at the local businesses. We will not be deterred from pursuing this agenda in getting rid of these 50 dangerous and congested level crossings, working as hard as we can to remove them as quickly as possible.

Youth justice centres

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Treasurer. Local federal Labor MP Joanne Ryan, the only Wyndham Labor MP who actually lives in her seat, has said:

I think this site is the wrong site for a youth detention centre.

Treasurer, will you tell your constituents today in the gallery and the people of Wyndham: do you back Bill Shorten's Labor MP and local resident, Joanne Ryan, on this issue or, Treasurer, as Treasurer do you back your Premier, who could not care less about your constituents?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — Can I answer the question this way: I support the decision of the government and the decision of the government to meet its obligations around a preferred location and, might I say, the decision of the government to have genuine consultation with the community.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Gembrook will not be warned again. The Chair is on his feet. The Treasurer has concluded his answer.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — It was so brief, I thought there was more to come. My supplementary is obviously to the Treasurer. Treasurer, last week you told ABC Radio that:

We have to consult with the community of Wyndham. We said we would at the time that we identified our preferred location.

You have also just told the house that you have engaged in genuine consultation. Treasurer, will you detail to the house and to your constituents in the gallery exactly what consultation did you as local member and Treasurer with the council and community engage in before you chose Werribee as the site for this new youth prison?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — 'He thought he had more time'. That is what they said four years ago in government: 'We thought we would have more time' — to do nothing. I have been asked to outline what consultation we have had. Could I make it very clear: the consultation will be around the preferred location. The government has been very —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer was asked a question in his capacity as Treasurer. The Treasurer is endeavouring to respond to that question and should be allowed to do so in silence. The Treasurer, to respond.

Mr PALLAS — The government takes its obligations around consultation seriously. We are meeting with representatives of Wyndham City Council and key local community representatives. I have had numerous conversations and I do not intend identifying who those people are.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the supplementary question clearly stated 'before the government had chosen Werribee as the site for the new youth prison'. The Treasurer is answering the question with the consultation he engaged in after the government had chosen that site. I ask you to bring him back to answering the question that was asked of him, which was about the consultation before the decision, not once it had been made.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, as is required under *Rulings from the Chair* and standing orders, the Treasurer needs to respond to this question within his capacity as Treasurer. He was outlining exactly to the house the consultation processes and conversations that he has had on this issue. I understand that those opposite may not have heard that. In their desperation to shout and scream over the top of the Treasurer they may not have heard him give that information to the house and I ask you to allow the Treasurer to continue to answer the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order. The Treasurer was being responsive. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr PALLAS — As I indicated, there were 16 locations considered by the government. It would be foolish — indeed it would be patronising — to suggest that you could consult with the world at large. What the government has done is to make a decision around its preferred location and we are entering into genuine consultation around those issues.

Ministers statements: ambulance services

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I rise to update the house in respect of the Andrews Labor government’s recent achievements regarding ambulance response times. I am very pleased to advise the house that, with the quarter 2 of 2016–17 data that this government released on 1 February, we continued the trend, unlike the previous government. In each and every single quarter our ambulance response times have improved. Unlike the previous government when there were the worst ambulance response times on the mainland, we are finally seeing some good and sustainable change.

This is a really significant improvement because this was the quarter, of course, when there was an incredible demand on our ambulance services including the Christmas period and thunderstorm asthma. To see an improvement in that context is indeed a very pleasing result.

I also would like to update the house on the fact that the January results provide very good news. For the first time since 2010 our ambulance response times have hit 80 per cent. That is the highest rate of ambulance response times hitting towards target since 2010. This is indeed a terrific achievement. I pay tribute to our wonderful paramedics, who work so hard each and every single day. It was a delight during the last parliamentary session to hear the members of this place reflecting upon the paramedics contribution during the Bourke Street tragedy. It is important that we continue to support our paramedics. Of course, as the Leader of the House foreshadowed in her contribution at the start of question time, we are all very deeply upset about the incident that has occurred in Essendon this morning. Certainly our first responders have yet again made a sensational contribution.

The SPEAKER — Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition that referring to people in the gallery is disorderly. I request that that not be done.

Youth justice centres

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Treasurer. Treasurer, you admitted this morning that your government had considered 16 sites across Victoria for its new youth jail. Will you tell the many residents of Wyndham why your government chose the Werribee site, the announcement of which you attended, with this location just 400 metres from many of their homes?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition is entitled to silence when endeavouring to conclude his question to the Treasurer.

Mr GUY — Treasurer, will you tell the many residents of Wyndham and some who have come to the Parliament today why your government chose the Werribee site — the announcement of which you were at — a site — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair has heard the totality of the question. The Leader of the Opposition — —

Mr Guy interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair does understand that the Leader of the Opposition has not concluded his question, but the point the Chair tries to make, if members will allow, is that the Chair has heard the Leader of the Opposition up to the references that he made.

Mr GUY — Treasurer, a site 400 metres from many of your constituents’ homes, the announcement of which you were at — why did you choose that site above more than a dozen others across Victoria?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — A total of 16 sites were considered by the government, including four regional sites. The Hoppers Lane south site was preferred because of its distance from residential communities, its accessibility for staff — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PALLAS — Do you want to hear the answer or not?

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer is entitled to silence when endeavouring to respond to the question.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, the Treasurer is reading from a list of 16 sites, and I ask you to have him table that list, given he has been reading from it copiously while answering this question.

The SPEAKER — Order! Was the Treasurer reading from the document?

Mr PALLAS — I was referring to notes.

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

Mr PALLAS — You can see just how opportunistic they are. They get an answer and they do not like it, so they complain about it. To be very clear, I am not referring to 16 sites, nor do I consider it appropriate that those 16 locations be identified because this government is about genuine consultation with the residents and community affected in the preferred location. But I was asked why this site was chosen above others. The Hoppers Lane site is preferred because of its distance from residential communities, the accessibility for staff — —

Mr T. Smith interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Kew is warned. The Treasurer is entitled to continue in silence.

Mr PALLAS — The accessibility for visitors — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Bentleigh is warned. The member for Warrandyte is also entitled to silence when making a point of order.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, just for clarity, does he mean the distance from Werribee residents or his own residence?

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

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! A question was put, the Treasurer is answering an important question. Respect should be extended to the Treasurer.

Mr PALLAS — Until today they thought Wyndham was a hotel chain. You never once put your hand in your pocket for this. They ripped them off and they sold them out at every opportunity they could.

The Hoppers Lane south site is government land so that does allow the state to get on with the production and to commence construction quickly. Because of the inaction of the previous government in doing anything in this space, this government is getting on with the job of providing protection for our communities and also making sure that the economic opportunities that this facility will provide to the Wyndham community are delivered as quickly and effectively as possible.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Ringwood will allow the Leader of the Opposition to ask a supplementary question.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Treasurer, is it not simply a fact that you live 20 kilometres away from your own constituents and therefore you could not care less about selling them out or building this prison next to their houses?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Ovens Valley and the member for Broadmeadows are both warned.

Ms Allan — On a point of order, Speaker, this supplementary question is flagrantly out of order. There has not even been an attempt by the Leader of the Opposition to cloak this question in relation to government business to do with the Treasurer's portfolio, and I ask you to rule it out of order.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair gives the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity of rephrasing the question. That question was out of order.

Mr GUY — Treasurer, given it is a fact you live 20 kilometres from your own electorate and your own constituents — frankly you could not care less about them — is it your government's policy that you should live within your own electorate?

Ms Allan — On a point of order, Speaker, we have seen this on many occasions before where the Leader of the Opposition is playing to the gallery rather than being interested — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House, in silence, to continue. Members of the opposition will allow the Leader of the House to make her point of order.

Ms Allan — Rephrasing the question and adding the words 'is it government policy' does not mean that where members of Parliament live is a matter of government business. I suggest that this supplementary question be also ruled out of order and be seen for what it is.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair rules that question out of order.

Ministers statements: economy

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — It gives me great pleasure to update the house about the enduring strength of the Victorian economy. The ANZ

Stateometer recently rated Victoria as the only jurisdiction with both above trend growth and improving momentum. This is not just idle commentary; this has been confirmed by the CommSec *State of the States* report and it is actually reflected in a number of key economic indicators.

Our jobs performance remains the envy of the nation. In fact we are the job-creating centre of the nation. We have now created more jobs in the last year than the rest of Australia combined — more than 188 000 jobs since taking office, with employment growing at 3.8 per cent per annum. This is what happens when you have a government that is getting on with it, getting out of bed and getting on with delivering for people.

It is no surprise that the energetic approach of our government is giving confidence to our business sector as well. NAB now rates Victoria as having the highest business confidence of all the states.

Just last week we progressed out tenders for the western outer suburban arterial roads package. That is \$1.8 billion for — get it — Wyndham. This is an innovative approach to procurement that will deliver massive benefits for Melbourne's west, upgrading roads that are not fit for purpose.

At the same time we are also ensuring that Victoria's finances remain strong. Earlier this year Standard & Poor's wrote to me saying that 'the finances of the state of Victoria are in strong shape'. Indeed let me be clear that we will continue to keep Victoria's finances strong. We will continue to deliver the infrastructure that Victorians need, and we will not take a backwards step in delivering our commitments to the people of Victoria.

Pill testing

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) — My question is to Minister for Mental Health. Before Christmas the Greens asked the Premier about pill testing and reporting, which the Premier declined to support. Since then, over one weekend there were a number of hospitalisations as result of people taking recreational drugs, some in nightclubs in the Prahran electorate. Three people died. There was a drug-related death at the Rainbow Serpent music festival, and just this weekend there were over 20 hospitalisations at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. Minister, in light of these deaths and hospitalisations and the risk of further incidents, will the government now implement a pill-testing and reporting regime in Victoria to reduce harm and help prevent deaths?

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Mental Health) — I thank the honourable member for Prahran for his question. I also join with him, I am sure, and the Minister for Health in particularly thanking our paramedics on Saturday who, through eight different ambulances, intervened and really did an outstanding job in making sure that the 20 — or 21, I think it was — patients who were taken from that dance festival at the Myer music bowl to three hospitals were saved. I think they did an outstanding job. Can I also join with the Chief Commissioner of Police in ensuring that the operators of that particular festival are held to account for what would seem to be a fairly flagrant breach of their responsibilities.

In terms of the honourable member's question about a harm minimisation focus, particularly in his electorate where this is a substantial issue, only last week I met with a number of providers — Inner South Community Health Service and a whole range of others — that the government is funding \$192 million through its harm minimisation project in its most recent budget. We are funding in six hotspots, one of which is in the honourable member's electorate, a program whereby street-based workers are going out and talking to people on the street about how best to handle through a health prism a very significant health issue where far too many people are taking unnecessary risks. In terms of that particular project I can assure the honourable member that workers in his electorate also engage with a number of the venue operators. We are making sure that safe practice, safe management and a health focus first — a harm minimisation focus first — are delivered.

In regard to the broader issue of pill testing at festivals more generally, I stand shoulder to shoulder with the Chief Commissioner of Police on this issue. There is a lot of talk around how effective or otherwise this mobile pill-testing technology is. I am convinced by the views of Victoria Police that, despite some of the rhetoric that goes with how effective this material is, that Victoria Police is concerned the effectiveness of such technology leaves a lot to be desired. Indeed there might well be some harm and health risks associated with providing false information off the back of such technology. In that respect, whilst I share the views of many in this place, including the honourable member, that this is first and foremost a health issue and a harm minimisation framework, I also share the view of Victoria Police that a temporary pill-testing facility is not the way to go.

Supplementary question

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) — On a supplementary question, in regard to the deaths that occurred over the weekend of 14 January, the drugs in question were seized by police, they were tested by the police and information was distributed internally that these drugs were being sold as MDMA but actually contained a much more dangerous substance. Why was this information — potentially lifesaving information — not made public and not released to the public at large, and will the government ensure that such information is released in the future?

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Mental Health) — Again, to the honourable member, you are correct as I understand it from media reports, but your question theoretically is best directed to the minister responsible for Victoria Police. But allowing for the fact that she is not here — she is attending to, can I say, the very tragic circumstances at Essendon Airport this morning — as I understand the proposition, the honourable member's question actually goes to Victoria Police, and indeed in the other place as I understand it, this question is the matter of a question on notice to the Minister for Police. I will certainly undertake on the honourable member's behalf and liaise with Victoria Police and the Minister for Police and respond to his question on notice, understanding that it is given in good faith but is more appropriately directed to the Minister for Police.

Ministers statements: call centre code

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Industrial Relations) — I rise to inform the house of a new initiative in my portfolio of industrial relations. Last Friday I announced a new call centre code to now apply to government-operated call centres and private sector organisations that have been contracted to do government work and provide call centre services. We launched this updated code at VicRoads, and I had the pleasure of meeting many of the call centre workers there. My thoughts go out to them today and to the call centre workers at the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority, who would have had to handle some of the calls out of this morning's tragedy. I thank them for their service, as well as our emergency services workers.

This revised call centre code will operate as a benchmark for the call centre industry, and I urge all call centre industry participants to adopt and adhere to the code. It has been designed to encourage best practice in call centre management and employee relations.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister, as everyone in the house can see, is clearly reading from a document complete with highlighted bits. I would ask you to ask her to please table what she is reading rather than slavishly reading it.

The SPEAKER — Order! Is the minister reading from a document? There is no point of order. The minister will continue and comply with the practices of the house.

Ms HUTCHINS — This code has been updated from an original version from 2006. During the time between 2006 and this year there has been an enormous amount of change in the Fair Work Act 2009, which was not considered during the time that the code was previously operating. We have amended that to make sure that it is modern and applicable and able to be utilised across call centres in this state.

Those opposite may not know that 85 per cent of the work conducted by Victorian call centres is government work — all levels of government. It is a very significant industry for employment in this state and one that this government supports. We support Victorian jobs, and what this code does is underpin those Victorian jobs with a great standard for the industry to ensure that jobs are not contracted out to overseas — unlike those opposite, who looked at doing that during their term of government.

Youth justice centres

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, you have admitted that there were 16 sites your government considered for a new youth jail and that you have known about them behind your community's back for weeks, if not months. Treasurer, will you tell your local Werribee residents: did you sell them out? Did you do that because your advocacy was not strong enough or because you are a weak Treasurer who frankly does not have the guts to stand up to the Premier for your constituents?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I will tell you what selling out looks like. It looks like a — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! A question was put. The Treasurer is entitled to silence. The Chair should be able to hear the response as put by the Treasurer, so should the media and everybody else in this house. That level of disruption does not allow that to happen.

Mr PALLAS — Nothing for Wyndham’s roads, nothing for Wyndham’s hospitals, nothing for the Wyndham community at all. They were so contemptuous of Wyndham they did not even man electoral booths. They did not make them a promise in the last election, and now he has the audacity to come into this place and suggest that we do not stand up for a community that has been deserted by those opposite.

I will tell you when I knew the preferred location was Wyndham: when the government made a decision that the preferred location was Wyndham. I can tell you when that actually was made public: it was only a matter of days after the decision had been made, a preferred location.

Now I want to be very clear. When the government says it is serious about consultation, you do not consult with the world at large. That is the sort of nonsense that those opposite got on with. We are talking — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer must be heard. Members should allow the Treasurer to continue making his contribution and give him the courtesy of being heard.

Mr PALLAS — As a government we remain committed to a genuine process of engagement around the preferred location, a decision that was made only a matter of days before being publicly announced, and of course our commitment, our continuing commitment, is to genuinely engage with the affected community, the one that has been identified as the preferred location — Wyndham — and we will do that.

Mr Guy — Treasurer — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair has not called on the Leader of the Opposition.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Government members will come to order.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Treasurer, you have run back to Williamstown and sold out your electorate!

Interjections from gallery.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition is also entitled to silence. The Chair will not tolerate disruptions. I respectfully suggest to members

of the gallery that they do not disrupt. This is the practice in this house and has been for many years. The Leader of the Opposition to continue, in silence. He is entitled to silence when advancing a supplementary question. Equally, the Treasurer is entitled to silence when advancing a response.

Mr GUY — Speaker, if the Treasurer has any integrity, will he now give up the white car, give up the chauffeur, resign from the ministry, shift into his electorate and finally stand up for the people of Werribee?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair is on his feet. All members should come to order.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — For 10 years I have proudly represented the people of Werribee, and I will continue to do so while ever they want me to. Let me be very clear: the only time you would ever see a Liberal member of Parliament in Werribee is if they were lost.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Sandringham is warned. The Treasurer to continue, in silence.

Mr PALLAS — As a government we remain committed to a genuine process of engagement, unlike of course the Leader of the Opposition, who indicated he had no problem with Werribee until Bernie Finn in the Legislative Council told him he should have a problem. If you fall short on integrity — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer has concluded his answer.

Ministers statements: Racing Victoria Limited

Mr PAKULA (Minister for Racing) — I rise to provide the house with an update on the process for reforming the governance of Racing Victoria Limited (RVL). As I stated in January when I announced this, it is in my view no longer appropriate for those that are regulated by RVL to select the board of RVL. Notwithstanding that, the government is not proposing to convert RVL into a statutory entity, and as such the role of stakeholders, who are indeed shareholders in RVL, remains important.

There has been an approach made to government to progress a change to the appointment process by amendments to the Racing Victoria constitution in

advance of legislation to allow that change to occur more expeditiously. I have agreed in good faith to explore that particular approach with shareholders, and to that end I have so far met with the metropolitan clubs, Country Racing Victoria, the Victorian Jockeys Association, the Australian Trainers Association, Thoroughbred Breeders Victoria and the Thoroughbred Racehorse Owners Association. Those discussions are ongoing.

I am optimistic that a change to the appointments process can be progressed in the first instance via that constitutional change approach. But I do say to the house, which I have made clear to all of the shareholders during the conversations that we have had, that should that approach not be successful — and, as I say, I am optimistic that it can be — the government of course reserves the right to pursue this matter via legislative change, as was the initial intention of the government. That, of course, remains an option should the other approach not be successful.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER — Order! Before commencing constituency questions, the Deputy Speaker has asked me to consider the constituency question asked by the member for Carrum on the last sitting Thursday. I rule that the question is in order as it requested information about what the minister is doing in response to a particular issue. This is different to calling on the minister to take action, which is not permitted in constituency questions.

Brighton electorate

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — (12 250) My constituency question is to the Minister for Education, and my question is: when will the minister provide funding to non-government schools, specifically to St Columba's Primary School in Elwood in my electorate, to compensate for the government's requirements on compulsory swimming and water safety education? The background to this is that St Columba's school in Elwood wrote to me on 1 December 2016 worried about funding this program and deeply concerned about the government simply foisting a program on non-government schools. I referred this correspondence to the minister on 9 December, and the minister replied to me on 24 January this year. Whilst I thank the minister for his response, his response does not address the school's key issue, so therefore my question is: when will he provide funding for this announcement foisted on the school by the government?

Yan Yean electorate

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — (12 251) My constituency question is to the Minister for Public Transport, and I ask: what communications will be made to Hurstbridge line commuters regarding train replacement services which will operate during the very welcome Hurstbridge line upgrade? The upgrade includes the removal of dangerous and congested level crossings in Rosanna and at Grange Road, Fairfield. This welcome upgrade, together with the Mernda rail line extension, the north-east link, the Yan Yean Road and Plenty Road upgrades and the new bus interchange at Diamond Creek station, are not only going to massively improve public transport and reduce congestion in the north but are creating tens of thousands of jobs. They show that the Andrews Labor Party, unlike the Liberal Party, cares about Melbourne's north.

Gippsland East electorate

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — (12 252) My constituency question is to the Minister for Police, and the information I seek is whether the minister has yet decided to support provision of more police to Lakes Entrance over the Easter holiday period. As I have stated in this place numerous times, there have been police shortages over the holiday periods dating back from Christmas 2015, and it got no better over the holiday season just past. There was a strong police presence in Lakes Entrance on New Year's Eve, but they were all gone by 2 January, when the crowds were still rising. We had the police station closed every weekend in the January holiday period — a situation that is not acceptable. As the minister may know, I had the chief commissioner in Lakes Entrance over the holiday period to hear my concerns, and we had a very productive chat where Mr Ashton agreed to look at the situation. Given this and the level of angst that still exists in the community, I ask the minister to advise whether a solution to this problem has yet been advanced.

Broadmeadows electorate

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — (12 253) My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. The first 1000 days are critical for the development of every child. Gowrie Victoria's Broadmeadows Valley Children's Program is vital for teaching and caring for the preschool children of my constituents, so my constituency question is: what information is available concerning funding for a kitchen upgrade for this preschool centre? Gowrie Broadmeadows is a not-for-profit organisation and has applied to the Victorian Building Authority for the upgrade. A lack of

facilities is hampering the operations and capacity of Gowrie Broadmeadows to care for and educate more children, which has an impact on the ability of parents to find jobs where they are needed most. Gowrie Broadmeadows only operates at a capacity of 40 children, while their licence is for 128 children. The upgrade is therefore vital for children, families and social cohesion.

Broadmeadows is the designated capital of Melbourne's north, which is undergoing a population boom to the extent that 1 in 20 Australians is predicted to live in this region within two decades, where the increase of half a million people means the population, already four times the size of Victoria's second-largest city, Geelong, will match the size of Adelaide. Gowrie Broadmeadows has delivered quality care and education —

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

Rowville electorate

Mr WELLS (Rowville) — (12 254) The constituency question I wish to raise is for the Minister for Police on behalf of concerned residents in my electorate of Rowville. Minister, can you please advise my concerned constituents, who are constantly living in fear that they might be the next victim of car theft: when will measures be taken to address the car theft crisis within the Rowville electorate? Within my electorate the suburb of Rowville experienced a 29 per cent increase in car theft in 2016; Scoresby, a 28 per cent increase; Knoxfield, a 77 per cent increase; and Lysterfield saw a 200 per cent increase.

Against the background of a statewide crime tsunami under the Andrews government, there is currently a car theft crisis across Victoria. The latest car theft stats for the year to September 2016, as compiled by the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council, reveal that Victoria has the highest number of car thefts of any state.

Bendigo West electorate

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — (12 255) My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. On behalf of the community of Chewton, I ask the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change to advise what action the government is taking to preserve the monster meeting site at Chewton as a heritage and culturally significant location. On 15 December 1851 at the Forest Creek diggings in central Victoria, 15 000 gold-diggers attended the first protest meeting, the monster meeting.

This was the first mass anti-government protest in Australia, and preceded both the Red Ribbon Rebellion in Bendigo and the Eureka Stockade of 1854 in Ballarat. It also set a path for democracy in Australia. The Forest Creek goldfields are now within the towns of Chewton and Castlemaine but, unlike other locations of the 1850s gold rushes such as Bendigo and Ballarat, the diggings are still in the landscape for all to see, including the monster meeting site at Chewton. The site is of historical and cultural significance, and the Chewton community is very keen to see it preserved.

Shepparton electorate

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — (12 256) My question is for the Minister for Education. When can schools in my electorate expect infrastructure works to be undertaken to provide new buildings and upgrades to replace many old and decrepit buildings no longer suitable for the purpose? I visited five primary schools in my electorate last week; many are in serious need of attention from the government. I understand that historically schools in the Shepparton district electorate have been significantly underfunded for infrastructure spending. Many of our school communities have to raise thousands of dollars for their own needs, having been overlooked by successive governments. So many schools in my electorate are in need of infrastructure investment; schools such as Orrvale, Zeerust and Bouchier Street are just a few in my electorate that need new buildings. They often battle on, teaching in poor-quality facilities. Our students must be our priority, and to achieve good educational outcomes there should be investment in suitable buildings in many of the schools in my electorate.

Sunbury electorate

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — (12 257) My question is for the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade in the other place, and I ask: how many small businesses in the Sunbury electorate have accessed the support services offered by Small Business Victoria in 2016, including the small business bus, and what opportunities will my local small businesses have to access support from Small Business Victoria in 2017 and beyond?

Ripon electorate

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — (12 258) My constituency question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, why, having visited the Maryborough District Health Service and seen plans for a proposed multidisciplinary student accommodation centre in October last year, have you not made any progress in announcing the needed funding of \$3.8 million to get this centre built? I have a particular

interest in getting this centre built, having been the president of the East Grampians Health Service, which has similar student accommodation across a large group of health services — medical students and nursing — and I have seen the difference this makes in enabling a rural health service to attract workforce, to train workforce and to progress in a really positive way in having all of these students in their town. The Maryborough District Health Service needs this \$3.8 million, and I query why it has not been announced.

Macedon electorate

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — (12 259) My constituency question is for the Minister for Police. The Andrews Labor government is investing around \$2 billion in Victoria Police, and as a result of this is creating an additional 3135 new police officers to be recruited over the next five years — that is 3135 jobs in Victoria for Victorians. It is great news. Minister, my question is: what will this investment mean for the people of my electorate? On the weekend I had the opportunity to meet with constituents in my electorate in the township of Romsey, both at a listening post and doorknocking. This announcement was very well received, not only because it represents a significant boost in community safety but, as we know, policing is a fine career, and I would like to see many of my constituents take up that opportunity.

JURY DIRECTIONS AND OTHER ACTS 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 Jury Directions Act 2015, the Criminal Procedure Act 2009, the Evidence Act 2008, the Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958 and the Juries Act 2000 and for other purposes.

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — I seek a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I can say to the member for Hawthorn that this bill implements the third tranche of jury direction reforms that commenced under a previous government. It also will seek to clarify the question of the requirements of identification of prospective jurors by the accused and clarify the fact that a jury parade is not an essential requirement for an accused person's rights to have been properly acquitted.

Read first time.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Introduction and first reading

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

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Education and Care Services National Law set out in the schedule to the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, the Children's Services Act 1996 and for other purposes.

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — May I ask the minister for a brief explanation of the bill?

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing) — This is a bill that proposes to amend the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Victoria), and these amendments were recommended as part of a recent Coalition of Australian Governments' review of the national partnership agreement on the national quality agenda for early childhood education and care.

Read first time.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Alert Digest No. 2

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 2 of 2017* on:

Building Amendment (Enforcement and Other Measures) Bill 2016

Country Fire Authority Amendment (Protecting Volunteer Firefighters) Bill 2016

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Pilot Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2017

Electricity Safety Amendment (Bushfire Mitigation Civil Penalties Scheme) Bill 2017

Fair Work (Commonwealth Powers) Amendment Bill 2017

Justice Legislation Amendment (Parole Reform and Other Matters) Act 2016

Statute Law Revision Bill 2017

Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016

together with appendices.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

DOCUMENTS**Tabled by Clerk:**

Crimes (Assumed Identities) Act 2004 — Report 2015–16 under s 31

Duties Act 2000 — Report 1 June 2016 to 31 December 2016 of Foreign Purchaser Additional Duty Exemptions under s 3E

Land Tax Act 2005 — Report 1 June 2016 to 31 December 2016 of Land Tax Absentee Owner Surcharge Exemptions under s 3B

Major Sporting Events Act 2009 — Major Sporting Event Orders under s 22 (*Gazette G51, 22 December 2016*) (three orders)

Murray-Darling Basin Authority — Report 2015–16

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

Bass Coast — C140

Casey — C220, C250

Darebin — C153

Greater Bendigo — C212

Greater Geelong — C325

Hume — C196, C213

Indigo — C68

Kingston — C147

Knox — C158

Macedon Ranges — C102

Maroondah — C102

Mornington Peninsula — C197, C230

Port Phillip — C136

Wangaratta — C69

Warmambool — C101

Wodonga — C120

Wyndham — C186, C209 Part 1

Yarra — C146

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under s 16B in relation to:

Geographic Place Names Act 1998 — Naming rules for places in Victoria: Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities

Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016 — Event management declaration for Kardinia Park events

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

ROYAL ASSENT**Message read advising royal assent on 14 February to:**

Energy Legislation Amendment (Feed-in Tariffs and Improving Safety and Markets) Bill 2016
Food Amendment (Kilojoule Labelling Scheme and Other Matters) Bill 2016
Transport Integration Amendment (Head, Transport for Victoria and Other Governance Reforms) Bill 2016.

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE**Reference**

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

That, under section 33 of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003, an inquiry into civics and electoral participation in Victorian state parliamentary elections be referred to the Electoral Matters Committee for consideration and report no later than 31 August 2018 and the committee should specifically examine:

- (1) electoral and civics education, the Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC's) community engagement programs and other best practice approaches used by the VEC, other Australian electoral commissions, the United Kingdom and New Zealand, to ensure that Victorian citizens are adequately informed and able to participate effectively in elections;
- (2) strategies to reduce informal voting at Victorian state elections which are not related to the voting system;
- (3) how the VEC employs and trains casual staff for Victorian state elections, this should involve discussion about methods to attract people to join the VEC's casual staffing roster for Victorian elections, the committee should also examine the roles and responsibilities of the VEC's casual election staff in light of changing technological and societal demands; and
- (4) strategies to increase electoral participation amongst community groups that traditionally experience barriers to electoral participation, such as Victorians aged 18 to 24, Victorians from multicultural backgrounds, as well as Victorians who have recently become Australian citizens and are not familiar with Australia's electoral system.

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Program**

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Major Projects) — 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, 23 February 2017:

Consumer Acts Amendment Bill 2016

Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016

Electricity Safety Amendment (Bushfire Mitigation Civil Penalties Scheme) Bill 2017

Fair Work (Commonwealth Powers) Amendment Bill 2017

Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016.

I will only make a few brief remarks in regard to the program that has been outlined to the house today and is consistent with the advice that was previously given to members of the house late last week. There are those five bills that are there to be considered and completed by the end of the week and, if time permits, the government would like to address the motion on the notice paper in regard to the attendance of a minister before the Legislative Council. However, as I said, we will endeavour to do that should time permit.

The only other issue I will note in regard to the government business program is that there has been a request from the manager of opposition business regarding the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016. There was a request from the manager of opposition business that that be a bill that goes into consideration in detail. I have indicated to the member, who I think might be the shadow minister — no, the member for Hawthorn is the shadow minister, my apologies — that the Attorney-General has agreed that that is a bill he is happy to take into the consideration-in-detail stage. Again allowing for the structure of the week and for bills to be considered appropriately, it will be the government's endeavour to do that on Thursday afternoon and to allow for an appropriate period of time for that. With those few comments, I commend the motion optimistically to the house.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — This is a reasonable workload for the house, and the opposition certainly appreciates the fact that the Leader of the Government has agreed to the proposal that the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016 be considered in detail in accordance with our proposal. We do believe it is the single most important bill that deserves consideration in detail. We have made the point on other occasions that just about every bill would benefit from consideration in detail, and we are still quite a long way from the government's election

undertaking that consideration in detail would be the norm rather than the exception. Nonetheless, we are making some progress in that regard. I think the government will see, and indeed hopefully the community will see, that this does in fact contribute to better handling of legislation in this house.

It is, however, still disappointing and concerning that we have seen no sign of legislation from the government that would address the crime wave that we are currently suffering in Victoria. We made this point last sitting week. We live in hope that the government might heed the cry that is coming loud and clear from across Victoria for urgent action in this regard and to respond either by introducing legislation or by bringing forward some other item of business that would enable the issue of community safety to be advanced in this house as part of the government's legislative or other program for the week, but unfortunately we are still to see that.

The Attorney-General has given notice of a jury directions bill, which he referred to as the third tranche of jury directions reform. We certainly hope that bill will make valuable reforms after the then opposition's disgraceful defeat of the jury directions amendment bill that was brought to the Parliament under the previous government. Of course we will also look to see exactly what the measures are that he referred to in relation to jury parades.

As important as no doubt the jury directions reforms are, they go nowhere near addressing the key issues of bail, of sentencing and of the soft-on-crime approach that seems to now be pervading our justice system. We on this side of the house believe that there should be measures before this house to be dealt with this week in that regard. So, as I say, it is very disappointing that those measures are not there. We are going to continue to call on the government to recognise the urgency of acting on those matters. By all means have a review, but the government should bring to the house now measures to deal with those problems that we already know need to be dealt with and where solutions are available, and then if a review comes up with further recommendations, it can bring further legislation to the house at that point. That is certainly what the previous government did in relation to parole, and that is what the current government should be doing in relation to bail and other aspects of the law and order crisis that we are currently facing.

Nonetheless, despite those deficiencies in the government's program, unfortunately on this side of the house we can do nothing more than draw attention to them and call on the government to act and, where they

have failed to, put forward our own measures in this place or in another place. I have to say that we have been repeatedly doing that, indeed even from opposition, in setting the law and order agenda far more than even the government is. But in this house, with this government business program before us, unfortunately we are not in a position to do any more than draw the government's attention to these shortcomings. We do not oppose the government business program, but we do believe there is a lot more that could and should be on it. We certainly hope that the penny will finally drop with the government and that perhaps next sitting week we will actually, at last, see some of the action that is now long overdue to help keep our community safer.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — At the outset, firstly, as the member for Essendon I do want to place on the record my deep sadness about the events that happened earlier today. I do not know whether any people on the plane who lost their lives today were constituents, but I do know that this is going to cause an enormous amount of concern, stress and anxiety in my community. I, along with the member for Niddrie and the member for Pascoe Vale, will work with the affected communities over the coming weeks and months.

I am delighted to make a contribution in relation to the government business program. As you know, Deputy Speaker, I am a new member to this place, and I have got to say that whenever I rise to my feet to speak on the government business program it feels that everything is as fresh as a bright blue sky when being afforded this opportunity. We have got five bills on the program, which enables us to deliver good government. I think it is fair to say that we on this side of the house are demonstrating that every day we are out the door before those opposite wake, but that is nothing new to them.

There are five bills on the program, as the Leader of the House has said. I do appreciate the fact that the manager of opposition business has indicated that the opposition will be supporting the government business program. I note that the member for Box Hill has asked the Leader of the House to allow the opposition to pursue the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016 in detail, and that request has been agreed to. I would like to highlight and point out the fact that when the opposition does communicate with the government and does express these desires or interests at the outset and early, then we maximise the chances of being able to accommodate those requests.

It is a solid program. I do note the position of the manager of opposition business about wanting again for us to introduce bail laws this week. I suspect that he

will continue to raise this matter week in, week out until we do introduce those proposed laws. I suppose what I would say to the manager of opposition business is we are going to get it right. When we do, it will be done — it will be done once, it will be done properly and it will be done right — and we will not be badgered or bullied into bringing something forward that is ill conceived, not thought through and not properly measured and considered. That is the way you do things: you do things once, you do it right, you do it properly and you make sure that you get the balance right. That is what we will do.

As I said, it is a great joy to be on this side of the house and pursuing this legislation. I think when you go from opposition into government it is a bit like going from rags to riches, you could say, but you have just got to keep pushing for the fortune and fame. It is an absolute joy to be here to be doing this. I am so excited that I could be going off like a frog in a sock. I am that excited. I commend the government business program to the house.

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I rise this afternoon to make a contribution to the government business program debate. There are five bills before the house this week on the government business program. There is the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016, the Consumer Acts Amendment Bill 2016, the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016, the Electricity Safety Amendment (Bushfire Mitigation Civil Penalties Scheme) Bill 2017 and the Fair Work (Commonwealth Powers) Amendment Bill 2017. I am looking forward to making a contribution on the planning bill, which has really been a policy-free zone from this government.

It was interesting that the member for Essendon said in his contribution that this government was delivering good government for the people of Victoria. I think there were a few people in the gallery today that did not seem to think they were delivering good government for the people of Victoria with the disdain and disgust they have shown towards the people of Werribee.

The government has agreed to go into consideration in detail on the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016, which is a good thing in that it is finally starting to honour an election commitment, although making that standard practice was what was originally promised, which would mean you would expect that on a consistent basis, but the number of times we have gone into consideration in detail on bills has been very erratic.

The really pressing issue before this house should be the law and order crisis in this state. Recent polls have shown that 52 per cent of people in the state list that as their number one issue, but instead of debating laws that would strengthen our bail system and our parole system and correct the lenient sentencing that is being handed out in this state, we are debating bills which are not addressing those issues. As I said, the government has agreed to go into consideration in detail, and we will not be opposing the government business program.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — I certainly concur with the statements from the member for Essendon earlier in relation to today's happenings, which of course have also constrained and led to perhaps a different rollout of our program here in the house this morning. Can I just add to the commentary and contributions from both the member for Essendon and the Leader of the House in relation to the bills this week, in particular the fact that we are going into consideration in detail on the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016, which of course is picking up on an affirmation and a commitment from the government to provide more opportunities to go into consideration in detail and deal with the detail of bills. That of course is something that has happened on several occasions, in fact many occasions, in this place under the Andrews government.

I can certainly recall in relation to the National Parks Amendment (Prohibiting Cattle Grazing) Bill 2015 that we went into consideration in detail on that bill, a very important piece of legislation that was an election commitment from the Andrews Labor government. We went into consideration in detail on that bill just recently. We also considered in detail a bill before this house by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, so there have been a couple of opportunities, certainly in my time here in this term, where we have met that commitment to go into consideration in detail.

The opposition has sought on several occasions the opportunity to go into detail on bills, and I certainly commend the government for providing those opportunities previously. The manager of opposition business has been consistent in his concerns that the government has not always gone down that path, but I think what is important to note is that there are at least a few examples just off the top of my head that I would be able to list to people today. The fact that we are going into consideration in detail on the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016 is further evidence of the government providing opportunities for the opposition, if they choose to take up

that opportunity, to debate in detail, clause by clause, aspects of bills before this place.

I think that is to be commended, and I am looking forward to further discussion on some key matters, particularly the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016, so I certainly commend the program and the orders of the day to the house and to you, Deputy Speaker, and I am sure we will see more from you in your role in consideration in detail on the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016. I commend the government business program to the house.

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) — The Greens will not be opposing the government business program in this instance. There are five bills on the agenda, and the Greens have not foreshadowed any amendments or requested to go into consideration in detail, but we note that the opposition's request to do so has been granted, and we welcome the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Amendment Bill 2016 being considered in detail. It was a commitment by the government that that would be a standard feature of bills, so in this instance we will not be opposing the government business program.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr WELLS (Rowville) — This statement condemns the Andrews government's continuing war against Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers in favour of its United Firefighters Union (UFU) mates. The Premier boasted last year that he had to step in and intervene to fix the CFA enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) dispute, yet here we are, two-thirds of our way through summer — the very time of the year, the very month that Black Saturday occurred eight years ago — and the dispute is still not resolved. To make matters worse the Premier's and his government's failure to appropriately support CFA volunteers and to ensure that the CFA EBA negotiations did not impinge on their rights has seen volunteers giving up in disgust and walking away from the CFA.

The fall in the number of CFA volunteers, the very backbone and lifeblood of the CFA, has been reflected in the latest Productivity Commission *Report on Government Services*, released some time ago, which reveals that the number of CFA volunteers in Victoria

has declined significantly under the Andrews government. Since the Premier and the UFU began their war against CFA volunteers the number of operational volunteer firefighters has fallen by 6.9 per cent, from 38 048 in June 2014 to 35 585 in June 2016. That is 2463 volunteers walking away from frontline firefighting, more than 1200 during each fire season under the Andrews government.

Instead of looking after his UFU mates, whom he obviously owes big time for their deceitful and appalling behaviour in supporting Labor at the last election — —

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

Koori maternity service program

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — Last Friday, on behalf of the Minister for Health, I had the pleasure of officially opening the first Koori maternity birthing room at the Northern Hospital in Epping. The Koori maternity service is an initiative that has been developed in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and the Koori maternity services workforce. This important partnership has given voice to their wisdom and expertise regarding the provision of culturally safe and high-quality maternity care. It is an important initiative that delivers culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal women and their families.

In 2015–16 Koori maternity service program data indicated that approximately 75 per cent of Aboriginal women who gave birth in public hospitals had accessed antenatal care through the program. This is a great outcome. This addition to the Northern Hospital is a fantastic service for families in my community, and I thank and congratulate the minister for her great work.

Mernda rail extension

Ms D'AMBROSIO — I also had the pleasure of visiting Mernda last Friday with my friend and member for Yan Yean, Danielle Green, where crews are conducting geotechnical drilling works along the rail reserve as we continue to deliver the extension of rail from South Morang to Mernda. This \$588 million project is an excellent example of how this government is providing for Melbourne's booming outer north. It was a former Labor government that extended the rail to South Morang, and it is our government now that is extending it to Mernda, one of Melbourne's fastest growing suburbs. I congratulate and thank the Minister

for Public Transport for her terrific work in delivering this program. I know that suburbs like those in my community will never be forgotten by this government.

Timber industry

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — It was pleasing to see the Minister for Agriculture finally visit Australian Sustainable Hardwoods recently after many unanswered requests; however, it was disappointing there were not any answers derived from the visit. I look forward to the outcome of the working party's review. It is due to report back later this week after being given a four-week deadline to determine the future of 250 direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs. The working party must return lost resource areas to the sector and ensure that the native timber industry has a strong future and commit to a no-net-loss resource policy.

Regional and rural roads

Mr T. BULL — On Friday in Lakes Entrance I spoke to industry leaders and members from the South East Australian Transport Strategy group, or SEATS, about the need for increased investment in country roads infrastructure. I explained to members that the road and asset management budget is down \$113 million over the past two years and that the road operations and network improvement budget is down \$307 million over two years. On top of this the country roads and bridges program has been scrapped, which equates to about half a billion dollars out of these areas in two years that should have been spent on our roads.

Deirdre Relph, OAM

Mr T. BULL — Congratulations are in order to Maffra's Deirdre Relph, who was honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia on Australia Day. Mrs Relph has lived in Maffra for 50 years and has spent her life volunteering for the cancer council, North Gippsland bowls division and many other community organisations and events. She is indeed a great East Gippslander.

East Gippsland and Wellington shire citizen awards

Mr T. BULL — I also congratulate winners of the East Gippsland and Wellington shire citizen awards across the East Gippsland region from Heyfield, Maffra, Stratford, Bairnsdale, Omeo, Paynesville, Lakes Entrance, Orbost and Mallacoota.

Geelong Girls Gala

Mr EREN (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — On Saturday I was honoured to attend the inaugural Geelong Girls Gala. The gala was held by the Geelong Regional Football Committee's women's task force to help promote football to females in the region. This gala showcased the tremendous strides our community has made in relation to female participation in sport, especially in relation to soccer. Melissa Barbieri, the former Matildas captain and player, said some inspiring words to the 150-plus players and their families and friends. The strong crowds supported all of the teams, which included girls under-12s, under-15s and open women's age categories. Special thanks to Rebecca Horrocks and her team for the amazing effort they put into hosting such a great day, including all of the sponsors.

Geelong Community Cup

Mr EREN — Sunday also saw another fantastic local event, which was the Geelong Community Cup. The Geelong Community Cup is a preseason soccer competition comprising eight local Geelong and Surf Coast-based football clubs which was first held in 1981. It was this year hosted by the Geelong Rangers. It is the longest running community cup in the nation. After some sponsorship issues this year, I am proud to say our government has contributed \$8000 from our programs and initiatives fund. Congratulations to all who made the cup such a wonderful showcase of community sport, especially the host club, Geelong Rangers, and the winners, Corio.

Geelong international cricket match

Mr EREN — Sunday also showcased Geelong's famous Kardinia Park, as I have always called it, with the first international cricket T20 match between Australia and Sri Lanka. Despite the grizzly weather, fans came from all over Australia for this event, which was great for cricket and for the local and state economy. It is just part of the huge program that has been developed for this great stadium and regional city.

Don Bigham

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — It was a great shock to the Yarra Valley community to hear the heartbreaking news of the passing of Don Bigham, a devoted family man, a farmer and a true local who always extended a helping hand to anyone in need. He was highly regarded within the Yarra Valley community and a generous friend to many, including me. Don was a second-generation ex-captain and 55-year member of

the Gruyere brigade of the Country Fire Authority (CFA). The high regard and respect in which Don was held in both the local and much wider CFA community was so very evident by the numbers who attended his funeral service and formed an extraordinary guard of honour.

Don's knowledge of the local area of Warramate and Gruyere Valley was second to none. This knowledge was freely shared, often delivered in Don's straight-talking, no-nonsense way. He was one of the most genuine people I have ever known — never afraid to speak his mind or stand up for what he believed in. I extend my deepest sympathies to Pat and his family. I will miss his dropping into my office, his freely given advice and his humour and friendship.

Timber industry

Mrs FYFFE — I have been appalled at what has been happening within the timber industry in Victoria. For many years I have been closely associated with the Upper Yarra Valley timber industry, and to think we are going to have devastating cutbacks to the supply of timber that is going to affect our furniture industry and the people who work the mills at Heyfield — I can see this spreading.

Broadmeadows jobs

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — I have written to Australia's new Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science — the fourth in as many years — asking how much from the unspent \$1.324 billion I have identified from the automotive transformation scheme will be reinvested for the Turnbull government to honour its election priority of jobs and growth where they are needed most in Melbourne's north.

I am also campaigning for Broadmeadows to be a centre to help deliver the Land 400 project, which we will be campaigning to bring to Victoria with the assistance of the Minister for Industry and Employment. Victoria has a long and proven record with military land vehicles, with expertise in engineering, design and technology. Leading research and development sectors are bolstered by a world-class tertiary education system, and Broadmeadows provides Victoria's most appropriate sites, internationally acclaimed innovation, leading technology and a skilled workforce to develop this project of national significance. This would obviously be a project for Victoria, but I think there needs to be a specific carve-out for Broadmeadows, given that it remains a world leader in innovation and that Ford has recently reinvested in research and development. That will

increase by 50 per cent to \$450 million, with white-collar engineering design jobs in Melbourne's north forecast to increase by 400 to 1500.

Narracan electorate roads

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) — I have received a number of complaints recently regarding the reduction in speed limits on country roads. Many of our country arterial roads are having their speed limits reduced from 100 kilometres per hour to 80 kilometres per hour. Local residents and businesses are concerned about the impact on their lives and livelihoods with this further restriction on their ability to move about their community in a timely manner. The reduction in speed limits has had a serious impact on productivity and the cost of moving freight. It appears that the main reason VicRoads is implementing these changes is that the condition of sections of the roads has deteriorated to the point that safety is a concern and they do not have the funds to undertake repairs.

These roads have been used for many years by light and heavy vehicles with a speed limit of 100 kilometres per hour. Unfortunately the VicRoads maintenance budget has been reduced by such an extent by the Andrews government that road surface damage has driven this decision. This is road surface damage that cannot be repaired because of budget cuts, and VicRoads has been forced to implement a management decision that is all about reducing the risk of litigation.

Once again the Andrews government is showing complete disregard for the wellbeing of country people and no regard for the impact of its budget cuts and the subsequent reduction in speed limits. With the upcoming budget the Minister for Roads and Road Safety must increase the maintenance budget for country roads in Gippsland and get these arterial roads back to a standard that allows the safe movement of vehicles at a speed that does not add cost and inconvenience to country road users.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Can I also congratulate the honourable member for Narracan on his preselection win.

Somali community

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I rise today to condemn the actions of the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, and I do so in my capacity as the member for Essendon and the co-chair of the parliamentary friendship group for the United States of America. In a single act of capriciousness and a fit of pique President Trump signed an executive

order that prevented persons who hold citizenship in Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Yemen and Sudan from entering the United States of America. My electorate is home to many people who were born in these countries, and you must appreciate that given the size of the Somali community in my electorate I probably have more to do with members of this proud and great community than the President of the United States. Unlike President Trump, I am proud to have the Somali community in my electorate.

It is worth asking the question: how many Somali hijackers were on American Airlines flight 11 that crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center? None. How many Somali hijackers were on United Airlines flight 175 that crashed into the south tower of the World Trade Center? None. How many Somali hijackers were on American Airlines flight 77 that crashed into the Pentagon? None. How many Somali hijackers were on United Airlines flight 93 that crashed into a field in Pennsylvania? None. How many Somali bombers were involved in the Boston Marathon bombing? None.

The President of the United States of America has defamed the Somali community with his cruel executive order. To the Somali community I say: you are welcome in our great state and you are welcome in my state district of Essendon. Under the Andrews Labor government equality is not negotiable and we embrace you, as we do all multicultural communities.

Clontarf Academy

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I was privileged to join Clontarf Academy's year 12 camp held in Mildura recently. Young men from all over Victoria and Broken Hill who are doing year 12 gathered together for team building aimed at enhancing their confidence for year 12. I joined them for a meal and a trivia night. I learned a great deal about Clontarf and sport during the trivia quiz, as it was the focus of the questions. Thank goodness I was in a team of young men who are attuned to sport. I wish them well in 2017.

Bombing of Darwin anniversary

Mr CRISP — The RSL conducted a service for the 75th bombing of Darwin. It was well attended on a very pleasant Sunday morning. Well done to the RSL and particularly to Laurie Andriske, who was stationed in Darwin during the bombing and had been telling his story on ABC during the week prior to the service. I am sure many of those who listened to Laurie's account were touched and inspired to attend the service.

Mildura Young Professionals Network

Mr CRISP — The Mildura Young Professionals Network invited local business owners Mark O'Donnell, Steve Timmis, James Slorach and me to participate in their recent evening get-together. It was great to hear the stories of our leading sports store owner, a businessman with a passion for gin who has established a microbrewery, and a young entrepreneur who has recently opened a coffee shop. I would like to thank the young professionals network for inviting me to gain what I gained from listening to the presentations by the businessmen and the questions from those present.

Georgia Lee and Jemma Searle

Mr CRISP — Two outstanding young people have had their efforts rewarded recently. Georgia Lee from Birchip won a prestigious Macpherson Smith Rural Foundation scholarship to assist her with her university studies, and Jemma Searle won the Queen's Scout award.

Sergeant Grant Mitchell

Ms WARD (Eltham) — Thursday night was lovely and warm, not least because of the kindness of Eltham Rotary in recognising the service of our favourite local cop, Mitch. Grant 'Mitch' Mitchell received the 2017 Rotary district 9790 Community Police Officer of the Year award at the weekly gathering of Eltham Rotary at the delicious The Common in Eltham.

I have known Mitch for decades, not because I have been naughty but because he is a fantastic local cop. It would be hard to find anyone in our community who has not come across Mitch. He cares about our community, he cares about our people and his actions clearly show the depth of his commitment to all of us. Mitch is never too busy to stop for a chat — in fact he loves a chat — to find out what is going on with people. Because of this, in his 27 years of service to our community he has come to know us inside and out. He knows who is doing it tough, who the ratbags are and he also knows who has just made one bad choice.

Thank you, Eltham Rotary, for acknowledging how important Mitch is to our community. Every community should have a cop like Mitch, and I thank him wholeheartedly for his service.

Heidelberg Golf Club and Community and Volunteers Eltham

Ms WARD — Friday was a fantastic day for the Heidelberg Golf Club and Community and Volunteers Eltham (CAVE). CAVE is an important local

community organisation which helps Banyule and Nillumbik students who may be doing it tough in affording the start of high school. It is entirely run by volunteers who ensure that all money raised goes directly where it is needed. Throughout a gorgeous day 204 golfers, including 54 professionals, had a wonderful time — some indeed a challenging time — playing the 18 immaculate holes of the Heidelberg Golf Course in Lower Plenty for the Get Wines Direct 2017 Heidelberg Pro Am Draw.

Thanks to the hardworking general manager, Lindsay Bell, the groundskeeper extraordinaire, Clinton Raven, and the woman who pulled it all together, assistant manager Katie Grosdanis, it was a very successful event. It was won by Simon Hawkes, who smashed the course record by four shots with eight under par. The event raised over \$2500 to be generously donated to the good people of CAVE, and I congratulate Jan Aitken, Diana Warrell and crew for their important work.

Midsumma Festival

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) — As the Victorian Greens LGBTI spokesperson I attended a number of events of the 2017 Midsumma Festival. I joined Greens federal and state MPs, local government councillors and members and supporters at the Queer Greens stall on festival day, chatting to the public about our efforts to progress equality in Victoria. I also attended another uplifting Pride March in St Kilda.

Thanks to Dolly Diamond for having me as a panellist on her fantastic Blankety Blanks show, along with Anthony Callea, Callum Francis and Toby Francis from *Kinky Boots*, The Sparrow Men and Super Girly, at Chapel Off Chapel. Well done to all contestants; it was a really 'blank' night.

A particular highlight was hosting the Queer Greens Victoria Many Colours of the Rainbow panel event at Chapel Off Chapel, where I was joined by Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, Budi Sudarto, Dr Judy Tang and Imam Nur Warsame to discuss how to better support LGBTI people from multicultural and multifaith backgrounds to ensure their voice is heard in the equality debate. Attendees gained so much insight from this informative and lively discussion, and it was a pleasure to host the event.

I attended Temple Beth Israel's (TBI) annual pride Shabbat service in St Kilda East, which welcomed, celebrated and affirmed Jewish LGBTI members of the community. TBI also marched in the Pride March for the first time this year, along with a number of other Jewish groups.

Multiculturalism

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — Victoria is a diverse and multicultural society which has been built and enriched by our first peoples and successive waves of migrants. As the Premier has often said, Victorians do not just tolerate diversity, they proudly embrace it. They know it makes us stronger. So I commend the Minister for Multicultural Affairs for the launch on Sunday of the multicultural policy *Victorian. And Proud of it*. In particular this policy is underpinned by the following values: ‘One law for all’, ‘Freedom to be yourself’, ‘Discrimination is never acceptable’, ‘A fair go for all’ and ‘It is up to all of us to contribute’.

Nothing presents more of a threat to these values and to the Victorian way of life than the racist One Nation party. Ever since the rise of Pauline Hanson, the major political parties and their leaders have rejected the fear and racism peddled by One Nation. This has included premiers Kennett, Bracks, Brumby, Baillieu, Napthine and Andrews. Whether in opposition or government, Victoria’s major political parties and their leaders, regardless of their differing political outlooks and, I should add, regardless of their political prospects, have denounced the threat of One Nation to our community.

But now it is reported that the Liberal Party is open to doing deals with One Nation — dirty deals with a racist, bigoted political party. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to show leadership, to stand up to the Liberal Party’s state president, Michael Kroger, and to demand that no deals be done with One Nation. Tell him he should not sell out Victoria’s multicultural communities and our cultural harmony for a fistful of preference votes.

Australia Day awards

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) — I would like to acknowledge the two most recent recipients of Order of Australia medals, presented in my electorate on Australia Day 2017. Firstly, Geoff Beilby, someone I have worked with from time to time, received an award for his great work in the environment. Geoff has been a great source of knowledge and history for people reclaiming land, watersides and repairing vegetation. His award was in recognition of the many hours of community work he has done in that area.

There was also former councillor Geoff Smith, a long-time mentor of mine, who always has many a wise word and thought on dealing with country communities. Geoff spent over 35 years on the Corangamite shire and its pre-amalgamation in various

forms. He has been a great contributor, only resigning at the most recent council elections.

I would also like to put in *Hansard* the local Citizen of the Year awards that were handed out on that day across my electorate. I know all the recipients and can speak very highly from personal experience of their contributions. For Colac Otway shire there was Mr John Blane who was awarded for his many years in Rotary and his contribution to the local Catholic Church and community; Mr James Green from Cobden in the Corangamite shire, a civic leader in both sporting and business areas; and Mr Peter Spring from Lorne was recognised for his contribution to the Surf Coast shire, particularly for his efforts in raising money and coordinating community groups after the Wye River fires.

Willow Ware

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — Last week I had the great pleasure to meet Willow Ware CEO Richard Simiane to discuss the challenges of local manufacturing and the ways the Andrews Labor government can assist Willow in continuing to operate in a competitive environment. The family-run business started 130 years ago from the humblest of beginnings but has grown to be a leading manufacturer and employer of over 200 people, operating locally in Tullamarine. Buying Australian-made products like Willow directly supports local jobs and fair and decent working conditions. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at Willow for their excellent work.

Sunbury BMX Club

Mr J. BULL — On Saturday morning I joined Cr Leigh Johnson, the Sunbury BMX Club Committee, local riders of all ages and abilities and their incredibly supportive parents at the Sunbury BMX track for the national sign-on day and a ride around the track. It is fair to say that my BMX riding skills are not what they used to be and the youngsters well and truly showed me how it was done. BMX riding is a fantastic way to stay active, meet new people and participate in competitive sport. Thank you for having me along, and keep up the great work.

Northern Community Legal Centre

Mr J. BULL — Community legal centres play an integral role in our community. Last week I joined the Attorney-General and a number of state colleagues at the launch of the Northern Community Legal Centre in Gladstone Park. They provide legal work, case work and duty lawyer services, court representation and

community legal education to thousands of clients who desperately need help navigating the justice system each and every year. This is a fantastic service, and I thank all staff and volunteers for their time and efforts in ensuring equal justice for all.

Ararat correctional facility

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — I rise to raise the concerns of many Ararat residents who were not consulted by the Andrews Labor government before it announced the building of a new secure facility at Ararat to house violent and sex offenders deemed too dangerous to be allowed back into the community after their sentence has been completed. The origin of this facility was the Harper review into the multiple failings of the bail and justice system that led to the murder of Masa Vukotic by Sean Price. Sean Price had been a resident at Ararat's Corella Place before he reoffended, was jailed and then was released straight back into the community.

Ripon already houses all serious sex offenders in residential facilities in Victoria. We do not need to be the dumping ground for even more. The government must listen to the community and abandon their plans to build a new facility here. As the member for Ripon and a resident of Ararat, I know we are doing more than our fair share to keep these offenders away from other communities. We must not have more of these sex and violent offenders put here.

Imposing a facility for people convicted of the worst, most heinous sex crimes without consulting the community of Ararat or their elected parliamentary representative is a complete betrayal and demonstrates the utter contempt the Andrews Labor government has for my community. It is entirely insufficient to hold secret meetings behind closed doors yet refuse to engage openly with the wider community and ask them if they want more sex and violent offenders housed here. Ripon is doing much more than our fair share to keep all Victorians safe from dangerous and convicted violent sexual predators.

Geelong electorate major events

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) — Over the summer break Geelong was alive with major events that I attended and acted at on behalf of the Minister for Sport. The government supported these major events, as it promised it would. The Geelong Yacht Club's Festival of Sails, which is Australia's oldest and largest keelboat event and which started in 1844, was a huge success. I congratulate the club.

We staged the 2017 National Cricket Inclusion Championship over 10 days, featuring 15 teams and over 230 players. The three divisions included blind, deaf and intellectually disabled cricketers, and it was a great success. The soccer match at Simmons Stadium between Melbourne Victory and Newcastle Jets attracted 16 000 fans. The Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race was a major drawcard to our region, attracting visitors from all over the world. I would like to congratulate Cadel Evans on the work that he puts into that event.

I congratulate the Surf Coast shire on the amazing welcome ceremony that it put on for the elite women's cyclists. I want to acknowledge Mayor Brian McKitterick for making the women feel so welcome and for highlighting the issue of equity in sport. The people's ride and the elite women's and men's races were embraced by the Geelong region.

Portland cruise ship visits

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) — It was great to be in Portland last Sunday to welcome the fourth cruise ship for the season into the port. The *Pacific Jewel* arrived in port early Sunday morning and her passengers were treated to a day exploring all of what the south-west coast has to offer. The visits provide a significant boost to the local economy. On each visit Portland has been rated as one of the favourite stops among passengers, with many vowing to return to the south-west. The Portland community does a terrific job welcoming the ships, creating a festive atmosphere on the foreshore with live music, market stalls and plenty to see and do. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Tyrendarra Agricultural Show

Ms BRITNELL — Last weekend I also had the honour of officially opening the 100th Tyrendarra Agricultural Show. When the show started in the midst of the First World War, the community came together to create an event to support each other. That is what makes communities strong and that is what was reflected in Tyrendarra last weekend — a strong community. Thanks and congratulations to the show president, Peter Malseed, and the organising committee on another great event.

Relay for Life

Ms BRITNELL — Over the past two weeks I have been lucky enough to take part in Relay for Life events in Warrnambool and Portland. It was a great honour to stand with other cancer survivors and carers to commemorate the journeys we have been on while

remembering those we have lost. Cancer research is vital, and both events raised significant amounts of money to help the cause. Well done and thank you to the organisers and to everyone who participated.

Portland Lions Club

Ms BRITNELL — It was also a pleasure to be in Portland to attend the Portland Lions Club 50-year anniversary celebrations. Congratulations on half a century of community contribution to a wonderful club.

Clayton Road, Clayton South

Mr LIM (Clarinda) — I rise to congratulate and thank the Minister for Roads and Road Safety for listening to the school community at Clayton South Primary School and acting to facilitate the placement of variable flashing speed lights on Clayton Road, Clayton South, on either side of the school. This section of Clayton Road is extremely busy, and it is particularly busy during the morning and afternoon peak periods. It has around 20 000 vehicle movements each weekday, almost 10 per cent of which are heavy vehicles moving throughout the Clayton South industrial precinct and to and from locations throughout Melbourne.

The location also had two dangerous areas which caused distraction to motorists: the road dips just before the school when travelling south towards Mordialloc and for vehicles travelling towards Clayton, and the bus stop outside the school forces traffic to merge lanes to the right just at the point when right-turning traffic at the nearest intersection is banking up. During the five-year period ending 30 June 2016 there were seven casualty crashes. Local residents have been concerned about drivers running red lights and speeding along this stretch of road. The \$105 000 upgrade between Cleary Court and Bodley Street includes four new electronic flashing speed signs, which will remind drivers of the 40-kilometre-per-hour speed limit during school drop-off times.

Essendon Airport tragedy

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — Today is a desperately sad day in my community, with the confirmation that a plane with five passengers did crash at Essendon Fields shortly after take-off before 9.00 a.m. I very much remember back in 1993 when a plane crashed in Gilbertson Street, Essendon, not far from where you lived, Acting Speaker Thomson — miraculously that had 10 survivors — but today's events will really resonate with the local community. My condolences to the families who have lost loved ones. Only last Saturday I and my wife were shopping at the DFO not

far from where the plane crashed at JB Hi-Fi. Even last Thursday I was also there at the Australian Events Centre for an event to thank the wonderful staff at VicRoads for the work they had done working with Lendlease to build a new English Street Bridge with three lanes on either side going into Essendon Fields.

I want to put on record that my thoughts are with the family members of the deceased and their loved ones. I also want to put on record my thoughts and prayers for the emergency workers who are there on the scene right now, as we speak, and also my thoughts for the first emergency responders and the whole community out in the north-west. I will work very closely with the member for Essendon, the member for Pascoe Vale and also the federal member for Maribyrnong to do what we can as a state government to ensure the safety of our local community.

Highlands Community Residents Group

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — On Saturday, 11 February, the Highlands Community Residents Group (HCRG) held yet another successful outdoor movie night, with the screening of award-winning family favourite *Snoopy and Charlie Brown: the Peanuts Movie*. Congratulations to all HCRG members, including president Stuart Hodgson, the 1st Craigieburn Scout Group and all involved in this evening of fun, food and family entertainment. No doubt the 450 residents who came to the screening will be back again next year.

Northern Community Legal Centre

Ms SPENCE — I would also like to acknowledge the Northern Community Legal Centre (NCLC). I was recently pleased to attend the launch of the amalgamated service — formerly the Broadmeadows Community Legal Service and the Moreland Community Legal Centre — along with a number of parliamentary colleagues, including the Attorney-General and the members for Broadmeadows, Sunbury and Pascoe Vale. As a volunteer solicitor for a predecessor to the NCLC, the Broadmeadows Community Legal Service, I know the importance of the vital work that these services do in our community, and I have no doubt that the NCLC will continue to provide high-quality, accessible legal advice to residents in the north-west for many years to come.

The NCLC has dedicated significant resources to the issue of family violence in our community and will continue to do so through its new pathways program that will link with the Broadmeadows Magistrates Court and the Broadmeadows Family Relationship

Centre. Through the identification of low-risk cases this project will aim to assist families to resolve disputes that may otherwise escalate. Congratulations to the NCLC CEO, Jenni Smith, and all involved with the recent launch.

Essendon Airport tragedy

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — I would just like to add my thoughts to a few previous members statements regarding the tragedy this morning at Essendon Fields. My thoughts go out to the families but also to the emergency workers who were the first responders on the scene to the bystanders and who obviously did such an incredible job in dire circumstances.

VICTORIAN PLANNING AUTHORITY BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 7 December 2016; motion of Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning).

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — This is a bill that in effect abolishes the Growth Areas Authority and replaces it with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), a body that is intended to have functions similar to those of the Growth Areas Authority but operating more widely across the state. As the second-reading speech says, and I quote:

These functions and powers enable the Victorian Planning Authority to work anywhere in Victoria that is designated by me as Minister for Planning rather than be limited to growth areas. This will enable the creation of plans that respond to the opportunities and challenges faced by communities across Victoria and allow for economic opportunities to be shared.

The Victorian Planning Authority is intended to be an advisory body for the Minister for Planning, as is indicated in the statement of compatibility and the second-reading speech, and I quote the statement of compatibility:

The primary object of the VPA will be to provide advice and assistance to the minister that is in accordance with ‘the objectives of planning in Victoria’ set out in section 4(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson) — Order! The member for Kew needs to acknowledge the Chair as he comes in. Go back to the spot.

Mr CLARK — As the statement of compatibility goes on to indicate:

The bill will also abolish the existing Growth Areas Authority (GAA) established under the Planning and Environment Act

1987. The GAA currently uses ‘Victorian Planning Authority’ as its trading name. The functions of the GAA under that act in relation to the administration of development contributions, infrastructure contributions and growth areas infrastructure contributions will be transferred to the VPA.

That, in essence, is what the bill is on about. The primary concern of the opposition is that the bill does not go anywhere near addressing one of the crucial issues that is facing Victoria at present — namely, the consequences of steadily increasing population numbers. Indeed the bill’s second-reading speech goes to some length to talk about those problems and issues, but then regrettably what is actually provided for in the bill is in no way an adequate response to the needs that are identified.

For example, the second-reading speech rightly points out that Victoria is experiencing a period of what it refers to as ‘unprecedented growth’. ‘Unprecedented’ may be a slight exaggeration if one looks back over the entire course of Victoria’s history, but I think it is true to say that it is currently a very rapid rate of growth and certainly well above that of past recent decades. The second-reading speech rightly refers to the need for integrated land use planning to meet that growth. It goes on to refer to Melbourne being predicted to grow from 4.6 million people today to 8 million by 2051 and the rest of Victoria’s population being expected to almost double to around 2.1 million people over the same period, and the minister said:

We must ensure we are able to meet this challenge and preserve the inclusive and prosperous state we so value.

The speech goes on to extol what the minister considers to be the virtues of the Victorian Planning Authority to meet those objectives, and he talks about planning for our growth and livability with the establishment of the Victorian Planning Authority and its ability to lead planning in various designated areas. He then claimed that the authority will work with local government, utility providers, developers and across government to, and I quote:

... ensure that the infrastructure and services our communities require are planned for and delivered.

The trouble is that this is an incredibly overstated piece of hype about what the role and indeed the capacity of the Victorian Planning Authority are going to be. It is essentially an expert advisory body for the Minister for Planning doing, across a broader range of parts of the state, the sorts of work that the Growth Areas Authority has been doing to date. The minister talks about an expanded focus on regional areas and strategic development sites and looking for new ways to maximise growth in regional and rural Victoria, and

then he says, as if this is a solution to the problem, ‘the Victorian Planning Authority will provide this advice to government’.

The problem is that the government has not grasped the magnitude of the task that is in front of it in responding to Victoria’s population challenge. It is simply not going to be able to deal with the population challenges that we face through an expanded advisory authority reporting to the Minister for Planning. It will no doubt be staffed with very worthy officers who will do their best to exercise their professional skills as planners and the other skills that they will bring to the task, but that does not go anywhere near what is needed to ensure that we have an effective, whole-of-government response to the challenges of rising population. You can look at just about every area of government activity and see the impact that rising population will have on it and see the deficiencies that are now emerging.

Take the topic of crime, for example, probably the pre-eminent issue facing the Victorian community at the moment. Now, there are a lot more issues than population that need to be dealt with in responding to the law and order crisis that we face in terms of the soft-on-crime attitudes, inadequate sentences et cetera, but one of the very significant contributing factors to the problems that we are facing in relation to community safety at present is the fact that the government has allowed the number of police per capita to fall significantly since it came to office in 2014. That means that with a rising population, the police resources are being stretched thinner and thinner, and the community is paying the price for that.

Look at public transport and the crowding on metropolitan and country train services. Look at roads and the ever-growing congestion on roads right across Melbourne and indeed now increasingly across parts of Victoria other than Melbourne. It was not helped of course by the Andrews government’s scrapping of the east–west link and its inadequate policy for the delivery of new roads. One of the background contexts to that is that with steadily rising population, unless the government is responding effectively with the roads that we need, Victorians and Melburnians are going to be stuck in traffic for longer and longer.

A body like the Victorian Planning Authority — an advisory body to the Minister for Planning — is no form of comprehensive solution to those problems. How is this body effectively going to be solving the challenges of jobs and the location of jobs, the industries in which Victoria is going to have a competitive advantage and a capacity to create and attract jobs to the state? How is this body reporting to

the Minister for Planning going to ensure proper delivery of the new schools, the new hospitals and the new community health facilities that we need? How is it going to ensure that Victoria has an adequate energy supply? How is it going to, through advice to the Minister for Planning, tackle the range of housing affordability problems that we are facing? How is it, as an advisory body to the Minister for Planning, going to ensure that Victorians continue to have the water supplies that we need, not only in Melbourne but across Victoria, to supply the needs of a growing population?

The government has come along and has in effect said, ‘We recognise we face many challenges from rising population. We recognise that something needs to be done about it if Victorians are going to continue to enjoy the quality of life that we have been fortunate to enjoy to date. We recognise all of those problems. And behold, here is our solution: our solution is to establish the Victorian Planning Authority’, which is effectively taking the existing Growth Areas Authority and giving it a mandate, where the Minister for Planning so chooses, to go off and do some strategic planning in other areas that are designated by the Minister for Planning.

It is in no way an adequate solution to the problem. There is no sign that there is the whole-of-government commitment to the task of tackling population growth that is needed. There is no sign of buy-in from the Premier. There is no indication of the status that the Victorian Planning Authority is going to have in the scheme of government bureaucracy to even deliver — certainly not directly, because it is not going to have the authority to do so, but even through persuasion, through advocacy and through the quality of its work and the regard that the government is going to have to its work — in any significant way a solution to these problems or indeed to play a clear and designated role within a broader strategy to solve these challenges of population. The fact of the matter is the government does not have such a broader strategy into which the work of the Victorian Planning Authority can fit.

That of course is in stark contrast to this side of the house, where the Leader of the Opposition has recognised the importance of population as a long-term issue for our state and recognised that it requires a whole-of-government response — one led from the top, one backed by the leader and one that engages with communities right across Victoria to understand the challenges that they face and to work with them on the solutions that are needed. That is why the Leader of the Opposition has established a population task force and given a mandate to the member for Kew and others to work on that task force. I have to say they have been

putting a tremendous amount of energy, brainpower and engagement into that process.

Indeed I commend to the Minister for Planning, if he has not already read it, the discussion paper that has been issued by the Victorian opposition's population task force. I am sure it will give the Minister for Planning a bit of guidance in terms of the opportunities that will be available to him and perhaps to take it to the cabinet table and to urge the Premier to similarly recognise the importance of whole-of-government planning and to give whole-of-government planning the attention that it deserves. Because without that commitment, without that engagement, without bringing outside experts to the table in the way that the opposition has been doing, this bill is going to go nowhere near responding to the needs that our state faces with our rapidly rising level of population.

To add to those concerns and to elaborate on one of the points that I made earlier, the Victorian Planning Authority is going to be one of a plethora of bodies that are going to be operating in the planning and development space. I touched on this problem in this Parliament not long ago in relation to the Development Victoria legislation. We have got a wide range of bodies that each have different roles in this space. We have got Land Use Victoria, which is answering to the Minister for Planning. We have got the Office of Projects Victoria, which is answering to the Treasurer. We have got Development Victoria, which is answering to the Minister for Major Projects. We have got now this proposed Victorian Planning Authority answering to the Minister for Planning.

Then, as the second-reading speech refers to, we have got other bodies as well. We have got the office for suburban development, we have got Regional Development Victoria and we have got the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Then on top of that we have got Regional Partnerships and Metropolitan Partnerships, which are nominated as two other bodies that the VPA is going to work with. So we have got a lot of bodies out there, no doubt all focused on doing good work in their own particular areas, but exactly how they are going to fit together to provide a coordinated and effective government response to the needs of a rapidly rising population is very difficult to see.

I referred in the previous debate to Barry Jones and Noodle Nation, which will be familiar, I am sure, to some members opposite: the spaghetti mess of connected entities, of who reports to whom and how, and of how different bodies relate to one another.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CLARK — I see it has stirred the memory banks of some of the comrades opposite. I hoped it might resonate and help them get the point: that they need to do a lot more than is currently being proposed with this bill and with the Victorian Planning Authority that is going to be created.

Of course it will be even worse if this bureaucracy is not simply one statutory entity amongst many but is in fact not going to be working effectively with other bodies and if in fact it is potentially going to be counterproductive. If it is going to be getting in the way of local government, getting in the way of other entities that are doing their jobs and creating uncertainty, confusion and a lack of accountability, it will be the sort of morass that drives people to despair when they are actually trying to get on with doing a project but do not know which government entity they need to relate to. They deal with one and it says, 'Okay, you've now satisfied us, but you've got to go and deal with this other one and get some tick-offs over there as well'.

We do run the risk, if this is not properly thought through, that not only will it not be as effective as it ought to be but it could actually prove to be counterproductive and obstruct clear and effective planning. Of course there is also the cost if we are going to have a lot of additional people on the payroll who are in fact proving to be a handbrake on the system rather than making a valuable contribution to a planning regime and indeed better delivery of services across the whole of government.

In short, the opposition does not oppose this bill but we do have these reservations. We do very much hope that the minister and others on the government side who are taking part in this debate will respond to the concerns that we have raised and will attempt to give us and the community some explanation of how these bodies will fit together and how the Victorian Planning Authority fits into the government's overall policy in responding to population growth. We will certainly look closely at those responses and how the Victorian Planning Authority might operate in future.

I conclude by reiterating the point that it seems to us to fall a long, long way short of what is needed. We do need a whole-of-government commitment to an integrated population strategy that can deal with all the different aspects of government service delivery, land use, planning and quality of life that flow from a rising population, the sort of whole-of-government commitment that has been made by the

Liberal-Nationals coalition and which to date has not been made by the government.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — I am pleased to contribute to the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. I just want to start by outlining a bit of context around our plan for new communities and jobs across Victoria with the population of Victoria set to double by 2050. I also want to note that the inaugural chair of the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), Jude Monro, AO, who certainly has a residential history back in Ivanhoe, my electorate, is a very well-regarded administrator and policymaker. There is no better choice the government could have made than to appoint Jude Monro, AO, to that role, and her leadership will stand the government and the people of Victoria in good stead.

Can I touch also on a number of these urban renewal areas, including places such as Arden and Broadmeadows. I know the member for Broadmeadows will speak in an in-depth and articulate manner in relation to some priorities in his neck of the woods that are important to his community and how the VPA can play a role there. Also, I think this debate touches on things like the Growth Areas Authority and the Metropolitan Planning Authority, previously operating of course under legislation that allowed it to operate in growth areas only, which meant an increasingly important role in urban renewal areas in regional cities was not formalised under legislation.

I also think that in inner-city electorates, such as Ivanhoe, these infill dwelling developments need to be managed too. I did touch want to touch on some of the other organisations, such as Places Victoria. We are dealing with a Yarra Valley Water tank site in Ivanhoe and working through a lot of the challenges we have in inner-city communities where there is a demand and a desire to provide greater infill growth and development opportunities. People in communities like Ivanhoe who have lived there all their lives, very often in large homes, and who want to continue to live in that community are very limited in housing choice and opportunities because of the mix of housing types. So part of the challenge for inner-city electorates such as Ivanhoe is to make sure that we are providing a diversity of housing to provide for people who want to downsize but remain living in and connected to the communities where they have grown up and raised their own families and contributed.

Also it is important to make some mention of what the opposition are keen to do, particularly around their population policy. They are pushing this view that Melbourne is full and that somehow we should be

turning back boats on the Murray River and stopping those from interstate coming to our shores and making a contribution here in metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding suburbs. Can I say in relation to the Victorian Planning Authority that when the opposition talk about building capacity in regional cities, if we go back in our recent Victorian history, what has driven growth and opportunities for people in regional communities is, for example, under the Bracks government, investment in regional rail. That has provided opportunities for people to settle in those communities and commute to Melbourne for work opportunities. What we also saw, certainly under a previous member for Melbourne, in the Bracks government's time, was investment in regional hospitals and radiotherapy services across Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and the Latrobe Valley.

People who live in those communities have access to the same services that are available in Melbourne, and there are great opportunities for housing growth and ensuring housing affordability. Government must invest in those regional communities to ensure access to hospitals, university opportunities and growth in TAFE and education. Regional communities need to be viable so that people do not need to leave to further their work and family opportunities. We must grow and add value to those communities so that ultimately those regional hubs can sustain significant parts of the expected growth in Victoria's population, because the services are there.

That is the role for government to play and to lead in. We have not heard much at all from the opposition about how it intends to invest in regional communities to cater for the expansion and the growth of Victoria's population. Until we hear more from the opposition about that, we can only go on its previous record in regional communities. Former Premier Jeff Kennett referred to those places as the toenails of the state, so a lot of work needs to be done before those opposite can talk about government investment in health, education, transport and services. I can remember when I worked at the *Geelong Advertiser* and we would get Premier Kennett on the phone telling us that the road to Geelong was not too bad. A four-lane undivided road — can you believe it, Acting Speaker? — is what we had under that government. We now have of course the Geelong Ring Road, and that has opened up access to coastal communities and opportunities for people to commute from Melbourne to Geelong and vice versa.

Can I say also that as I listened to the lead speaker for the opposition it sounded as if somehow these processes that have been put in place were undesirable, whether that be the Growth Areas Authority in the past

or what was VicUrban, which became Places Victoria after some meddling from those opposite when they were in government. There was the absolute crookery that occurred when those opposite reformed Places Victoria. It sounded to me a lot like those opposite seemed to be critical of the processes when it came to land development and opportunities for land development in terms of the watchdog processes, the transparent processes of land management and land development that the people of Victoria should be entitled to. Rather, the thinking has been that you can deal with these processes on kitchen tables in Ventnor and you can keep secret the deals made on the steps of the Supreme Court and the use of taxpayers money for confidential deals. People on the other side seem to think that that is the way you do property development here in Victoria.

That is not what this government is about. We will be making it very clear that the crookery that went on at Places Victoria in the past will not continue. We expect those organisations to be accountable to the government, to be led appropriately. The Victorian Planning Authority under this legislation will have a greater authority to make sure there is coordination amongst those different organisations.

I have a desire to see VicTrack held to greater account by the Victorian Planning Authority for the way in which it conducts its business and the way in which it manages its public land. In particular, if you have a good look at the rail corridors around metropolitan Melbourne and you compare them to the rail corridors in metropolitan Sydney, there is a very significant difference in the quality of the rail corridors. Metropolitan Sydney spends something like \$1 billion on their rail corridors to make sure that they are at a standard that people have come to expect. In Victoria, through VicTrack, it is something of the order of \$250 million a year, with a very significant injection of billions of dollars that will be invested by this government in a long-term rail transport future that opens up communities, provides lots of jobs for people, adds value to communities not just in a property sense but in the capacity for communities to move around our city.

What I think will be interesting is when the livability of Melbourne is actually also accounted for in terms of what our rail corridor infrastructure looks like. The significant investment from this government to upgrade rail corridors by duplicating tracks — as we are doing in my electorate of Ivanhoe between Heidelberg and Rosanna with a \$140 million project — improving train stations and building new stations, and removing level crossings will provide great opportunities to improve

those rail corridors. But there will be of course quite a mix in terms of the standards that people have come to expect in level crossing removals and new stations and in other aspects of our rail corridors that frankly look pretty atrocious.

The Victorian Planning Authority also has a role in making sure that enterprises such as VicTrack and other organisations are held to account for the standards that Victorians expect of that land. If we start getting marked down on livability in relation to our rail corridors, then I am sure we will start to see that change. That is another aspect that I think the Victorian Planning Authority has the capacity to show some leadership on as well.

I note that the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has highlighted the need for the Victorian Planning Authority to work closely with councils, and that is something that we would welcome. We would also make the point that the Municipal Association of Victoria is perhaps not the force that it once was, and it has got a little bit of work to do in terms of its governance and its capacity to make sure that its management reforms reflect its membership base and the role that it can play in the community. It certainly has more work to do, but we are keen to work with it and its members to make sure that there is an integral relationship between the MAV and the Victorian Planning Authority.

The government's role and the consistency of the planning ministers, both in this government and in past Labor governments, have played an important role in making sure that it is Labor that works towards a transparent and long-term future for people in planning and land development here in Victoria. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms RYAN (Euroa) — It is a pleasure to rise today to speak on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016 and to follow the member for Ivanhoe, although I must say that I disagree with a number of the viewpoints that he put forth. It is interesting to hear the member for Ivanhoe talk at great length about the wonderful investments that his government is making in metropolitan Melbourne, but I can tell the member for Ivanhoe that that is not being reflected throughout rural and regional Victoria. On his particular point around the Liberal and Nationals parties population task force, he alleged that we say Melbourne is full. That is not the case. What we do say is that there is immense opportunity for this government to actually invest in rural and regional Victoria — invest in the infrastructure that rural and regional Victoria needs — in order to rebalance the state's population growth and

ensure that there is a more even spread across the state than what is currently occurring.

The purpose of the bill before the house is essentially to formalise a name change which occurred last year for the Metropolitan Planning Authority to the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA). The bill aims to define the objects and functions of the VPA. It sets out its powers and defines the rules and procedures within which the VPA will operate.

Whilst I certainly welcome the government's recognition — a long overdue recognition, some might say — that there is more to Victoria than just Melbourne, I think, as the coalition's lead speaker, the member for Box Hill, pointed out, bills like this actually need to be backed by some real action, and we have seen very little of that in this bill. For a bill of some 65 pages it is somewhat disappointing that it does not have more substance within it.

I also noted that in the minister's second-reading speech he made mention several times of the Victorian Planning Authority's role in regional centres like Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Wodonga and the Latrobe Valley, but rural and regional Victoria are more than just those bigger regional centres. I find it somewhat concerning that places like Seymour, Benalla, Kilmore and Shepparton did not rate a mention, although I do understand the VPA is currently undertaking a Shepparton structure plan. Each of those communities is quite different from the others, and those subtleties need to be recognised by the VPA.

To give you a bit of an example, at the southern end of my electorate — the electorate of Euroa — there is rapid change occurring as the interface areas of Melbourne start to push out. Mitchell is the fastest growing shire in regional Victoria and is expected to average a 4.3 per cent increase per year in population between now and 2031. That is an additional 46 000 residents that that shire is required to plan for, and council are struggling to keep up with that planning. Not only does it impact on the new developments that they have to undertake, but also at the northern end of Mitchell shire in places around Seymour residents can be forgiven for feeling that they get somewhat ignored and somewhat left out of the picture because of the pressure that council is under. The average wait time for a planning decision to be made in Mitchell shire is now 84 days.

I was at the train stations along the Seymour line last week. One resident in Broadford came up to me and expressed his concern that a lot of that long-term planning is not taking place and that, despite the rapid

growth that communities like Broadford are beginning to see, the long-term strategic decisions are not being made. New subdivisions are occurring without proper precinct structure planning in place, so I think it is very important that we look at that and consider in Broadford, for example, where provision for a second rail crossing might need to be. But at the moment we are finding that in rural and regional councils in particular those decisions are being held up. Precinct structure plans are being held up, and that is largely due to the lack of resources that council currently has. So while it is all very well to change the name of a statutory authority, that authority needs to be empowered to do a bit more than just say it is about all of Victoria; it needs to actually have resources behind it to make sure councils like Mitchell, at the southern end of my electorate, are adequately resourced to be able to make those decisions and eliminate those barriers that the community is currently facing.

On the flip side of the major growth that places like Mitchell are experiencing, at the northern end of my electorate, I have got, as I mentioned, communities like Seymour, whose growth has virtually stagnated in the last 10 years and who would welcome more population but are not seeing it. It has got a range of great resources, but it is held back by planning and it is held back by, again, the failure of this government to adequately financially resource councils to get those precinct structure plans done.

Even further north I have communities which are actually seeing a decline in population, and that is greatly concerning to me. It means that there are small schools that at times become destaffed which, as we know, is basically another word for 'closed'. Communities which were once vibrant, blossoming little communities are struggling in many cases to keep the doors open of their businesses and the like open because they do not have the population to support it.

To come back to the points that the member for Ivanhoe was making, we do not believe that Melbourne is necessarily full, but we certainly believe that there are communities in regional Victoria that have the capacity, and not just the capacity but the willingness and the desire, to see more people come to their communities. The Nationals and the Liberals have established a population task force, which is being very ably chaired by the member for Kew and also the member for Gippsland South, on how to tackle this challenge of population growth. Planning is a very critical part of that, but it also relies on much more than just planning. It is about how we improve transport and infrastructure links, and I have to say that this government has not invested in trying to solve those problems.

In my part of the world, along the north-east railway line, whilst the Minister for Public Transport stands up almost every week and gives us an update on level crossings in Melbourne, on my line in the north-east we have had \$15 million invested for one single carriage. That is all that entire corridor has received in the way of public transport improvements under this government. Again, it is all very well and good to change the name of an authority, but you have to do a bit more than that, and that is not currently happening.

There is one other point I would like to make, and that is around the rural planning flying squad. It was a fantastic initiative, which the coalition put in place in November 2011 that actually provided planners with a workforce to go into rural councils that were struggling to meet their statutory 60-day time frames for planning approvals and to help them iron out their problems, to help speed things up and to help them when there were major projects that they were dealing with. This government has scrapped that initiative, and I think that rural councils are now really struggling with the burden of trying to do that. I think you have to do more than just talk about something; you have got to put some real and tangible thought and action behind it.

In the consultation on this bill that I undertook with some of my local planners, not only did they make those points that I referred to earlier about the differences between regional communities and the fact that, for example, Kilmore is vastly different to Benalla and that the VPA needs to recognise those subtleties, but they also expressed a desire that the VPA actually undertakes more community education and more work around population growth.

I think that if we are going to have more growth, then the government needs to change its thinking. At the moment the constituents of country Victoria that I represent feel like they are an afterthought to this government. I am afraid whilst in this bill it is great to see a recognition that the state extends beyond Melbourne, it does not do much to change my opinion on the government's lack of investment in regional Victoria or the fact that it needs to actually back things up with more than just words.

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — I am very pleased to rise today to speak on the Victorian Planning Authority Amendment Bill 2016. This bill sets up the Victorian Planning Authority, an authority that will be really important to urban renewal and growth areas in Melbourne. But most importantly for me, the Victorian Planning Authority will be relevant to regional Victoria and most particularly to our growing regional centres — centres like Bendigo, Geelong, Wodonga,

the Latrobe Valley and of course the best regional centre of them all, Ballarat.

Ballarat has seen terrific growth, and that trend is set to continue. The Ballarat *Courier* recently printed a very positive article about projected population growth in our city. According to this article our population is expected to grow by 70 per cent over the next 23 years — that is, an additional 66 000 people by 2040 — and most of that growth will be in the west of the city. That is a huge amount of growth and is on top of the growth that we have already seen out in the west.

For example, the suburb of Lucas is a thriving suburb with a town centre that has a major supermarket and specialty shops, as well as providing services right where our city is growing. Services like the award-winning Ballarat Community Health Centre have made their new home in Lucas, which is becoming a disability and health precinct, which is great. There is a similar story in Delacombe. The Delacombe town centre is currently under construction. Once it is completed, which will be pretty soon, there will be a Woolworths, a Kmart, smaller retailers and a cinema all in an area of major growth in our city.

When you talk about a growing population, you have to consider jobs as well; you cannot talk about a growing population without talking about jobs. While some people will travel to Melbourne for work, it is important to me that Ballarat is more than a dormitory satellite of our capital city. We need, as I have said again and again, local jobs for local people, and that is exactly what the Andrews Labor government focus is. That is why I am particularly excited about the recent announcement of land purchases in the Ballarat West employment zone, or BWEZ as we call it.

BWEZ is a joint initiative between local government — the City of Ballarat — and the Victorian government. The most recent of these purchases, announced on Friday, which was great, were by two companies: Broo and Athlegen. I want to congratulate both of these businesses for their investment in our city. I am particularly excited about Broo — not because it is beer, although that is a very good reason to be excited about it — but because that brewery is going to create more than 100 ongoing jobs. That is really terrific news for our city. These jobs are on top of approximately 160 new jobs that will come from previous land purchases at the Ballarat West employment zone, so that is the first stage completely filled, and expressions of interest are now open for stage 2 of BWEZ.

There are three great examples of work by the City of Ballarat and the Victorian government to plan for future

population and jobs growth. This is the kind of coordination that is central to the creation of the Victorian Planning Authority.

The authority will, as the minister's second-reading speech outlines, have a focus on planning new housing in places that are not just affordable but accessible to local jobs, hospitals and services. It will do this by working with local councils, with government departments and authorities and with developers to make sure that services and infrastructure are planned and, most importantly, delivered. This is central to making new developments to accommodate the growth we will see across Victoria and, as I said, in Ballarat and will really affirm places like Ballarat as great places to live.

The Victorian Planning Authority will, as its primary objective, provide advice and assistance consistent with the objectives of planning in Victoria. It is also going to work with other government departments, including the office of suburban development, Regional Development Victoria, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Land Use Victoria and local councils as well. They will be working with all of those departments for a number of reasons: to support productivity, livability, housing affordability and environmental quality for Victorian communities; to facilitate the timely and coordinated delivery of infrastructure and services; to promote the alignment of decisions made by government about infrastructure with land use planning; to promote the supply of housing; and to encourage land development that is sustainable and that takes into account natural and other hazards.

But this bill is not just relevant to Melbourne and our thriving regional centres. Regional Victoria is growing, and this growth is being seen not only in large regional centres but also in some of those smaller shires as well. Just a couple of weeks ago there was another article in the *Courier* about the challenges faced by a shire in the Ballarat region in how to manage growth in one of its largest towns. There was a councillor talking about that and saying that infrastructure was lagging behind because the council did not previously have a plan to manage and accommodate growth. I was pleased to read that they are developing a plan to guide that growth and infrastructure development.

But this issue is not one for smaller shires alone. The legacy of housing construction without adequate planning and coordination can be seen in parts of our state, including in Ballarat. I have previously spoken about the Delacombe town centre that is currently under construction. As I have said, this is great news for those who will live in new developments in that suburb of Ballarat, but it is also really good news for the people

who are currently living there and have lived in Delacombe for a long time and have had to go to Redan or Sebastopol to get their groceries or for their recreation. It means that they have got access to that right at their fingertips.

Of course what that also means is that there will be jobs there. If you are building a Kmart, a whole lot of retail outlets and a cinema, that means part-time jobs for young people who will not have to travel into Ballarat for those jobs. It is also full-time jobs as well, and the Minister for Industry and Employment is nodding and affirming. The other great thing about the new Delacombe centre is that there is now a bus that goes right to the Delacombe town centre. That has not happened previously, but that has started to happen now. That will provide access to that new facility from the very first day that it is open. It is a great outcome for the people of Delacombe, and it is a great example of the benefits that come from new growth and new development in regional cities like Ballarat.

New growth and development, if properly planned, can provide tangible benefits to existing suburbs as well as to those that are being developed. The collaborative nature of the Victorian Planning Authority will be really important to maintaining and building on the livability of Victoria, and of course the livability of regional Victoria is part of that picture. Working with local councils and regional partnerships will make sure the issues that are most important to local communities — the issues that local communities experience every day that are unique to them — are considered in the strategic development of our state and our regions.

Another example of great planning in what is adjacent to my area but provides a lot of employment for people in my area is of course the racing precinct. I have to congratulate the City of Ballarat for rezoning that precinct. It is now really open to trainers, which of course again means jobs, jobs, jobs in Ballarat and in the surrounding areas. This is a really important bill. I congratulate the minister and all who worked on this bill and I commend the bill to the house.

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) — I, too, rise to speak on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. In so doing it has become obvious to me and my colleague the member for Box Hill how glaringly obvious it is that this government has no holistic or whole-of-government approach to population policy. They are intellectually bereft when it comes to the big-picture issues facing our state going forwards as we are inundated with 100 000-plus people every year and

looking at a state population of 8 million in Melbourne by 2050 — —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — The member for Essendon is trying to get himself involved. He is up the back with a bag over his head as per usual, but that is what we expect. The key point is this: unplanned growth is bad. Growth is good but unplanned growth is bad and currently we have a state government that is all at sea with itself and indeed with the big issues that are facing our state. At no point in the minister's second-reading speech — —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — I will quote from the second-reading speech, member for Essendon:

The Victorian Planning Authority will ensure that our planning is holistic and aligned, this will include working with the Office for Suburban Development, Regional Development Victoria, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Land Use Victoria, Development Victoria and importantly local government.

What about the department of transport, planning and local infrastructure? Why would you not think to combine a discussion about where people are going and where people are living through this new quango that is meant to fix all of our great ills?

This government's record when it comes to moving people around the state is a disgrace. You started off by paying \$1.2 billion not to build a road. Here is a really interesting fact. In this city there are 400 000 less people than there are in Sydney, yet 112 000 more people in this city commute to work by car than they do in Sydney. This is one of the most car-dependent cities in the world and you do not have a major new road project to change Melbourne — not one, not a jot. You have this western thing that is miles away from beginning. Not a thing! You have got no idea. You are the anti-motorist party, that is what you are. Not a single new big road project to change our city. We are growing by 100 000 people a year. Everyone has a car here. Note to self: everyone has a car. They want to drive to work, so why do you not build a road instead of spending billions not to do it? What a disgrace. What a disgrace you all are, sitting there.

'Let's get the tradies onto the train'. There is a great idea. We think public transport is a wonderful idea and adding capacity to the city loop is indeed bipartisan but you are not going to improve the livability of our state — particularly in the west, Geelong and

Ballarat — without a second Maribyrnong River crossing and you are miles away from achieving that.

The other issue that this government has failed to grasp with regards to population growth is around South Yarra, in my old stomping ground of Stonnington. How you can not attach the South Yarra station to this new Metro rail tunnel is beyond me. It is the key infill development area in our city and you are completely ignoring it. Are you people insane? Quite possibly. The number of people moving into that area of South Yarra over the next five to 10 years will be intense. The corner of Toorak Road and Chapel Street at the moment is a perfect example with the LK Group building a 50-storey building and yet you are not including South Yarra station in the Metro rail tunnel. That just beggars belief.

The other issue is in regard to the performance of V/Line. V/Line's patronage has increased by 138 per cent in the last 20 years.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — When did I last catch V/Line? I caught V/Line to Nagambie last Saturday week, member for Mordialloc, and I have to say that the service could be greatly improved. Oh, I lie, I caught V/Line to Geelong on Sunday to watch the cricket and was that not a ripper because the last train left before the cricket finished. The wonderful service that is V/Line is living in a bygone age. We cannot take the pressure off Melbourne and grow country Victoria, as is the wont of a good number of my colleagues, including my good friend the member for Gippsland South who is in the house, without improving the performance of V/Line.

Going on to police, a key state service is law enforcement. I had the pleasure last week at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee of speaking to the Chief Commissioner of Police and I asked the chief commissioner about 2015–16 and the number of new police that had come on that year. We had population growth that year of 2 per cent. That would mean about 380 new police. We did not get anything like that — not a jot. In 2015–16 police numbers did not keep up with population growth so we had a per capita cut in police numbers. The chief commissioner said it would be perfectly logical to suggest that when it came to a 13 per cent rise in crime and a reduction in police numbers per head of population there might be a correlation between those two stats.

Who would have thought? Less police, more human beings, more crime. Wow! That is rocket science. On

our side of the house we do not think there is too much rocket science in that. We think that is utter negligence by you people. That is what we think — utter negligence.

Mr Pearson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomas) — Order! The members for Essendon and Kew, through the Chair. I would suggest you have a drink of water at this point in time to save your throat.

Mr T. SMITH — Thank you, Acting Speaker. There has been complete and utter negligence. They have made our city less safe because in their first two years there were no new police — none. So the population grows, police numbers drop and crime goes up. That is what happens when you have a Socialist Left Labor government that does not care about people's safety and is more interested in victims' rights than locking up perpetrators. We are sick of the excuses. The public is sick of the excuses. You saw the Ipsos poll that recently said that 52 per cent of Victorians feel less safe now than they did two years ago. Get used it, because it is going to get worse and worse for you lot, I promise you.

V/Line is a mess. There is no east–west link. There is no South Yarra station. There is no grand vision. There is no idea how to take the pressure off Melbourne and grow country Victoria. You are constantly trying to blame the previous government for everything, yet you people have been in office for 17 years, give or take a year. It is disgraceful. You have been in government for basically most of the last 17 years.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomas) — Order! The member for Kew will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr T. SMITH — You were first elected in 1999. All of our state's systemic problems are yours. They are yours. You created them. The Labor Party is the cause of great systemic problems that our state faces, from 1999 to 2010 and now. I implore the government to do something on the big issues that are facing our state. Stop blaming us. Stop blaming the feds. Stop blaming everyone else and show some leadership on the issues that Victorians are concerned about: law and order, road congestion, the economy. But you do not care, because it is not on Mr McLindon's grid, is it? If it is not on Mr McLindon's grid, you do not talk about it. Therefore you do not care about it, and therefore you do not do anything about it.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — Where is your light blue suit, member for Essendon? The intellectual heavyweight over there, the member for Essendon.

You are not going to fix the great systemic problems in our state with a quango called the Victorian Planning Authority. To put it simply, this is just another discussion group that is going to sit around the table, have a cup of tea and talk about these big issues. It has no teeth. It has no real powers. It has no real ability to fix the problems that we all know are based around an integration of planning and transport.

My task force is doing the work on this. We are going to be preparing a significant document throughout this year, and I am very pleased with the work that we are doing. We are travelling around Victoria. We are listening to people, which is something you are not doing. We will come up with a document that provides a vision to manage our state's population growth over the years to come.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — Victoria is Australia's only jurisdiction with both above-trend growth and improving economic momentum. That is why people want to come to Victoria. Here are the critical facts that back this up. We do not need a rant and a rave about this, we just need to analyse what is happening. If you listened to the Treasurer's statement on our economic development during question time, he outlined that CommSec's *State of the States* report details and echoes this proposition on key economic indicators: the Victorian government — the Andrews government — has created more jobs in the last year than the rest of Australia combined. That is the killer statistic. That is what it is about. That is what people want.

Do you know what happened? I was watching what happened when the Treasurer actually outlined that the National Australia Bank now rates Victoria as having the highest business confidence of all the states. The Leader of the Opposition turned his back. He did not want to hear this, because we know that business confidence helps drive economic activity and attracts population growth, and we are creating the jobs to deliver on that as well.

This is the inconvenient truth that the opposition does not want to address and that it turns its back on. The Treasurer also outlined that earlier this year Standard & Poor's wrote to him saying, 'The finances of the state of Victoria are in strong shape'. These are the key settings that we look at under the Andrews Labor government. Let us take all the hyperbole out of it, analyse the facts and address the critical issues.

The manager of opposition business failed to understand a critical point here. This is not an advisory role to the Minister for Planning; this is a planning authority in its own right. He failed to understand the key proposition. The opposition can try to aggravate anxiety and fear, which is their key proposition, but the rest of the business community are realising that the Andrews Labor government is getting on with delivering, and that is the proposition.

We are now in a time when Victoria is experiencing exceptional growth, and to meet this we need to look at what is an integrated plan for our land use. Melbourne is predicted to expand from 4.6 million people today to 8 million people by 2051. The rest of Victoria's population is expected to almost double to around 2.1 million people during this time. What the Victorian Planning Authority will do is ensure that we are able to meet this challenge and preserve the inclusive and prosperous state that we value.

I have long argued, even before I had the privilege of being elected to represent the people of Broadmeadows, that we needed better coordination and collaboration in planning. I note the rewriting of history from the member for Kew about what the causes and reasons are. He is trying to say it is all Labor's issue.

Let me just go to some more inconvenient facts. Coalition governments have relegated Melbourne's north to the status of managed decline. That is what has been going on. Such a fate proved disastrous for England's north under the Thatcher government, and unemployment in Broadmeadows rose to 26.4 per cent — higher than Spain and equal to Greece, countries suffering the worst jobless rates among developed nations in 2014 — during the convergence of state and federal coalition governments. Youth unemployment was more than 40 per cent. Australia's department of employment could not tell me the rate of disengagement of 16 to 24-year-olds who were neither working nor learning. Such an unemployment rate was worse than Detroit's peak of 24.9 per cent during the decline of America's auto industry in 2009.

I have argued that the political system must change to address impending social catastrophe and make the most of opportunities. Melbourne's north is one of the areas that has great opportunities. This new Victorian Planning Authority goes to this proposition of getting the coordination and the collaboration right. Particularly I want to outline the facts here that one in 20 Australians is predicted to live in Melbourne's north within two decades, where the increase of 500 000 people means the population, already more than four times the size of Victoria's second-largest city, Geelong, will match the

current size of Adelaide. Just think of what is happening, where the population is going and how we need to get better coordination and collaboration through these areas. It is one of the key propositions of this authority to look at the growth areas.

Melbourne's north also features the highest proportion of undeveloped industrial land in Melbourne — about 60 per cent — defining it as the most sustainable and affordable region to cope with population growth. Proximity to the heart of the world's most livable city, affordable land, blue-chip infrastructure and the booming population provide the opportunity capital craves to help create a 21st-century vision, which I have been advocating for through the publication *Creating Opportunity: Postcodes of Hope*.

I welcome this as an important evolution in how we actually address these significant issues and how we make the most of our opportunities. If you look at what the planning authority will do, it will lead planning in designated areas, including the urban renewal sites, the growth areas and regional cities and towns. It will work with local government, with utility providers, with developers and across government to ensure that the infrastructure and services our communities require are planned and delivered. The planning will be based on the extensive strategic planning already done by state and local government and other stakeholders, so it will avoid repetition and duplication. It will have an important focus on planning new housing in places that are not just affordable but accessible to local jobs, hospitals and services.

This goes to another key criterion that I have been arguing for, highlighting that Broadmeadows represents the most affordable housing within 20 kilometres of the centre of the world's most livable city. It has got the infrastructure, it has got two train lines, it has got the spur into the Ford site, it has got the now widened Tullamarine Freeway — widened by the Andrews government — it has got the ring road and it has got the curfew-free international airport at its backdoor, so here is a major opportunity.

In this area we also have 2000 old housing commission homes that were built in the 1950s — they are about 13-square concrete homes on almost quarter-acre blocks. It is important for us to look at how we unlock the value of those old homes for affordable housing and how we change the mix in the community because, I think, it would really help if we had a public, private and social housing mix. It would also change the proposition because one of the issues is that poor people remain poor because they only know other poor people. If you look at the old housing commission

estates, one of the best things we could do for social development and better community cohesion would be to go around all those estates and change the mix into public, private and social housing and to do that in a way that would also mean we avoided the proposition of having enclaves of disadvantage. That is what we need to do.

This is an important authority that will address these issues, and this is an opportunity to look at the different ways we can do this. To go to the politics of this, I want to just highlight that in the past we have had the managed decline proposition, towards Melbourne's north, from the federal government. Then we had the reverse Robin Hood strategy from the one-term state coalition government. I want to remind the house that it was the now opposition leader who claimed to represent the people of Broadmeadows as a Liberal in the upper house, and yet he did the reverse Robin Hood. We talk about local representation. He duded his own constituents and it was for a lot of money — the redevelopment of the Broadmeadows railway station. That got shunted down the line to buy the vote of Geoff Shaw, the then member for Frankston. So let us not have any more hypocrisy about who actually represents communities and does things for them. This is the proposition of what you actually deliver, and we have him on the record on that.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I rise to speak on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016, and The Nationals in coalition are not opposing this bill. The purpose of the bill is to establish the function and powers of the Victorian Planning Authority and to provide for the composition and operating arrangements of the board; the appointment of the chief executive officer and the employment of staff; the managing of conflicts of interest; general transitional directions, including enabling delegation of powers; and the usual consequential amendments.

It is claimed that the Victorian Planning Authority Bill has as its primary objective for the authority to provide advice and assistance that is in accordance with the objectives of planning in Victoria, and the bill requires the Victorian Planning Authority to do so in collaboration with government and councils. These functions and powers enable the Victorian Planning Authority to work anywhere in Victoria that is designated by the Minister for Planning rather than being limited to the growth areas, and it is claimed that this will enable the creation of plans that respond to the opportunities and challenges faced by communities across Victoria and allow for economic opportunities to be shared. The authority will be governed by a board that brings a range of skills,

including areas of knowledge and expertise that were not previously provided for such as governance, management of business or commercial ventures and infrastructure planning.

Boy, do I have a job for these guys first off. What I want to talk about is Mildura and some of the planning issues around Mildura, in particular amendments C89 and C92, which are planning amendments that have recently come off the planning minister's desk. But we have got to start at the start, and this all started a very long time ago. In the history of Mildura, back in the 1880s, there were 10-acre blocks — I am using old units here. As time went on the blocks needed to be bigger to support families and with various world wars and soldier settlement those blocks have become bigger and bigger over time.

Mildura has been a growing regional city and will continue to grow in the future. Also, Mildura is surrounded by abundant prime horticultural land. You just need to add water. The new horticultural land has been developed over the years, and in my lifetime I have seen Nangiloc and Colignan, a band of very good soils just upstream of Mildura, come on board. Wemen, Boundary Bend and even Lake Cullulleraine have all helped our horticultural industry expand. That wonderful Mallee sandy soil is suited to citrus, almonds, grapes, stone fruit, vegetables, asparagus — you name it, it can grow in those soils.

During the 2000s there was a dramatic change in how farming was undertaken in the Mildura region. Some of that was due to drought, some of it was due to the Murray-Darling Basin plan, some of it was due to economics, but they all came at once and large amounts of land ceased to be farmed, and they were all those small properties particularly close to Mildura. As a regional city it was continuing to grow across these properties with high-density residential housing, but there was also a demand for rural residential land. I have one, and I enjoy the lifestyle.

A study called the *Mildura Older Irrigation Areas* was done and finally, after a lot of work, amendments C89 and C92 came along. To get to this, the Mildura Rural City Council went through extensive community consultation. One way or another this has been going for a decade. An amendment was developed. It was passed by council. It went to a planning panel, was approved by the planning panel and then this year, after months with the department, the minister rejected it. This has caused great hardship for the people of Mildura and has cost a number of individuals a great deal of money.

What the minister has done is stop the small lot developments, but I think there is a better way forward here. The minister could stop the creation of new lots within the farming zone but recognise those that already existed and allow them to be built on. I know the minister used the term proliferation of lots, but in reality if you followed my advice and what I think the intent of C89 was, it was only to look at those existing lots, not create new ones. I am informed that there are less than 200 of them. The demand is for 20 or 30 a year. In 10 years they would have all been used up and everybody would have been happy, but instead lives have been ruined. In the *Sunraysia Daily* of 4 February the Mildura Rural City Council mayor was particularly scathing of this decision, saying, and I quote:

I've spoken to a lot of people in the community and what I'm hearing is that's not really good enough.

That pretty much sums it up. A lot of people have bought these blocks of land believing and hoping they could build on them and that their value reflected that. Now they are worth just a handful of dollars as unwanted prime horticultural land. It is extremely unlikely that they will be absorbed back into our horticultural properties because it is simply too expensive to plant up 0.2 hectares, or even 2 hectares. So those lots are just going to sit there, and that is not good for Mildura and it is not good for those who own them.

There is a preference particularly in horticulture for greenfield sites. In order to be economic you have to have scale, and the old, tired land is expensive to develop. It is going to come under residential pressure in the next 10 or 20 years anyhow so it is just going to sit there. But for those people who have paid tens of thousands of dollars for something that is worth just a handful of dollars, it is not worth it.

There is a little bit of activity in this area within the table grape industry, but this is an agricultural industry that is incredibly labour intensive and which requires really high levels of management. What is required with that industry is for people to live on the properties. Much of the table grape industry in Mildura is still family farming. However, if a son wants to come and work on the property, he often cannot live on the property, or if they buy some more land, he cannot build a house. So table grapes are very high value, very high risk and very hard work. You need to have eyes on the orchard and footprints in the orchard to do the job properly.

So what do we do next? I think this is where the planning authority that we are discussing needs to be right on the ball. The Mildura council needs to prepare another amendment. They need to do this and they need

help to do it, but they also need the assurance that after all the work they do in the community, which expects to be involved, that what they produce will be considered. The prime land issue may be an issue on the coastal plains of Australia, but it is not an issue in the inland. I have said this before: you have just got to add water. So there is work to be done, the work should be done and the work needs to be considered with Mildura at the centre of it and the knowledge that it is an inland centre, not a coastal plain.

The Mildura Rural City Council and the people of Mildura need the ministers', the department's and the authorities' help to get this through. It has to be sorted and it is not going to be over until it is sorted, and that is important. There are people's lives that are in ruins. They have paid \$80 000 or \$100 000 for a block of land that is now worth \$2000. You do not recover from that sort of disaster very easily. They are not going to have 0.2 hectares absorbed into the neighbouring table grape property; they are going to go down the road or go out of town or whatever and do what they have to do. This land is not going anywhere. It needs a solution and there is a steady demand for it. The authority needs to work with Mildura and the minister's office and get this sorted. We will not be opposing the bill.

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — I am delighted to be able to speak on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. This is a very important piece of legislation that implements another election commitment. We can tick off yet another one completed by the Andrews government. The bill establishes the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), which is effectively a merger of the old Growth Areas Authority and the Metropolitan Planning Authority. This is an approach to planning that we on this side of the house are very proud of. It is a careful, strategic approach to planning Victoria's future, in contrast with those opposite, where we saw —

Mr Wynne — The wild west!

Mr BROOKS — The wild west, as the minister at the table correctly points out. It was interesting to listen to some of the contributions from members opposite. The member for Kew came in here heading up the opposition's population task force, which any reasonable observer would know is just an exercise in spin. The now Leader of the Opposition as the then Minister for Planning oversaw the debacle that was Fishermans Bend — an absolute debacle. Then straight after the election as Leader of the Opposition he set up this carnival that he is trying to pass off as a serious policy process. I think the Victorian people can see

through that. They see that actions speak much louder than words and they remember the mess that he created.

It was interesting also in relation to planning during question time today to see a number of questions put by the opposition about representation of their communities by local members of Parliament. I remember very well 600 people objecting in my electorate to a development on the edge of Bundoora Park, which is valued parkland. The now opposition leader was the Minister for Planning at the time. He was also a member for Northern Metropolitan Region, so he was these people's local member of Parliament. They could not get in contact with him. They could not get boo out of him, or have him even meet or correspond with them to say, 'I note your concerns' or 'I understand as your local member of Parliament that there is a process to go through' — zip, zero from their local member of Parliament, the now Leader of the Opposition. So I thought today in question time that it was pretty rich of him to ask those questions. The place was rank with hypocrisy. The member for Bulleen, the Leader of the Opposition, did himself no credit by going down that path today.

As I said, this bill represents a careful, strategic approach to planning. It builds upon the work this government has done in creating bodies like Infrastructure Victoria (IV) to as much as possible take the politics out of the provision of infrastructure and the planning for infrastructure in the state and, on top of that, getting on and delivering the infrastructure that Victoria needs. It is not just talking about it, like those opposite did. It is not talking about building schools while actually reducing the amount of capital in those schools. It is getting on with the job and building schools.

We are building Melbourne Metro. We are getting on with the job of building an important rail tunnel that will take two of our busiest rail lines out of the city loop and provide all the other train lines that run into the loop with much greater accessibility. There is the very popular and important level crossing removal program, which was in some cases opposed by those opposite. The fantastic upgrade to the Hurstbridge line is well underway. My colleague the member for Ivanhoe is closely involved in ensuring that the community is well briefed and consulted on the changes there.

Then, of course, there is the north-east link, a fantastic project, one that is extremely popular with my community. This is a piece of infrastructure linking up the Metropolitan Ring Road with the Eastern Freeway or EastLink. It is a vital connection that has been missing for so long. Those opposite, in the political

paradigms they operated in, pushed ahead with that dud tunnel — the east-west tunnel. That could not stand in starker contrast to the approach that this government has taken in getting Infrastructure Victoria to do the careful work by waiting for its recommendations. The government waited until IV came back with the research that said, 'The priority is the north-east link' before it started to get on with the job of doing it.

I note that the North East Link Authority has already been established. I want to congratulate Duncan Elliott, the recently announced CEO for north-east link. I am sure all members of Parliament look forward to working with him and his team to deliver that vital piece of infrastructure not just for Melbourne's north-east but for all of Victoria.

We are getting on with the job of providing more police so that we can make our community even safer and of building facilities that those opposite failed to build in their time in government. It was interesting to listen to the rant from the member for Kew today. I do not think he had had a really serious crack at doing any work before he made his contribution.

One of the important pieces of work that the VPA has been working on and will continue to work on is the La Trobe national employment cluster, which is a cluster that affects my electorate of Bundoora and also Ivanhoe and Preston. This is a cluster that includes precincts such as the Austin medical precinct, the Northland area, the Northland urban renewal precinct, the Heidelberg West industrial precinct and of course the La Trobe University precinct. This is a plan to leverage the facilities and the expertise that are already located in that jobs cluster and to build on the capabilities in those areas — the technology and the research that exists in those areas — to drive even more jobs in that local area.

It is about driving jobs in areas like medical and health technology, in high-tech manufacturing and in international education obviously with La Trobe University and its important approach to attracting international students and with the work that we have done in supporting La Trobe University through things like transport connections. The shuttle bus — an important transport link between La Trobe University and Reservoir station at regular intervals — was another election commitment this government made. That service has been not only funded but delivered by this government in partnership with La Trobe University.

The professional services in the area make an obviously nice fit with that area, as do food and fibre

technologies, which I have spoken about in this place before, in a broader sense in the northern suburbs but certainly in this La Trobe national employment cluster, with La Trobe University being seen as a leader in pre-farmgate food technology. I have mentioned here before the important role that RMIT plays further up the road in Bundoora in its post-farmgate food technology work. The VPA is doing some really important work, and this is just one small part of the state. Members opposite and on this side of the house have highlighted areas that are important to their local areas; the La Trobe employment cluster is one that is significantly important to me.

I should put on record in the house the great working relationship that I have with La Trobe University. I do wish to raise concerns, and I think I have done so in this place before, about the future of a golf course that La Trobe University owns. It is currently public open space, and I will work very hard to ensure that golf course remains public open space for use by the Strathallan Golf Club and is not disposed of by La Trobe University. But on every other measure I am keen to support La Trobe University in the work that they do, the research that they do and the jobs that they provide for my local community.

Just in conclusion I want to talk about the importance of planning in the broader sense to my local community and the work that the VPA can help do with structure plans. In my local community, like in most middle to outer suburban communities, there is a general level of concern about the impact of development on amenity but also an understanding that the community is changing and that there needs to be a more diverse range of housing options for people, particularly as our population ages. There is a level of acceptance of high-density development around transport hubs where people might not necessarily need to have a car, but some more neighbourhood areas — areas with more neighbourhood character — want to be protected from some of the harsher impacts of neighbourhood development.

I think the role that the VPA can play is to ensure that there is a more consistent approach across all of Melbourne. I know this is a Victorian body, but I am talking as a representative of a Melbourne electorate at the moment. There is a role for the VPA to play in making sure there is a more consistent approach to residential development, multi-use development and medium to high-density development across Melbourne suburbs.

I think it is important that we keep the Victorian community supportive of that change of housing mix

and increasing densities around transport hubs. My very strong view is that the way you do that is to give people a sense of surety that there is a level of protection for the things that they hold very dear in terms of the places that they live, so we protect the open spaces and we protect the character of the streets where people live, including trees. We ensure that they are protected from increasing traffic. That goes to the investments that we have made in the areas that I spoke about earlier in my contribution — around schools, around roads, around transport. I think that sets us apart from those on the other side of the house. We understand that Melbourne will keep growing and that Victoria will keep growing and that that provides prosperity for our state and jobs for our state, but we understand that we must do it in a way that is supported by the Victorian people.

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I rise this afternoon to make a contribution on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. The bill's stated purpose is to establish the Victorian Planning Authority, and it details its powers and composition, its governance structures, how the CEO and staff are employed et cetera, which is fairly basic stuff. One thing the second-reading speech does say is:

The authority will plan for regional Victoria, and particularly places such as Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Wodonga and the Latrobe Valley, to at least match Melbourne's growth and attract their fair share of population and development.

That is a quote directly from the second-reading speech. The issue that I see is that we already have a version of this in Geelong. It is called the Geelong Authority, which was established for this very purpose in Geelong — to speed up development. In fact the media release from the Premier of 12 August 2015 says:

The Andrews Labor government will break the deadlock that has delayed and hindered the major projects that Geelong needs.

Premier Daniel Andrews today announced the creation of the Geelong Authority, which will push ahead with major planning decisions, creating jobs and driving growth in Geelong.

That was a year and a half ago. I am yet to see one thing that the Geelong Authority has approved or anything that it has done in a year and a half, seeing as it was going to smash this deadlock and impasse and get things going and create jobs. To be quite honest, it has done nothing in Geelong. It is my fear that the Victorian Planning Authority will be the same story, just with a different name.

There are problems that we see in planning. Planning is a very subjective matter, but when you look at planning and the issues that are faced, which a lot of speakers

have spoken about — particularly in Melbourne's north and west — that was really due to swathes of farmland being opened up in Melbourne's west and north for development under the Bracks government, but without putting infrastructure in. Where was the job creation that should have come with that? Nothing was done. So we ended up with these unlivable suburbs that have no local infrastructure, have very poor transport connections back into the CBD and have very few job opportunities locally, apart from retail. This is exactly why the opposition — and the member for Kew certainly elucidated on it earlier — has established the Geelong population task force, which I am co-chairing with the member for Kew.

That is what we want to look at. We realise that Melbourne's population is growing at a very unsustainable rate and that we cannot just keep growing Melbourne as it is growing. We have to take the pressure off Melbourne with cities such as Geelong, which is Victoria's second city and indeed Victoria's second CBD. We can grow Geelong, we can grow Ballarat further, and Bendigo, Wodonga and Shepparton. They can all take additional growth. But that growth needs investment in infrastructure, and the relevant towns' and cities' connections to Melbourne need to be seriously looked at.

As I said, look at cities such as Sydney, which has a western CBD and a northern CBD. Well, quite frankly, Geelong can be Melbourne's second CBD. Geelong has huge opportunities for growth, and that is something that we as an opposition are certainly looking at. But you cannot just do as Labor did in the early 2000s and open up all these areas without providing the proper infrastructure. We need to look at how we can improve our connections to Melbourne, particularly with roads. Obviously the east–west link contract has now been torn up at a cost of \$1.2 billion — actually the member for Ivanhoe should stay, I am about to mention him — and also V/Line has really been quite a joke. With its connections to Geelong it has gone backwards, particularly under this government.

That was highlighted last night. The member for Kew joined me at the Australia–Sri Lanka cricket game. The member for Ivanhoe is an expert train critic, and I know that on Twitter he has certainly been very informative about the true state of the Metro train system and also probably the V/Line system. But the amazing thing was that the last train back to Melbourne from South Geelong station was scheduled to leave before the game finished. V/Line cannot even get that right. We had a game that was won on the last ball by Sri Lanka, and people who had come from Melbourne had to actually

leave the stadium where they were seeing a magnificent match because V/Line had scheduled the train to leave before the cricket finished.

This is something you would expect in the Third World, not in Australia. People in countries like Germany or somewhere like that would laugh at us. It was absolutely absurd. It just highlights the poor connections we have and the shambolic way that V/Line is running. It was quite absurd. It was actually embarrassing to watch. I was sitting there and watching these people starting to slowly leave the stadium. It was quite amazing. Anyway, that is V/Line for you.

We really do need to look at fixing these issues. Geelong's prosperity is linked to Melbourne, and we need to get those connections to Melbourne right and a decent rail service between Geelong and Melbourne that is a modern, 21st century rail service. Quite frankly, the regional rail link has not delivered. We have actually seen the times blow out, and we are starting to see congestion, particularly with Tarneit and Wyndham Vale, which is actually slowing down the train service. We do need to re-look at these things.

As I said, to grow Geelong, Ballarat and the other cities we need to not only provide those good connections to Melbourne, but local infrastructure. You cannot simply plonk people somewhere without infrastructure. We do not want to make the mistakes — certainly we do not as an opposition — that Labor made in the early 2000s, particularly in the opening up of Melbourne's western suburbs and northern suburbs. That is what we need to do: get local infrastructure right. Also, areas such as the Geelong CBD are very prime job-creating areas; I always say Heales Road, but the Geelong Ring Road employment precinct out north, and the employment precinct at Armstrong Creek too. These are very important for local job creation. We also must recognise that not everyone who wants to live in the beautiful city of Geelong will work there, and they will need the connections to Melbourne.

As I said earlier, we will have this Victorian Planning Authority, but the Geelong authority has done nothing. With all respect to the members who are on that, they can only deal with the hand they have been dealt, and they have been dealt a very poor hand by this government. They are an advisory committee, they have no power and, quite frankly, after what the authority was touted to do, they have delivered nothing, in that sense. The authority has not brought one major project or created one job so far, except perhaps for the secretarial staff who work at the authority. They are about the only jobs it has created.

Also while on planning I might touch on local planning, particularly in the Torquay area. We have had the Spring Creek structure plan panel hearing recommendations come back. There were a couple of things that I thought were really striking with that panel. Basically, the panel has recommended that in the area 1 kilometre west of Duffields Road — which in my view is now the firm boundary of Torquay — growth should be investigated all the way to Bellbrae, which is what upset the community in the first place. The panel has effectively said, ‘No, we should investigate all the way to Bellbrae’, which I completely disagree with.

Quite extraordinarily, given the mess that has occurred over the years in education in Torquay — which the Liberal Party did fix — there was a school site touted for Spring Creek. The Department of Education and Training has actually written and said they do not require a school site. Again, there is a short-sightedness about education. This is the same education department that said we would not need a secondary college in Torquay. Yet if you go and see the Surf Coast Secondary College, which was only built because of a Liberal government, and see how popular that school is in the community, it just beggars belief that the education department would, as part of the panel process, actually say it does not want land in the structure plan for a school. I just find that incredible, particularly with Bellbrae Primary School, which the minister refuses to come and visit, being at full capacity. With that, as I said, the opposition is not opposing this bill.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to make a contribution on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. I do appreciate the comments made by the member for South Barwon that the opposition will be supporting this bill. I have to admit that it was rather a curious experience to have to sit in this chamber and have the member for Kew’s speech inflicted upon me and my colleagues. It was not clear to me at the end of the member for Kew’s contribution whether the member for Kew is advocating that we close our borders — that is a possible assumption, implied in his contribution; or that we encourage people to have fewer children — that might be another implied conclusion; or that we look at trying to shift people to the regions. It is not clear how the member for Kew would do this, and it is not clear whether the member for Kew is advocating that we embark upon a major capital works program to have significant transport linkages to enable that.

Despite the 10-minute outrage and ramble and hyperbole which the member for Kew is often wont to

engage in, I am still none the wiser as to what exactly those opposite would propose to do differently to what the government is doing. It was rather a curious and strange contribution, and I think it is probably indicative of a member who rarely makes a contribution in this place on a substantive piece of legislation that we have this sort of somewhat confused contribution.

I think back to the day that Steve Bracks resigned as Premier. I remember getting a call from a former colleague — both of us had worked in the opposition rooms in the late 1990s — who said, ‘Look, have you heard the whisper? It looks like Bracksy is going to tap the mat’. I remember being quite surprised and closely watching the press conference. When Steve was asked what he thought his greatest contribution was as Premier he said regional rail — the investment of significant funds into the regional rail network in order to improve transport linkages to the regions.

I think if you look at the way in which economic growth and development has occurred across those regional centres since that investment was made, it has been a huge success. A major level of economic growth has occurred. These provincial centres had previously operated almost under the Soviet passport control system. You could live in Melbourne, but if you sold up and you went to live in Ballarat, Geelong, Bendigo or the Latrobe Valley, you could never afford to buy back into Melbourne.

Now the reality is that because of the investments made by the Bracks government at the time, all of a sudden those centres became viable economic units. People could live in those regional centres and have a safe, reliable service to come to Melbourne. If you look at inner Melbourne with each postcode being like a sovereign nation, the reality is that you have got probably half a dozen, or a dozen tops, very, very wealthy postcodes which create a lot of that economic wealth, and that wealth is then repatriated when those workers go home to their families in those regional centres. So you are transferring that level of economic growth and prosperity to those regional centres, and that happens by having those strong investments in regional rail.

Again, listening to the member for Kew’s contribution, there did not seem to be any acknowledgement of regional rail and the success of regional rail, nor was there any acknowledgement of the fact that the regional rail link has also been a very successful project. It was originally announced by the Bracks government in its dying days, went through the Brumby and Baillieu-Napthine governments and then was opened

under the Andrews Labor government. So effectively you had five governments which oversaw that project.

In relation to where I think we are going as a state, the reality is that population growth is driving so much of our economic growth and development. I would have thought given the fact that the member for Kew sits on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — I assume he would read the budget papers, as I do and the member for Mornington does — that he would understand, appreciate and acknowledge the fact that so much of the economic wealth that has been created by this state is a consequence of population growth.

So if the member for Kew is saying, ‘We want to shut the borders and we don’t want population growth’, and that we want people to stop procreating, then I suppose the question must be asked of the member for Kew: have you thought about the impact that it is going to have on the budget bottom line? Have you thought about the impact that is going to have on the state’s AAA credit rating? Have you thought about the impact that it is going to have on the state budget? Because I do not think I heard the member for Kew mention any of that. It was just this rambling diatribe against the current Labor government and past Labor governments.

Again, if you are going to make those criticisms, you need to then follow them through logically. If the member for Kew is saying, ‘Look, we don’t want population growth and we want to try and prevent population growth, and we recognise the fact that it is going to have a downward pressure on state final demand’ — and bear in mind that the most recent state final demand figures were, I think, about 4.2 per cent for Victoria, and we are leading the nation — then you need to be able to come into this place and say that you are going to offset it by, for argument’s sake, becoming more productive as a workforce. That would be a reasonable, cogent argument you could bring to this place. But the member for Kew did not do that. The member for Kew just talked about the fact that ‘Population growth is bad and we don’t really like population growth; the government has failed to deal with that, and that is all bad’.

Similarly, is the member for Kew arguing, for example, that we should re-establish the decentralisation grants which were a hallmark, I think from memory, of the Hamer government? I recall John Brumby, when he was the federal member for Bendigo, being quite scathing of decentralisation grants because one of the recipients of a decentralisation grant was the *Bendigo Advertiser*. It was running a newspaper in Bendigo, to which I think John Brumby would have said, ‘Why on earth are you paying a business to run a newspaper in a regional centre, when

of course they would be running a newspaper in any event?’. It was a waste of taxpayers funds.

It was a very confused contribution from the member for Kew. I note the member for Mornington is in the house. I think the member for Mornington might rise to the challenge and outline more coherently and succinctly perhaps than the member for Kew what the opposition’s position is. I know that at least the member for Mornington is capable of mounting an argument. He is capable of being succinct and delivering his point clearly so you absolutely understand it, which is more than can be said for the member for Kew.

Having said that, this is an important piece of legislation before the house. I note that one of the projects of the Victorian Planning Authority will be the Arden-Macaulay precinct. This is a really exciting project. Evan Walker had Southbank, but I suspect the Minister for Planning will have Arden-Macaulay. I have driven past that precinct for probably 15 years; I regularly go through that area. You are looking at land that is badly degraded. It is a public sector asset that is ripe for redevelopment, which can bring about a significant material uplift in value. It will have that effect because of the fact that we are building the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel and because of its proximity to the Parkville precinct. So it is a very, very valuable, under-utilised, under-resourced piece of land and, like Southbank, it has got enormous potential. I have no doubt that with the Victorian Planning Authority being given responsibility for this important asset that we will see a level of wealth creation occur. We will see it become quite a lucrative asset for the state because of the focus and attention the Victorian Planning Authority will have with it.

I am in favour of population growth. I recognise the contribution it makes to the state. I recognise the fact that if we want a progressive, civilised society, we must keep our borders open; we cannot hide behind a tariff wall. We have got to work together constructively and collaboratively. Yes, we need to make sure that we have got appropriate transport infrastructure in place, which is why we are taking on a moderate level of debt, and that is what will drive a civil society. That is what will create the progressive society that most of us, certainly all of us on this side of the house, want. It is about being honest and up-front with the voters. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) — Today I rise to make a contribution to the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. I have been listening to the contributions since we started debating this bill. We are throwing rocks at each other from each side. We are listening to Labor’s

way of building their utopia through the planning schemes and schedules, but what I am hearing is the noise of investors and those who create the jobs and prosperity in Victoria zipping up their pockets and whipping up the horses to get away; it is absolutely deafening. To those that understand the frustrations and complexities of the planning system in Victoria, the title of this bill says it all. Not only will we have a Planning and Environment Act 1987 but we now have a bill proposing an additional layer — a layer upon a layer, like a marble cake — of bureaucracy and red tape with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA).

In effect this bill proposes to extend the current Growth Areas Authority's responsibilities and functions from the presently designated and limited areas of Victoria to all areas of our state and add a whole lot more powers. This bill also takes up many, if not most, of the present roles, responsibilities and functions of those parts of the Minister for Planning's department involved in planning activities and effectively hands them to the new VPA. This bill provides the minister with far-reaching powers to control the Victorian Planning Authority to a considerably greater extent than exists over current council planning powers under the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

There are a significant number of unanswered questions. What I find troubling is: does this mean that the minister's department is the responsible party for planning matters, and all those public servant jobs will be made redundant? Does it mean their jobs will be rolled over into the new VPA, or does it mean it will simply add another layer of bureaucracy to the planning processes? While the proposed VPA under this bill and the Planning and Environment Act both remain in place, the only conclusion can be the latter: it will simply add another layer of bureaucracy to the planning process.

This bill establishes very wideranging powers, which are very similar to, if not identical or possibly even greater than, those of municipal councils in their planning and responsible authority roles. Why would the state of Victoria need another authority doing the same job as councils? Does the Andrews Labor government think that councils are inadequately undertaking their planning functions and roles? If this is the case, the government should come clean and just say it. Does this mean that the planning roles of municipal councils will be withdrawn as the VPA progressively takes up the planning and responsible authority roles currently held by councils? If this is the case, just come clean and say it.

I note that the bill does require the VPA to collaborate with local government. Clearly, given that the VPA has potential jurisdiction over the entire state and is charged with advising the minister, in times of difference of opinion or dispute, say between a council and the VPA, the VPA position would be expected to prevail. Where would that leave council planning roles? The writing would seem to be clearly on the wall for local government.

It is very widely recognised that the planning system in Victoria is in a horrible state of affairs. As a consequence of systemic meddling by the Andrews government, we have some very ill thought through and poorly coordinated state planning policies which skew the planning agenda, and a good number of council planning departments and decision-making processes are in a mess. There is substantial system breakdown and failure. The current planning system under the Andrews government is broken and has largely become dysfunctional. It is a deterrent to economic development, particularly in rural and regional Victoria. More red tape will only add to the malaise.

This sort of dysfunction and uncertainty within the system has enabled, and under this bill increasingly will enable, poor and corrupt decision-making. Indeed it will make it much easier for councils in the short term to consider state legislation, regulation and particularly planning scheme provisions as optional in their decision-making. Ultimately perhaps this will justify the VPA taking over all planning roles and functionality. But this is all about waiting, and in time we will see what comes from it.

It is time for a root and branch review, no doubt, and I think successive governments have recognised this. Like I say, we need a root and branch review of planning in Victoria, and perhaps clandestinely and with stealth this bill is the start. Perhaps the real agenda is to entrench statutory and strategic planning as a state function dictated by the minister and to progressively withdraw the powers and influence of local government. This would be consistent with other regionalisation and dilution of local government influences established under the Andrews government.

Mr Foley interjected.

Mr TILLEY — See, I am hitting a bit of a sore point here. Obviously you have got something else to tell us. I say this is not the way to deal with the planning malaise in Victoria. What is needed is an open and honest process that clearly sets out the real agenda and the desired end result. This bill smacks of uncoordinated, incremental, political and bureaucratic

meddling with no clearly revealed agenda or overall structural plan.

Perhaps this bill is another example of the bureaucracy tail wagging the Andrews Labor government dog. A learned person with very wide experience inside the public service once said that all one needs to remember is that the purpose and function of the bureaucracy is to enhance and expand the bureaucracy; absolutely everything else is incidental. No offence to the bureaucrats and many others — and no doubt we have a significant number of those listening in today to this debate — as they do their job exceedingly well in most cases, but the ideologically compliant Andrews government once again will have the tail wagging the dog.

Given the track record of this far-left Labor government and the proposal under this bill to hand extensive powers to the minister and to increase the layers of bureaucracy and red tape in the planning system, those people with their own hard-earned funds to invest could be forgiven for looking beyond Victoria.

Unless there is a further and subsequent agenda that has not been revealed, this bill establishes another layer in the land use and development process. Under this bill it is not only conceivable but also very likely that approvals will need to be obtained from the VPA and the local council, and although the bill requires the VPA to collaborate with council, local policies and interpretations are very likely to be divergent at times, leading to gridlock and unnecessary greater expense for all parties.

This bill is vague in respect to how the VPA will be funded. The VPA is to be a corporate entity in its own right, but there is no clear ability for it to make an income to sustain itself. The VPA is to be charged with the role of administering the growth areas infrastructure contribution fund and would seem to have powers to levy other developer contributions. It presumably has the power to charge the minister for advice provided on request or for functions undertaken at the minister's direction, as well as to charge other agencies and organisations — again presumably including councils it assists or for which it undertakes projects or roles, either as requested by councils or as directed by the minister.

Going on, this smacks of the Andrews Labor government putting its hand in private citizens' and developers' pockets again and potentially causing more cost shifting to local government ratepayers.

I certainly recognise that some councils are struggling in both their planning and responsible authority roles. Indeed I have a rather constant flow of complaints and a number of people pay visits to my office regarding council planning in my electoral district of Benambra, but this bill only serves to further complicate the system and processes, and I say fundamental change in the way planning legislative control is structured and undertaken in Victoria is overdue. However, if this bill is any indication, I would be very concerned should that change be undertaken by this inept, far-left Andrews Labor government.

Certainly there are a number of points that need clarification, including how this new beast — this new layer cake — will be funded, who is paying who, who is doing what. That is not to say that there is no place for a proper statutory authority — I agree with that — with arms-length character and purpose, because there is a role for such a body. However, this bill does not create a true statutory authority in that manner. On that note, I certainly look forward to hearing the outcomes and answers to some of the questions I have raised in the last 10 minutes, and let us see what happens in the future towards what is hopefully prosperity and the future growth of our great state of Victoria.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — It is with great delight that I stand up and join the debate on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016, which is before the house. The member for Benambra — I actually quite like him; his name is Bill and he is a good bloke — could not even manage to do a full 10 minutes on this bill, such was his outrage at the so-called great left-leaning Andrews government. If you listened to the member for Benambra, it would seem that businesses have packed up and left the state. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We have had all sorts of myths and doublespeak perpetuated in this debate, but one of the things that we have not heard one word about from the other side is housing affordability. We have had a completely confused and in no way cogent narrative from those opposite. We began with the bounding labrador for Kew bouncing around. The member for Essendon gave quite a critique of the member for Kew's contribution, which was that we should either close the borders or stop breeding, or something along those lines. We keep hearing that the bounding labrador for Kew is the heir apparent and the great white hope and that he is doing the growth task force — be afraid, be very afraid. What would the member for Kew know about growth? The Kew electorate is more like the size of a postage stamp when compared to the Yan Yean electorate. We know a lot about growth in Yan Yean, and I suggest that what

the member for Kew knows about growth could actually fit on the back of a postage stamp.

Then we learned from the member for South Barwon's contribution to the debate that he is actually the co-chair of the opposition's growth committee. They have been hiding that one, have they not?

It is not surprising that we have not had any heavy hitters in this debate. We have not heard from any of the former ministers from the previous government, those who sat around the cabinet table with the now Leader of the Opposition, then the Minister for Planning, and who had no cogent vision for planning in this state. It was chaos. It was just whoever came along with the biggest bag to the most tucked away kitchen table. He was not able to plan for the whole state. When he changed the governance around the planning authority in this state he said, 'No, we are not doing greenfields anymore; we are just going to do infill'. Then, with the stroke of a pen he introduced the fisherman's friend, Fishermans Bend, but he did not do any forward planning for schools or any of the things that that community would need, and of course it jacked up all the prices. The government then had to try to buy that land later at highly inflated prices. This was all down to the work of the previous Minister for Planning, the current Leader of the Opposition.

At the time he threatened he would sue me because I said that his action in indicating that they were all about infill would mean that they would not complete projects like Aurora in the outer suburbs. He actually threatened to sue me. I should probably go to see a lawyer, because I reckon I might get a swimming pool out of it. What happened in Aurora, in Epping North, was that the VicUrban authority was closed up and boarded over, and there were tumbleweeds rolling down the street. There were bus stops there but no buses. Those opposite have been lecturing us about not funding public transport. We are always going to need more public transport and more road funding, but what we saw under those opposite is just, 'Do as I say, not as I do'. It is not this side of the house that has closed regional rail lines. It is not this side of the house that cut 1000 bus services per week in the Yan Yean electorate just at the time when the population in Mernda and Doreen was doubling. That is not what you do when the population is doubling. They made not one election commitment to that electorate.

I refer to the wisdom of the member for South Barwon in critiquing the previous Labor government's planning approach. He said that in the Bracks era they just extended growth into the northern and western suburbs and paid no attention to jobs and public transport. I

think that is quite insulting to the people who live in the northern suburbs, because they are not empty, soulless suburbs, as he seemed to indicate. They are actually vibrant places that did plan for economic nodes and for jobs growth, which those opposite never did. It was this side of the house that invested in moving the wholesale fruit and vegetable market to Epping, and we have expanded the Epping line not once but twice. That is now the South Morang line and will become the Mernda rail line. Those opposite never did that. They only cut public transport.

On roads and infrastructure, I do not want to hear another member opposite talk about the lack of road funding and criticise our government while staying completely mute when it comes to the abandonment of Victoria by the conservative government in Canberra, which cannot even spell Victoria. Not even 10 per cent of the federal government's infrastructure funding is spent in this state. The member for Benambra seemed to think it was some socialist plot in which we were going to usurp councils, and he talked about putting in layers like those of a marble cake. I think he is in the dining room now enjoying a slice of marble cake, but I think that is about as close to the truth as his claim was.

You need an overall planning framework for councils to operate in. Councils have cried out for this. They have cried out for support to actually deal with the growth that is occurring in the regions. When the Leader of the Opposition was the planning minister it was, 'Oh no, we're not doing the outer suburbs anymore. We are doing the inner suburbs'. Then he shifted the urban growth boundary a huge amount. Although he collected the growth areas infrastructure contribution, he did not spend a cent of it in those areas where it was needed, where it was collected from.

These people are trying to say that they understand growth. Whether it is in the regions, whether it is in the outer suburbs or the inner city, they have never planned for it properly. It was just whichever mate came along. For the member for Benambra to say that is what our planning schemes and planning projects are evocative of is completely wrong. Regional areas are benefiting from the planning support for councils' initiative, which provides supports and capacity building for councils in regional Victoria.

The Victorian Planning Authority has commenced supporting 15 councils and has received applications from a further 23 councils. Seven regional councils have been funded, including Greater Bendigo and Colac Otway, and a further 18 councils have applications that are being progressed. That does not sound to me like a local government sector that is

quaking in fear about this regime. It says to me that they are embracing it and they are loving the fact that we are supporting them to develop proper plans and we are actually supporting them in growing infrastructure. We are actually looking at their sewerage and reticulated water needs. It is what we have always done. The only side of politics that has ever developed and worked on a water grid for the state is this side of politics. It is the same with the extension of natural gas into outer suburban communities and into rural communities. That would have never happened without action from our government following the way the Kennett government sold off the Gas and Fuel Corporation with absolutely no plans at all for natural gas extension.

Ms Ryan interjected.

Ms GREEN — We have looked to the future and we will look to the future. The member for Euroa will get her chance. Maybe she will not get a chance on this side, but she will get a chance to speak. We will stand up for every part of the state. We have a good planning regime proposed in this bill, we are supporting infrastructure, our economy is growing, we are going to grow jobs in every part of the state and we are going to support people wherever they live. We will not cut education, like those opposite did. We will not cut TAFE. We will invest in the services that Victorians need in a well-planned and cooperative way, unlike what those opposite did.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) — I rise to make a contribution to the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016, a bill which may seem procedural but which has important implications for the future of this state. The bill establishes the Victorian Planning Authority, which has grown out of the Growth Areas Authority, and sets out the authority's functions and powers. It does feel a little, though, like we are creating another level of bureaucracy — another body to discuss the problems, another body to create master plans — but I hope that will not be the case.

I am, however, disappointed that the bill only makes one mention of regional Victoria, and that is in the brief overview of the functions of the authority, saying board members should have an understanding of land use in metropolitan or regional areas. Ideally a requirement that at least one board member must have a regional planning background should have been included. As the minister points out in his second-reading speech, we must plan for growth across all of Victoria, not just metropolitan Melbourne. Land use in regional areas is quite different to land use in the city and it brings a set of unique challenges. Not having a requirement that a

member of the board must have relevant experience working in rural and regional planning means we run the risk of having a city-centric authority that is not equipped to deal with the challenges of regional areas.

As the minister rightly points out in his second-reading speech, Melbourne is going through an unprecedented growth phase and land use planning is needed so we can meet that challenge. This is where regional Victoria can step in, but not just Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Wodonga and the Latrobe Valley and the growth areas in between, which the minister highlights. Focusing all efforts on those areas will create commuter cities that will feed into the capital, where congestion will still be a problem, as will access to public transport, health care and education. There needs to be focus on population decentralisation, creating a state of cities rather than a city state.

My electorate of South-West Coast stands ready to play an even bigger role than it already does, but there needs to be a concentrated effort to help attract people beyond the metropolitan boundary. There are challenges that need to be addressed, but the opportunities in the south-west of the state are in abundance. There are such challenges as access to three-phase power, transport and efficient routes to market. But there are also huge opportunities in food production, manufacturing, forestry, health care and education, as well as the unquestionable lifestyle benefits. A 10-minute commute in my part of the world results in fishing, surfing and hiking just 10 minutes after work with clean air surrounding you.

Portland, for example, sits on one of the deepest seaports in the country. It is the largest exporter of woodchips in the world and is situated within easy reach of the largest plantation forestry area in Australia, where six globally significant plantation companies operate. When combined with the associated transport industry, more than 18 000 jobs are created, and the industries have a combined output exceeding \$790 million each year. The port is also the leading exporter of mineral sands and grains, industries which are expected to grow significantly over the next 10 years. Then of course there is the aluminium smelter, which employs around 600 people directly, supports 2000 jobs in the region and is the state's largest exporter.

But there are challenges, some of which we have recently seen with the smelter, but they go beyond that. Roads leading into the port of Portland are failing, putting at risk millions of dollars in economic activity. The rail line into the port also needs upgrading to ensure a seamless route from the grain-growing regions

in the north. The Murray Basin rail project will go some way to solving that, but the overarching problem remains attracting new business to the far south-west. If the smelter had closed, there would have been no way the people who work there would have been able to stay. That is why we now need to be looking at workforce diversification and trying to attract new major employers to South-West Coast.

The Glenelg shire has done an amazing amount of work in this area over the past three years. Among that work is the industrial land strategy, which worked to rectify the planning failings of years gone by. Last week the council launched its industrial land prospectus. Despite what the member for Yan Yean said in her press release when she swept into town last week, that project was funded by the previous Liberal-Nationals government, not the current government, as the member tried to fool and hoodwink the people into believing.

The Great South Coast Group has also been active in planning for the region's future. Its food and fibre plan looks at all the issues hampering economic growth and what can be done to strengthen the region's many positives. It sits waiting for government funding so this project can be sustainable. The group has also worked on fantastic programs, like Beyond the Bell, which aims to increase education attainment rates, and it has been active in lobbying for improvements to road and rail infrastructure. I sincerely hope this new authority will look at the work that has already been done and build on that, not just scrap it and start all over again.

South-West Coast and the neighbouring electorate of Polwarth form the state's largest dairy production areas, but many farmers do not have access to three-phase power, meaning they are relying on unreliable power sources, creating inefficiencies in their businesses. In my electorate there are three dairy processors. One is on the cusp of expansion but because of insufficient power, gas and wastewater infrastructure, the costs associated with these infrastructure upgrades may mean that the project will not go ahead and instead will be built in the western suburbs, meaning more trucks on the road adding to an already congested area and taking jobs away from regional Victoria and further congesting Melbourne.

It is infrastructure upgrades like this that will lower the costs of businesses looking to expand or set up in the regional areas. At the moment it is just too easy to do it in the city, which worsens the problem this authority is trying to solve. If we are to encourage population decentralisation, jobs are the centrepiece, but people need to be encouraged to genuinely look at living in regional areas. Good public transport which lowers the

travel time to Melbourne is a good starting point. Right now trains on the Warrnambool line often take well over 4 hours to get to Melbourne. It is easier to travel by car, if you can put up with the terrible state of the roads. If the city is brought closer to the regions through reduced travel times, then people do not feel isolated from everything Melbourne has to offer.

The Warrnambool Base Hospital is still waiting for its stage 2 upgrade. It needs a new emergency department and its operating theatre expanded, but there has been no commitment from the minister, who is busy announcing exactly what Warrnambool wants and needs in Ballarat.

The Warrnambool Special Development School is still waiting on money to complete its new school. Money was given to buy the land, but not enough to build on it. Meanwhile the students are left in cramped areas and in overcrowded classrooms with minimal outside space to play in. These are simple projects which increase livability in regional areas such as the South-West Coast electorate and help encourage industry expansion and create jobs while taking pressure off metropolitan Melbourne and looking beyond the commuter cities.

It is a commonsense approach and one that I doubt we need a specific authority for; we already have the planning department, regional partnerships and local government working in this field. I sincerely hope the authority takes the advice of the minister and plans for growth across all of Victoria because there is so much more to this great state than Melbourne and the metropolitan area, and the opportunities to help ease pressure on the city in the regions and rural areas are too good to let pass by.

Clearly, the role of government is to assist the regions, to put a framework around ideas that the regions have and to take those ideas and turn them into actions and outcomes. What we need is a department that looks at customer focus, outcomes and results, not just more bureaucracy.

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — I am very pleased to be able to contribute to debate on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. I listened very intently to the member for Kew's comments — the population Pythagoras over there. You can see him wandering around with his spreadsheet, his Gantt chart and an abacus, trying to calculate all these various population projections, and all they end up being are political points.

How short is his memory? The member for Kew talked about a growing population but not once did he

address a critical fact: why, with this considerable population growth and these projections that we have all heard about this afternoon, did those opposite do absolutely nothing — not a single thing — for four years? And why, at a time of this exceptional growth, did they vanish?

This government has done more in two years than those opposite did in four, and you do not have to look far to find out what went so horribly wrong. In conversations with constituents, with business, with the private sector, with the education sector and with the construction sector you hear the same thing. That is, they simply vanished: you could not meet with them, you could not see them. Two years in, this government is getting on with putting people first.

This is a very important bill and one that comes at a time of considerable population growth in the state. Victoria is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth and to meet this growth we need integrated land-use planning. Melbourne is predicted to grow from 4.6 million people today to 8 million by 2051. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows that Australia's population grew by 1.4 per cent during the year ended 30 June 2016. All states and territories recorded positive population growth until 30 June 2016 but it was Victoria that recorded the highest growth rate of all states and territories, which was 2.1 per cent. What these figures and many figures like them show is that, more than ever, people are choosing Victoria as their place to live. We must be able to meet this challenge and preserve the inclusive and prosperous way of life that we in this great state value so much.

Victoria needs a government that will invest in jobs and a government that will invest in infrastructure, and that is exactly what the Andrews Labor government is getting on with doing. It is a government that will invest in people and a government that will build projects to ensure our future population can enjoy the way of life we all value so much. These are projects like the removal of the 50 most dangerous and congested level crossings; the Tullamarine freeway widening project; the Melbourne Metro of course, the most important public transport project in the nation; the western distributor; the Monash upgrade; the Western Ring Road upgrade and so many more like these. Compare this to those four wasted long, lonely, dark years under those opposite.

This is a very important bill, as I have mentioned. The bill provides certainty in planning with the creation of the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA). The provisions within the act encompass the establishment, function and powers of the Victorian Planning

Authority; the composition and operating arrangements of the board; the appointment of a chief executive officer and employment of staff; the managing of conflicts of interest; general and transitional directions including enabling delegation powers; and the necessary consequential amendments to the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Members have mentioned and know of the Growth Areas Authority and the Metropolitan Planning Authority, which previously operated under legislation that only allowed these bodies to operate in growth areas. We certainly know that planning is a whole lot more important than that. It is important in our urban renewal areas and it is important in our regional communities and I certainly will reflect on the importance of local planning matters in my contribution.

This bill formalises the VPA's role in coordinating land use and infrastructure planning in designated areas across Victoria. The legislation will see the VPA continue to operate as an independent statutory body reporting of course to the minister.

We know that the VPA has now released its forward plan, which covers an additional 19 new suburbs to be planned by December 2018. This will deliver zoned land for another 100 000 lots and ensure that our pipeline of available land remains strong, and it is very much a supply-and-demand model. The VPA's precinct structure plan has successfully delivered a zoned land supply sufficient for over 262 000 new lots in growth areas. That equates to about 15 years supply.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at the VPA, formally the MPA, that I have worked with since coming into government. In particular I would like to thank Peter Seamer, who has been a driving force behind the Growth Areas Authority, the Metropolitan Planning Authority and now the VPA. Peter has certainly been instrumental in planning 60 new well-designed and livable suburbs and employment areas in Melbourne's growth areas. Peter recently announced he will be leaving the VPA in April and I wish him and his family all the very best.

My interactions with the VPA have predominantly surrounded growth plans for Sunbury. As a result of urban growth boundary extensions in 2009 and then in 2012 Sunbury is projected to grow considerably. It was first identified as a growth area way back in 1969 and the vision was for it to be a contained, sustainable satellite city with strong internal connections, high-level services and local employment opportunities. It is certainly true to say that through a sustainable increase in population the town centre will be able to have a

greater range of services, a greater range of jobs, a greater level of services and a greater range of access to such services.

The VPA is putting together precinct structure plans 1074 and 1075 for future growth after two very comprehensive community consultations. They were consultations I attended and they were certainly of great value both to me and to my community.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr J. BULL — I certainly know the member for Mordialloc is very keen on community consultation, which is terrific to see.

Key features of these plans are the provision of an additional 20 000 new homes over 30 years, 6000 new jobs, the completion of the Sunbury ring road — the extension of Elizabeth Drive — two new road crossings, new community shops and entertainment facilities, two new train stations with additional parking, a network of recreational trails and of course new primary schools and secondary schools to cater for the growing population. These are very important in terms of local movements and catering for those additional residents that are going to call Sunbury home.

As I have expressed to the VPA on many occasions, Sunbury is a blessed place with a unique natural landscape, great heritage and history, and certainly some striking corridors along Jacksons and Emu creeks as well as views to the Macedon Ranges in the north. It is critical at this point in time to get these plans right, and it is critical to get the infrastructure delivered to a growing community. I am extremely pleased with what the Andrews Labor government has been able to do over the past two years. I am certainly very optimistic about what is to come. In my dealings with the VPA I have certainly been thoroughly impressed by their level of knowledge, their professionalism and their work ethic, and I would certainly like *Hansard* to reflect that.

On top of future growth plans that I have already mentioned, last year I asked the minister to direct the VPA to carry out another wholly important task for the Sunbury community, and that is the master plan for the Jacksons Hill site. This is a matter of great importance to me. It is certainly one that I have spoken about at great length in the house. I am very excited that on Tuesday night at Sunbury Bowling Club I will be joining the VPA and many local residents for further community consultation at a community ideas forum for the future of the site. It is something that I think can only be delivered by an Andrews Labor government.

This site is of great importance to the community, as I have mentioned, and I am optimistic about its future.

I want to take the time that I have remaining to congratulate the minister on his vision for good planning in this state. Can I also take the opportunity to thank his hardworking staff, who have been terrific in supporting me, in particular Evan and Glen from the minister's office. They have done an outstanding job in assisting me locally.

Through a thoughtful approach to planning, and through an approach that recognises the environmental, the social and the historic elements of good, detailed, structured planning, I am certainly of the view that the VPA will have the resources, the expertise and the vision to deliver high-quality planning in this state. I am very much looking forward to working with the VPA over the next two years and hopefully beyond to ensure that our planning is good for the community, good for the environment and delivers on all those things that this government stands so proudly for. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) — I rise to make a contribution to the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. This is just another example of this government not delivering clear outcomes for the people of Victoria but really just engaging in exercises that waste time, waste resources and, most importantly, will not improve the lives of ordinary Victorians.

What we have got here today is a new authority, a new public sector agency which is going to do, in the main, many of the functions that the previous authority has done. I would love to know the level of consultants, for example, that have been hired by this government to go through the process of creating this new authority. No doubt we have got shiny new logos to come in that have been designed and paid for by the people of Victoria. We have got new offices, no doubt. We have got training and, as I said, no doubt we have had consultants.

All for what? All for the purpose of creating just another bureaucratic authority that is going to subsume many of the functions that other authorities have undertaken in the past. That has been provided as the clear vision, the call of action, by those opposite. If that is the definition of a clear vision and of action — creating another public sector authority paid for by taxpayers that does in many cases many of the same functions — then they can certainly have that definition, and they can tell the people of Victoria, who are paying record high state government taxes and

charges, what their money is worth and what their money is being used for.

It is important to look at planning and the history of planning and what the current government has delivered on planning outside of just another bureaucratic authority paid for by taxpayers. Of course nobody will forget the planning and consultation that went on with the Windsor Hotel — or the lack of it — and the fraud that was perpetrated on the people of Victoria when the then-planning minister said he was going to undertake genuine consultation then did anything but. That is the hallmark of Labor with consultation and planning.

Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth, the metropolitan planning document that was abolished by the previous Liberal-Nationals government, thankfully, was aimed to destroy suburbs. It did not take into account neighbourhood character and protection. It was just about wrecking suburbs. As I said, that is just another legacy of planning under the Victorian branch of the Labor Party.

Then more recently, both in my neighbourhood and close to my neighbourhood, you have got the Markham estate redevelopment, a gigantic, completely inappropriate development which the member for Burwood has eloquently outlined to the house and which this planning minister seems determined to put on the people of Burwood and the neighbouring Mount Waverley district.

The Waverley Park powerlines debacle is another major planning issue that this government has got wrong. Many, many residents are furious at the government and in particular the member for Mulgrave, the Premier of this state, and want him to stand up for their interests in this planning matter. This Premier, the member for Mulgrave, is on the record indicating he will not even meet with some of these residents. It is fine that they pay their taxes. It is fine that they work hard. It is fine that they give the Premier the authority and the financial resources to be able to create just another bureaucratic organisation, but for the Premier, the member for Mulgrave, to actually take the time to meet with local residents — no, he could not do that.

I quote a resident from Waverley Park:

Our local MP is Premier Daniel Andrews and he's done nothing for Waverley Park residents.

If you are a member of the Labor party, it does not seem to matter whether you live in your district or not because, on that basis, even if you are one of the few Labor Party members who does live in their district,

you still will not meet with your local residents. You still will not advocate for them. You still will treat them with utter contempt. I just cannot believe that we have a Premier, the member for Mulgrave, who refuses to meet with local residents on a local planning issue.

That is the background. That is the context of this bill, a bill that creates another bureaucratic agency that has cost tens of thousands of dollars of taxpayers money on everything, no doubt, from new logos and new names to shiny new offices, consultants and training. For what? For what action? For what tangible improvement to the lives of working Victorians? We have got the Windsor Hotel, *Melbourne 2030*, the Markham estate redevelopment and Waverley Park powerlines. That is the context in which this government comes to planning.

But one of the things that must be mentioned today, which is so interlinked with planning and a government's ability to understand planning and get it right for the people of Victoria — it not only touches on planning but also on some of the things that other members have mentioned — is housing affordability and a record level of state government taxes and charges that this government is obsessed with using to punish ordinary Victorians. It flows through to the planning system and the types of development that we get.

There are a few figures that clearly jump out. Firstly, land tax. Under this government land tax in the last budget is up 28 per cent. What that means is that, if you own property in Victoria and you are seeking to develop or use that for other purposes, the imposition of land tax is likely to increase substantially. As I said, the revenue has increased by 28 per cent in itself. Stamp duty has now increased and is over \$6 billion for the first time in our state's history.

Who pays for these state government taxes and charges — the record level of state government taxes and charges — that have been put on ordinary Victorians by the Victorian Labor Party? It is ordinary Victorians who might own some property. They might have an investment property that is related to the planning system. They are being whacked yet again. I have countless residents come and see me and say, 'What have we done to have our land tax shoot up as much as it has under this government? We haven't earned extra income. It's an unrealised gain. We've worked hard. We've saved, and yet this government just seems intent on punishing us'. I say to those residents, 'You make a perfectly valid point. This government's problem is that it's addicted to making life harder for Victorians with a higher cost of living and higher state government taxes, and you are paying for it'.

It is the same when people come to me and say they want to buy another property but are being forced out of the market because of this government's record tax take on stamp duty. You just do not have to look much further, whether it is land tax, whether it is stamp duty or whether it is their clear plan to increase and introduce yet more state government taxes on property that have a relationship to the planning scheme through their value capture. Goodness knows how many more new government taxes and charges we will see on so many projects that involve property under the guise of value capture — another tax, another charge hitting Victorians and making it harder for them with their household family budget to live the life they want to, to live the life they are working for and to meet the aspirations for them, their children and their children's children.

As I said, when you look at a bill like this that is before the house you think, 'What is that money going to be used for that is being paid for by hardworking Victorians? What is that money going to be used for when it is harder for Victorians to make ends meet?'. It is being used for shiny new logos for a bureaucratic agency. It is being used for new offices and no doubt for consultants training for yet another public sector agency that is just undertaking many of the same tasks as a previous agency.

Mr Thompson interjected.

Mr GIDLEY — That is exactly right, member for Sandringham. That is the really, really disappointing thing about this bill. Planning is always going to be a contestable concept, and I can see that there will always be some differences with people's views on planning. You accept that because that is the nature of it. What I cannot accept on behalf of my residents that I have the privilege of representing is how hard this government is making their lives with the increase in taxes and charges related to property — stamp duty, land tax, new value-capture taxes that are going to be put forward by this government. And for what? For new bureaucratic agencies, for more consultants and for new logos, coming to the table with the planning legacies that I have outlined from a Premier who will not even meet with his own constituencies. This bill certainly represents exactly what the Victorian Labor Party is about.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — I am delighted to rise to contribute to the debate on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. I sat here and listened to the member for Mount Waverley. Can I remind the member and those opposite that under this Labor government we have seen record investments in infrastructure, public transport, roads investment,

schools and education, health, ambulance services, police and community safety. It is under this government that we are seeing landmark reforms and initiatives in family violence and gender equality.

In this bill we are seeing the delivery of yet another election commitment by the Andrews Labor government. The government has already delivered on its election commitment to create the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA). Last year the Victorian Planning Authority was launched, taking over from the Growth Areas Authority. As we have heard, this was an interim measure only, and the plan has always been to abolish the Growth Areas Authority and to introduce legislation that gives a strong legislative basis for the VPA to operate for Victoria's growing needs.

As we have heard on this side of the house, it is the Andrews Labor government which recognises the pressing and important need to plan for growth for this state, and that means to properly plan for new communities not just in Melbourne but across all of Victoria. We know that, importantly, this means planning for significant infrastructure investment and of course for jobs. The bill we are debating today is the final stage in this important transition. It will be a new principal act that will give the VPA the powers it needs to manage Victoria's growth and to make sure that our wonderful communities continue to thrive with access to infrastructure, transport and employment opportunities. We know how important it is to plan for growth in this state. What that means today is that we need to take a new approach to planning and infrastructure right across Victoria.

We heard from the member for Kew earlier, who put forward his views on the problems in this state. He seemed to level those problems squarely at population growth. The problem is not population growth; the problem is a failure to plan. The problem has stemmed from four years under the coalition with no proper planning for the future, no investment infrastructure and no investment in new schools. Unfortunately that is the legacy of the former coalition government. It is wholly inappropriate and frankly unacceptable to members of the community in Victoria that members like the member for Kew would level the problems in the community on population growth. It is irresponsible and frankly unfitting to be making those kinds of comments.

In Victoria planned growth is about getting the right mix of housing and jobs in the right locations. It is about establishing and maintaining partnerships with local communities and local governments to make sure that our new suburbs reflect the values and needs of the

place, and it is about establishing and maintaining partnerships with infrastructure and other service providers so that services are planned for, rolled out and delivered where they are needed.

The Growth Areas Authority, which has been in operation, operates under legislation which allows it to operate in growth areas only. What that meant in practice is that what was clearly becoming an increasingly important role — namely, all the work done in urban renewal areas and regional cities — was not formalised under legislation. This bill is going to address that deficiency.

Under this bill the VPA will be able to coordinate and undertake integrated land use and infrastructure planning in what are known as ‘designated areas’ across Victoria. These areas will include urban renewal sites such as Arden near Melbourne’s CBD and the Monash employment cluster, growth areas such as Wyndham, Casey and Hume, and regional cities and towns such as Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Wodonga and the Latrobe Valley. It will continue to operate as a statutory body with the board of course reporting to the Minister for Planning. As we have heard, in its role the VPA will work with local councils and other state bodies and agencies to complement and support the work of those organisations in a coordinated approach to statewide planning for Victoria’s future.

This bill will establish the Victorian Planning Authority, it will amend the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to finally abolish the Growth Areas Authority and it will make a number of other consequential amendments to other acts. It will set out and define the objects and functions of the VPA, its powers and the rules and procedures within which the VPA will operate. As we have heard, the primary objective of the VPA is to provide advice and assistance in accordance with the objectives of planning in Victoria as set out in section 4(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. These objectives are actually extremely significant and important for all of us to consider. They actually go to and highlight the complexities associated with planning and the overriding and prevailing need to get planning as right as we possibly can for Victorians today and obviously for Victorians in the future.

I would like to read into my contribution today those objectives. They are significant, and I think they do underpin the vital need for a coordinated approach to planning in Victoria. The objectives are: providing for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land; providing for the protection of natural and human-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic

diversity; securing a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria; conserving and enhancing those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest or otherwise of special cultural value; protecting public utilities and other assets and enabling the orderly provision and coordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community; facilitating development in accordance with these objectives; and balancing the present and future interests of all Victorians.

As I said, these are significant objectives, and they go to show the need to introduce a complementary and supportive planning regime in Victoria. As we have heard and as comes through from these objectives, planning is core to our way of life, to our livability and to the quality of life in Victoria. It goes to the make-up of our suburbs. It goes to the access to jobs, to transport and to infrastructure and to environmental qualities and sustainability. It is hard to overstate the magnitude of planning and the way that it impacts us in our everyday lives. I am certainly always encouraging my local communities to have their say and get involved in planning matters, whether it is about bus services, infrastructure, train timetables, road improvements or open space.

Of course it is not up to governments to tell people where to live; we need to support choice for all Victorians. It is not appropriate to tell Victorians that Melbourne is full and that they must look to the regions and then to move. The coalition might want to suggest to people that Melbourne is full, but this will certainly not help solve housing affordability or infrastructure, jobs, employment, education or health issues in this state. We must obviously protect our livability through integrated land use and infrastructure planning. This work cannot be done in silos. This highlights the importance of the Victorian Planning Authority. It will complement existing and proposed reforms across many portfolios in Victoria. I would like to acknowledge the Minister for Planning for all of his work in establishing the Victorian Planning Authority. It is smart planning for the future of all Victorians, and I commend the bill.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — A decade ago Bayside City Council, in helping to develop its structure plans for areas in the municipality, engaged Dr Roz Hansen, a leading Melbourne planner, to come down and take a group of people who had responded to a newspaper advertisement through a local shopping centre. As 20 people gathered on a Saturday morning in the neighbourhood she posed a question to them. They

were just a wideranging aggregation of keen-minded local citizens who cared about the community, and she asked them what their view of low, medium and high-rise development was.

She drew out of the crowd that the collective view of low-rise was one storey, medium-rise was two storeys and high-rise was three storeys. She then put it to the group that, from her perspective as a planner, within a number of international cities low-rise was 20 storeys, medium-rise was 50 storeys and high-rise was 100 storeys. She said, 'Now that we have got that straight, let's have a look at a few examples of architecture within the Hampton shopping precinct'.

We looked at a six-storey building that was at the back of the shops, and the collective view of the group of 20 was that that fitted in quite well. We looked at another building of four or five storeys that was built to the boundary line, with little setback and little vegetation, and the collective view was that did not enhance the built form in the City of Bayside. Then we looked at another property that was set back, tiered back, with a number of architectural finishes and some vegetation at each level, and the collective view was that that was a successful outcome.

In my time as local member I have attended multiple meetings where the community have gathered together to raise their concerns as we saw the unfolding of dual occupancy development, Viccode, Viccode 2 and the *Good Design Guide*. In more recent years the former Minister for Planning, now the Leader of the Opposition, empowered councils to define their neighbourhood areas to a great degree. The City of Bayside has the highest classification applied to the greatest area, being the neighbourhood residential zone classification which is applied to over 80 per cent of the municipality, protecting the residential amenity of Bayside, limiting development to not more than two dwellings and those dwellings to be not more than two storeys.

I think it is important to appreciate that one size of planning policy does not fit all across Melbourne. There was a concern raised by a number of conservation groups in my electorate, keen-minded people like the Beaumaris Conservation Society members who were perturbed by what was described by one of their respected members as the 'Elwoodisation' of Beaumaris: the unregulated, unfettered approval being given to a range of designs and densities of development — the six-pack developments, the 12-pack unit developments — that did not really enhance the ambience of the neighbourhood.

Much of Bayside is defined by the coast. It is defined by vegetation and in applying a planning regime that may be suitable for an inner suburb area of Fitzroy, Richmond or St Kilda to a suburb that has maintained use of open space and vegetation and is close to the coast, there should be a differentiated design. The City of Bayside has worked the planning structures forward wisely, and as it has applied them the neighbourhood residential zones have been one of the great achievements that I have seen for planning within the municipal district of Bayside and certainly within the Sandringham electorate.

A public meeting was held in Hampton last week at which concern was raised in relation to the structure plan for the Hampton Street activity centre. The structure plan was developed by the Bayside council together with the council staff and under state planning policy. There was an interest in ensuring that there was a high application of mandatory height limits. The context of the meeting arose where there had been a preferred height limit of four storeys in the activity centre, and an application had been put forward for a building of eight storeys. That tests the boundaries of good planning in the minds of the planners. I do not propose to comment on individual cases, but there is major concern in relation to the grasp for height.

Good planning, I might add, however, has multiple elements, including the quality of design, the breadth of street frontage setback, and appropriate provision for on-site car parking, landscaping and site context. In relation to setback, sometimes you can achieve a better outcome by going up a little bit higher if it allows a generous setback from the road. There are great examples around the world of planned cities where there are excellent setbacks. Canberra, the national capital city, provides an example of where there are good setbacks and some limitations on the breadth of advertising that takes place; it is more subdued and has a different tone and character.

In numbers of planning debates in my area I have posed the question to gatherings about what represents the paragon or optimum of the built form and, using a Shakespearean line, 'O, call back yesterday, bid time return': would we return to the market gardens of the 19th century or the seaside cottages of the 1920s and 1930s, the quarter-acre blocks developed in the post-war period or the advent of increased density of development through unit development and, in more recent days, multi-unit development, where over an urban block in an activity centre you may get 28 units with limited car parking being applied?

In the Bayside context and the recent meeting that took place last week in Sandringham, the shadow Minister for Planning, David Davis, noted subsequently that he supported mandatory height limits for the Hampton Street activity centre and would be pleased to meet with members of the Hampton Neighbourhood Association community representatives to advocate for greater amenity protection in Hampton. I wish to place very strongly on record that it is my view that the greatest threat to orderly planning within Bayside would be if the current government deconstructs the neighbourhood residential zone which protects over 80 per cent of the residential streets of Bayside. That represents an extraordinary planning protection, and there must be differentiation between the different parts of Melbourne.

There is scope within greenfield sites or even some brownfield sites to allow a greater density of development, where people have that opportunity but where there is the capacity. On Bay Road in Sandringham there are examples of where there have been some developments — and we have debated this in the house before — and where there can be a higher density of development providing you have got appropriate access to public transport, schools, health services and drainage services.

Mr Richardson — What about Mentone?

Mr THOMPSON — Mentone is a fantastic example, where the former government imposed a height limit of four storeys on the Mentone activity centre, in consultation with the local council and in consultation with the local community, and the current Minister for Planning removed that height limit, contrary to the wishes of the local community. We have an obligation to provide for a variety of housing stock and cheaper housing, but it must be done astutely, on a differentiated approach so that we can protect the livability of Melbourne and also protect the amenity of local districts in accord with the wishes of local communities.

Planning is a complex debate, but some of the great achievements within the electorate of Sandringham over the last 20 years have been the 80 per cent neighbourhood residential protection zones and the courage of the former minister to impose a mandatory height limit in Mentone to preserve the residential amenity of that district, a position strongly supported by the Kingston City Council.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — I note the member for Sandringham's contribution. He is one of the few members on his side of the house today who have dared to speak the name of the former Minister for Planning,

now the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Bulleen. We on this side of the house will never forget his ignominious reign as the Minister for Planning. No more was this more evident than in my own electorate. I must tell you, Acting Speaker Carbines, that I can only describe what the former Minister for Planning did as lying to the people of my electorate. Going into the 2010 election the then minister made a commitment to the people of my electorate that he would protect the unique values and the environment of the Macedon Ranges. I can assure you, Acting Speaker, that he maintained throughout the period he was the minister that he was going to deliver on this commitment.

Ms Thomson — He will say anything to anybody.

Ms THOMAS — Absolutely; the member for Footscray is right. Those on the other side of this chamber have no convictions, no values, no beliefs. They will say and do whatever it takes to get elected, and once they are in power they will do whatever they like. But the good people of Victoria can see straight through this, and that is why they kicked them out after only one term in government.

The Macedon Ranges Residents Association had this to say about the period of the Leader of the Opposition's reign as the Minister for Planning in this state, and I quote:

When elected in 2010, the state government promised to protect Macedon Ranges by reconfirming the 40-year policy — *Statement of Planning Policy No 8 (Macedon Ranges and Surrounds)* — as state planning policy.

Before, and many times since that election, the Minister for Planning has repeatedly publicly stated the government would deliver its promise and protect Macedon Ranges.

Was this promise acquitted? I can assure you it was not, and indeed back on 28 October 2014, one short month out from the state election, on the Jon Faine program, the former Minister for Planning was forced to admit that the state government would not keep the promise that it had made to the people of my electorate. Shame! They had four years to deliver protection to the Macedon Ranges, and instead of that the former government messed around the people of my electorate. They promised them one thing and did the exact opposite. At the 2014 election the people of my electorate definitely showed those on the other side what they thought of them when it came to delivering on planning, and they elected me. They elected me on the back of two very significant and important election commitments, which I am delighted to say, two years in, have been delivered in full. The first was that we would build the framework necessary to provide the protection that the Macedon Ranges required — we are

very well aware of this — against the pressure on those landscapes for housing and against the pressure for development at all costs. The Macedon Ranges — and I have said it many, many times — is very significant not just to the people of my own electorate, the people that live there, but to the whole of Victoria and indeed to Australia. It is an iconic region within our nation and particularly within our state. It is a really important place to protect so that the people of Melbourne can enjoy this beautiful part of Victoria.

The now Minister for Planning — and what a fantastic job he is doing —

Mr Edbrooke — He cleaned up the mess.

Ms THOMAS — He is cleaning up the extraordinary and, might I say, corrupt mess that he was left with. It is a strong word but I am going to use it. He has had a great challenge in doing that, but he has worked assiduously to clean up the mess that he was left and to deliver to the people of my electorate the protection of the iconic Macedon Ranges.

The way the minister did this was to establish an independent panel. The panel developed a discussion paper, which went out to my community. Submissions were taken, open hearings were held and, finally, a report was delivered. It was fantastic last Tuesday, a week ago today, to be in my electorate, in Gisborne, where more than 200 people were jam-packed into the Gisborne Golf Club, to hear that the minister had accepted all 12 of the recommendations of this independent planning panel to provide the protection that the Macedon Ranges needs, including legislated protection. So look forward, members of this house, to a bill coming forward to this place to ensure that the values of my electorate are protected.

I did want to touch on those matters. This is what the Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee found in its final report:

The committee finds that the present and long-term interests of Victorians require the preservation of the following significant values of the area:

productive agricultural land which supports local economy;

historic townships which provide a vibrant lifestyle for residents and a reason for tourists to visit and stay;

significant landscapes across the region, and significant viewpoints and view sheds including those to and from Hanging Rock and the Macedon Ranges, which attract visitors from near and far;

significant water supply catchments, which provide water to both the Macedon Ranges and the broader region;

extensive native vegetation and rich biodiversity present in woodlands, such as Black Forest, Wombat State Forest, Bald and Black Hill reserves, Mount William and the Cobaw Ranges.

The committee finds —

I might say something that we in the Macedon Ranges already knew —

that these values and attributes make the shire unique, in that protection of these values and attributes is warranted.

I, along with all my constituents, am so thrilled that the minister has delivered what is a very significant piece of work, one that will shape my electorate for centuries to come. It will ensure that here in Victoria we will always have the beautiful and iconic Macedon Ranges as a place of refuge for those of you that represent inner city electorates; you will always be welcome to come and visit. We will ensure that we are keeping our significant Aboriginal heritage, which was completely ignored by the previous government, and environmental values. All of these will be protected in the future.

In conclusion, I might also say that the other significant failure by those on the other side — there were so many — in relation to planning in my electorate was that they led my community along in relation to their so-called commitment to protect Hanging Rock. What they did at the death knell, moments before the last state election, was they threw some money at the local shire to assist with the maintenance of Hanging Rock. What they did not do was the hard work that was necessary to review the governance and the management of Hanging Rock. That is what this government did.

Once again we engaged and worked with our community, developed discussion papers, received submissions, had the listening post and worked to deliver a report that recommended a way forward for Hanging Rock that would protect it and treat Hanging Rock and the East Paddock as one precinct. We will highlight its environmental and Aboriginal values, which had been trashed and ignored by those on the other side. I am a great fan of the current Minister for Planning. He has really delivered in my electorate after the lies, untruths and disappointments that my constituents had to put up with under the previous government. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms THOMSON (Footscray) — I rise to support the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016, which will see the strengthening of the work that this authority will do

in urban renewal areas, including places such as Arden in North Melbourne, Broadmeadows and the Monash employment cluster. It will also include Footscray and Sunshine, growth areas in the cities of Wyndham, Casey, Hume and Whittlesea and designated areas within regional cities such as Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong and the Latrobe Valley. I think these are good strengthening measures to put in place to make sure that we are planning the development for the future.

I have listened to some of the contributions in the house today, and I have got to say how astounding it is to hear members opposite talk about the need for planning and the need to take into account the growth of our population, which is growing rapidly; 100 000 new Victorians are coming in each year. They want to live in Victoria because it is a great place to live, a great place to work and a great place to raise a family.

But I have got to tell you, the hypocrisy is astounding. For four years they did absolutely nothing — not a thing — to make a difference. In my area we wanted protections on the Maribyrnong River and we wanted planned development which the community and the council were ready for, but what did we get from the then planning minister, now the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Edbrooke — Nothing!

Ms THOMSON — No, we got worse than nothing. We got two 32-storey towers that now shadow the Maribyrnong River. It is already hard to get in and out of the Joseph Road precinct and we are going to see apartment buildings of unprecedented height going up. The community inside that precinct will not be able to move, whether on foot or by road or bicycle. They will not be able to move because of the outrageous decisions that were made by the then planning minister. It is just atrocious. Put the trash in the western suburbs, that was his plan. Just put it there, do not worry about livability, do not worry about sustainability and do not worry about building communities. Build it as high as you like, for his development mates. That is what it was all about in the Joseph Road precinct, and that community — my community — will feel it for years to come because of those decisions that could not be undone when we won government.

I am proud that we are really genuinely committed to planning for Victoria's future. We are not just talking about it; we are actually doing it. Let us go back a little bit. Let us go back to the period of the Bracks and Brumby governments. Let us talk a little bit about what they did to make sure that we were planning for the expansion of Victoria not just in Melbourne but also in

the regions, whether it was the campaign, which some of you may remember, about living in rural communities and the benefits of living in rural communities, or it was actually putting departments out into the regional areas. We moved the Transport Accident Commission to Geelong. This was based on the notion of ensuring that there were jobs in regional Victoria for people to undertake and do and of growing sectors in those regions that were about their futures so that they could develop and they could grow.

That is what was done, and this government is taking it a step further, such as with the regional rail project, which the Liberals like to claim. I hasten to note that it was the Bracks and Brumby governments that put the regional rail into place. But it is more than that, it is building the schools that were not built for four years in our growth communities, in regional communities. Schools that were needed in my area are now being built and are being undertaken. It is also about building community capacity and how important that is, so it is not just a bricks and mortar infrastructure procedure. It is about preparing communities for growth and development, and it is making these attractive communities.

In my own area the western distributor is a chance for a second river crossing that the people opposite, when in government, talked about but never did, and they never had a real heart for it at all. They only talked about it because they thought was in their political best interest to talk about it, never intending to actually meet the needs of the people in Geelong, in Wyndham or in my own area in the inner west, where we desperately need to get the trucks out of our streets. It is this government, the Andrews Labor government, that is doing the work to ensure that that occurs.

Let us talk about the metro rail tunnel and the importance of the metro rail tunnel, because it is important to the people of my electorate. For the first time ever they will have direct access to Parkville, to the hospital precinct, to the university precinct. My constituents who need to undertake cancer treatment will be able to go to the cancer centre, which by the way was also another Labor government initiative, in one train trip — they will not have to change but will be able to get there easily — and will get access to the Royal Children's Hospital. And if you do not have a car, that is a difficult thing to do from my electorate.

These are precious and important pieces of infrastructure to develop. More importantly than just my electorate, it is going to unlock the city loop. It is going to mean that we can run more trains more often with higher capacity and make sure that we are able to

provide the transport needs of the future through bigger, faster trains which are able to get through the network more often. It also means for those country trains that are coming through that we are putting in the orders for the rolling stock to enable them to be able to take more passengers through the regional rail and actually get them into city quicker.

This government is about planning Victoria's future. We are not just talking the talk. The Minister for Planning, who I am pleased to see is sitting at the table here, has made a commitment to protect the Maribyrnong River, something that the other side talked about and did not do for four long years. The minister is ensuring that the planning processes that are put in place across the state meet the future needs of Victorians while respecting the needs of the people of Victoria now.

We want Melbourne to be the most livable city in the world for years to come. In order to do that and to ensure that Victoria is the most livable state in Australia, you do need to plan. You need to plan across the board, not just in transport, which is very important; not just in the planning areas about what kind of developments are appropriate but making sure that you have all the links — the links to schools, the links to supports the community needs, community facilities and community assets. This is what this government is all about: making sure that the community assets are where they need to be when they need to be there. That is part of the work that will be undertaken by the Victorian Planning Authority.

The other thing that we need to be doing, which is important, is making sure that we are taking jobs where they need to be. That is not just about people commuting into Melbourne to undertake jobs but that the jobs are there where communities live. That is part of the planning work that needs to occur and that the authority is looking at.

So I think this is a very important bill before the house. It is not trivial; it is important work that is being done. This government is across the board and in every department looking at how to grow Victoria and plan for that growth and ensuring that we do meet the needs of future Victorians. We are not just talking about it; we are getting on and doing the job that needs to be done. We are not pretending and saying, 'Let's have a policy about population', because we all know that the population is growing, and it is important that we actually do the detailed work and that we are actually working with communities about the plan for growth. That is the work that is being undertaken now to ensure that we are still the most livable city in the world in 10 and 15 years and,

more importantly, that we are the best state in Australia to live in. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) — I am pleased to also add my comments in regard to the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. We know why this bill is so important, and we see that the predictions for growth in this state for the next 35 to 40 years, up until 2051, mean that the population of Melbourne is likely to double, or nearly double, from the 4.6 million people that we have now to about the 8 million people predicted by 2051. Likewise for the whole state we see that the population is likely to nearly double in that time.

In the area that I represent — the electorate of Buninyong, which includes the City of Ballarat and the shires of Moorabool and Golden Plains — we would expect substantial growth, and probably more than double in our cases, ahead of the year 2051, so it is vitally important we plan to allow for that because, when we look at those centres, we see Ballarat clearly is identified as a growth centre. We have seen how it has been developing, with an over 2 per cent growth rate for a period of time now — all the more reason why it should develop. Likewise other centres within Moorabool shire like Bacchus Marsh are growing at an astounding rate. There are growth pressures also on smaller towns like Ballan, and when I look at Golden Plains and the growth they are experiencing in Bannockburn, I see it really gives them significant challenges but at the same time significant opportunities. But what is important is that we get that growth right.

The Victorian Planning Authority, now being established, can work with the councils, which for the most part are doing a good job in following through on appropriate planning guidelines and ensuring that we do have appropriate service provision where we have new housing developments. But it is important that there is coordination not just with local government but with other authorities that are responsible for providing of course water and a whole range of other services like VicRoads do — the road authorities — and of course we must link various councils with the bigger picture across the state to ensure that planning does work well.

When I look at the centres that I represent, there is all the more reason why they will grow at a substantial rate, because as Melbourne develops we know that people will continue to experience all of those challenges that a large city like Melbourne presents. Being caught in traffic in the morning and in the peak periods in Melbourne is certainly pretty horrendous from my point of view, which I see from a distance, so it is great for me

and for others to be able to live in places like Ballarat, where we know that we can easily get to work in 10 or 15 minutes, even if that means going across town. You can get across towns like Ballarat pretty quickly in that time. We know there is a good country feel to Ballarat, where you are close to country areas, and there is a good feel to the city overall.

I can think of another great development in the last year. We have established the Canadian Regional Park, which means that there is that lovely sense of parkland on the eastern side of Ballarat now to be protected under this government, again providing great access to open spaces and natural bushland close to people's homes. So places like Ballarat have great opportunities.

On top of that we have built great schools, and this government continues to provide fantastic support to our schools in Ballarat. I am pleased to see that Mount Clear College in my electorate, Ballarat Secondary College and Phoenix P-12 are all gaining good support from this government to see their next stages of development occurring. Likewise our hospitals are of a fantastic standard. I was pleased to be at Ballarat Health Services — Ballarat hospital — just yesterday when the Minister for Health was there to open the next development for Ballarat Health Services, which is the new entrance area and rooms for 32 patients. It is a fantastic new development. We continue to commit funding to our major hospitals and particularly to Ballarat hospital, with the minister making more funding announcements when she was there yesterday to see further development on both the Ballarat hospital site and the Queen Elizabeth Centre site so that we continue to develop our health facilities.

It is going to be great in a couple of weeks to have White Night happening in Ballarat — the first regional centre to hold the event. We know that there was a very successful White Night held in Melbourne this weekend, but it is great that this government is supporting the flow of great arts events like White Night to Ballarat. So there is more and more reason for people to consider living in Ballarat and to not just see it as a commute opportunity, although of course we do have a great road between Ballarat and Melbourne. It is a high-standard road, and we know that under Labor we have really upgraded the rail services fantastically.

We know how back when I was elected the standard of our rail in 1999 had really subsided under the former Kennett government, and we know how regional rail has improved so significantly that there are huge numbers of people who see great opportunities of travelling from Ballarat, Ballan and Bacchus Marsh to

Melbourne by train. Of course this government continues to invest.

I was pleased to be in Ballan again only last Friday when the start of the geotechnical works took place. This is in regard to the nearly half-a-billion-dollar funding that was announced recently by the Andrews government to further upgrade the Ballarat rail line to meet the needs of the future and to be planning ahead in recognising that when you have something great, like a rail service between Ballarat and Melbourne, people will want to use it. Therefore you need to plan and you need to order the new rail carriages of the wonderful new VLocity trains. I am pleased to see that the Andrews government has taken the step of planning for and ordering more VLocity carriages and upgrading the rail links. These are great reasons why you need to plan the services ahead, and the new Victorian Planning Authority will help to do that.

When we see new housing estates developing in Ballarat, Bacchus Marsh, Ballan and Bannockburn and other centres, we want to see that they have the right facilities with them — that they have schools, not just road connections, and a range of other services. They have bike paths in my part of the world, and it is great to see that they can connect and that people can move around in an environment of great livability. It is vitally important that we have an authority like the Victorian Planning Authority — not a gimmick, but something that is important — to see we are linking together the appropriate authorities and the councils and looking at the big picture.

The last speaker, the member for Footscray, spoke about the western distributor and the importance of the Metro Tunnel development under the Andrews government. Of course they do not just benefit the people of Melbourne; they benefit the people of my region of Ballarat and people to the west of Melbourne. It is important that we plan those projects that are not of significance just to neighbourhoods but are significant across the whole state. I am really pleased to see that this government, the Andrews government, is making sound planning decisions.

We know that under the former government some dreadful planning decisions were made. I was assisted perhaps ahead of the last election by a disastrous planning decision made by the former planning minister, the now opposition leader. Despite councils' advice about the residential zoning system — they had recommended that Buninyong be of a lower density residential standard — the minister ignored that advice so that there was a risk of all Buninyong housing lots being as small as 300 square metres. That was not

something the Buninyong people wanted, and it was something they were very concerned about. Labor said we did not support it, and there was a backflip from the then government at the last minute ahead of the election, but certainly people saw that the former government under the former Minister for Planning, now Leader of the Opposition, was not listening to local government, was not working on sound planning guidelines and was doing things that were not in the interests of people.

We know this is going to be great for the people. I commend this bill.

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — It is a real pleasure to rise to speak on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016, a bill that is desperately needed because we have the fastest growing capital city in Australia. We really cannot blame anyone for wanting to live here, because we have a fast-growing economy, we have low unemployment and we have so much opportunity because we have such a great state Labor government.

We are also the second largest city for outer suburban growth in Australia, and of course alongside that we are the most livable city in the world, and if we want to keep it that way, proper planning will be needed. That is why the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) is so important, because we have seen in recent history the consequences of bad planning. I am going to come to that in a moment. It is not just the size of Melbourne that is changing; it is also the shape and face of Melbourne. As our economy changes, Melbourne itself is changing, and I will also come to that in a moment.

But if I can give some practical application to what the VPA will actually mean for planning in Victoria, it is in my electorate. One of the roles of the VPA will be to assist local councils in structure planning and in ensuring that councils have the resources to properly plan for growth. In fact the VPA has commenced supporting 15 councils and has received applications from a further 23 councils. One of those councils is in my electorate — the City of Glen Eira.

The City of Glen Eira made contact with the VPA to work in partnership with the authority on the issue of Virginia Park. Virginia Park, which today is being referred to as East Village, is made up of the Virginia Park business park as well as the Chassis Brakes manufacturer next door. Unfortunately the manufacturer is closing its doors at the end of the year due to the downturn in auto manufacturing.

Collectively this site is 24 hectares, and the reason why council working in partnership with the VPA is so

important is that for our community we are not going to see a planning issue as big as this. There is not another 24-hectare brownfield site in the City of Glen Eira, so it is important that we have proper planning. My predecessor in the seat of Bentleigh was lobbying the then Minister for Planning, now Leader of the Opposition, to just rezone the land, but to rezone the land without proper planning. When we are looking at the future of 24 hectares of land in Bentleigh East — and 24 hectares in Bentleigh East is hard to come by — we also have to look at what the community benefit will be, look at what the contribution will be to the community and look at what health services, education services and open space will be contributed as part of any future development of the East Village site. In partnering with the VPA, I think that is what our local community will achieve.

A letter from the VPA to the local council, which I will quote from, really does go through exactly what the VPA will be doing to assist council in terms of planning for the future of this site. I am going to quote from the letter now, which is already publicly available on the council's website. It states:

The role to be taken by the VPA involves:

Convening working group meetings involving key staff from City of Glen Eira, landowners and their representatives.

Project management, including commissioning of background technical reports needed to support the planning scheme amendment (e.g. transport, community infrastructure, drainage and utilities, infrastructure costings, etc.) in close cooperation with the council and landowners.

Coordination of state agencies and utility service providers.

Preparation of structure plan (comprehensive development plan), zone provisions, development contributions plan, and planning scheme amendment documents, in close cooperation with council.

Assistance and support with community consultation, exhibition of amendment, negotiation of outcomes, support at planning panel, updating and finalisation of plans and documents.

Obviously that is very important work, and I am looking forward to seeing what council and the VPA come up with.

I should also mention that throughout this process council is maintaining decision-making authority over it. They will be getting the assistance of the VPA in making that decision, and that is very, very important.

I listened closely to some of the opposition speakers earlier, and you really just cannot go past the member for Kew, who I do not mind, but today he was behaving like yet another obnoxious young Liberal. He was going on about all sorts of things, but we remember the member for Kew. Shortly after being elected he was lamenting in the *Age* that this poor little Aussie battler could not afford his first home in Kew. I mean, talk about where these people's heads are!

Mr Burgess — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, it is very difficult to see any relationship to the bill at the moment that the speaker has, so can you bring him back to the bill?

Mr Wynne — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, it is clear that the broad remit of the VPA is of course to encourage orderly planning and to ensure that we have an adequate supply of lots of land, which absolutely goes to the question of housing affordability, so I would put to you, Acting Speaker, that my colleague is entirely in order.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! There is no point of order. The member for Bentleigh, to continue.

Mr STAIKOS — The member for Kew commenced his contribution by declaring that 'unplanned growth' is bad. Of course that is right; nobody can argue with that. But if we want to learn about what unplanned growth looks like, think back to Fishermans Bend. I have this article from the *Age* in 2015 headed 'Report slams Matthew Guy on rezoning of Fishermans Bend'. It starts:

The former Victorian coalition government's signature urban renewal project delivered windfall profits to landholders but was unmatched worldwide for its failure to plan for transport and other key services, a scathing confidential report has found.

There were Liberals on this committee who actually put this report together and they called the plan 'misguided' and said it would result in 'poor urban outcomes'. It was something that did benefit a few people with certain allegiances but certainly not the people of Victoria.

The member for Kew went on about police numbers. That is obviously a very important issue, but it is a real shame that those opposite did not fund any additional police during their time in government. In fact in their final year in government police numbers did not even meet attrition levels. This government in its first budget funded 400 police custody officers, in its second budget 400 frontline police officers, and it is now embarking on the biggest single police numbers investment that

this state has ever seen: 3135 additional police, the first of whom will actually hit the streets in March. We are all very happy about that.

Then today the opposition walked into this chamber with faux outrage about the people of Wyndham. I doubt that many of them have actually been to Wyndham, but in the City of Wyndham a primary school is born every single month. How many new schools did those opposite fund in their four years in government? Zero. By contrast, this government has 42 new schools in the pipeline. We are four years behind in planning for the increase in population here in Melbourne because there was nothing done for four years. Over the next five years this government will have to accommodate an additional 90 000 students. That is why we are seeing the biggest investment in school capital in this state's history.

In relation to public transport, the member for Box Hill started crowing about overcrowding in trains but they spent four years not building the Metro rail tunnel which is the one infrastructure investment that will address that issue: it will mean a train on the Frankston line every 4 minutes. Instead, at the last minute just before the election, they came up with this dog of a project called the Melbourne rail link that nobody had ever heard of, so I say this to those opposite: the only people who mourn for the loss of the former government are you.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — It gives me great pleasure to speak on this bill. I think it is important to set a bit of context for Melbourne's growth. Melbourne, as we have heard, is scheduled to grow from 4.6 million people today to 8 million people by 2051. Eight million people is about equivalent to New York City's population today, perhaps just under, and where Nanjing in China is. They are big cities. That is the projection of growth for Melbourne by 2051. Victoria will grow to just over 10 million in the same time frame, so we really do not have much of a choice. We are a great place to live and people come here. This is an obvious point but it is important to note that this growth is not distributed evenly across Victoria. I will talk a bit later about the opposition's approach in thinking they can tell people where to live.

Greater Melbourne attracts the bulk of Victoria's overseas migrants. Due to its large share of the state's population, 76 per cent in 2015, and its younger demographic, it also accounts for the majority of natural population increase through childbirth. These trends are likely to continue, and greater Melbourne is projected to have almost 85 per cent of the state's growth by the time I mentioned, 2051. Within greater Melbourne the areas

with the greatest capacity for dwelling growth are the outer growth areas and the inner city. This is reflected in projected population growth.

While the middle suburbs are expected to regenerate and increase steadily in population, the designated growth areas, effectively 49 per cent, and the five inner local government areas, 16 per cent, are expected to account for the majority — two-thirds — of population growth to 2031. Of course the regions play a role, and they are clustered around the three largest population centres of Greater Geelong, Greater Bendigo and Ballarat. This is not a situation where you can just put up a 'We are full' sign, nor can you really direct people to live where you want them to. You cannot do that in a civil democracy. Of course you can encourage; you can put programs and infrastructure in place.

We are growing by more than 100 000 people a year because people want to live here, and we have seen that in international rankings time and time again. The Andrews government is planning for that growth with a massive infrastructure program that we have heard a lot about in this chamber over the last two years. Just as a quick refresh, we are investing \$10.9 billion in the Melbourne Metro rail project that my good friend the member for Bentleigh just talked about in his contribution. We are spending \$5.5 billion on the western distributor project over the Yarra, providing a vital second river crossing and an alternative to the congested West Gate Bridge. We are spending \$2.4 billion to remove 20 dangerous level crossings by 2018. Four of those are in my community and nine are on the line that I call my line. This is something that the previous government did not do.

We want to distribute growth evenly and get the planning right so we can see better growth for Victoria in four main areas. That is the government's vision for the inner city and urban renewal areas, through activity centres in our suburbs and in greenfield outer suburban areas and regional Victoria. That is as much planning as is appropriate before you enter Stalinist territory by telling people where to live.

Talking specifically about this bill as others have done and why it is important in managing for growth in that context I have described, this bill will enable the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to lead planning in designated areas, moving away from the model where it began with the Growth Areas Authority and then the Melbourne Planning Authority, to have a broader sweep of authority over larger areas of Victoria or wherever the minister directs, and provide advice more generally, including urban renewal sites such as Arden near Melbourne's CBD, as others have mentioned, in

growth areas such as Wyndham and East Werribee and regional cities and towns such as Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Wodonga and the Latrobe Valley.

The Victorian Planning Authority will be empowered to work with local government, utility providers, developers and a whole range of others across government to ensure that the infrastructure and services that are required for our communities to live in those population centres actually come to fruition. This planning will be based on the extensive strategic planning already done by other levels of government, including local government. It will have an important focus on planning new housing, which is also important, but not just any type of housing: housing that actually adds to your quality of life; housing close to service centres, shops, schools, medical practitioners and a whole range of other important life services required for any community.

As others have said, the bill details the function and powers of the VPA, the composition of the board and its operating arrangements and provisions for the appointment of a chief executive officer and staff. It talks about conflicts of interest, which is obviously important within this context of public policy, other technical provisions and necessary updates related to other acts to ensure this act is appropriately constituted. This is a very important piece of legislation because it essentially fulfils a vision of the frameworks and instrumentalities that we need to manage growth in a way that is effective and contributes to our amenity rather than mitigating it in what we call our most livable city in the most livable state.

I want to pick up on some of the small mindedness of the opposition. I find this extraordinary. They say they support the bill — well, they do not oppose the bill, I suppose. It is tricky language. You have first got the member for Kew, who is all puff and no pastry. He is the Dickie Knee of Victorian politics who just gets up and makes a little contribution. What has the member for Kew achieved since he was announced by the Leader of the Opposition as having some role regarding population policy? What he has achieved — I have read some of the documents — is that he has talked about regionalising our growth. He said, 'Let's get the population growth into the regions'. It is a good sentiment, but it does not constitute anything new. Gough Whitlam provided grants to attract people to regional Australia 43 years ago. This is what the great member for Kew has to offer in the population debate: 'Don't come to Melbourne. We don't want you in Melbourne'.

Then you have got the member for Benambra. There is a milk bar politician, if you have ever seen one. I ask the Minister for Planning, who is in the chamber: do you remember the milk bar where you used to go when you were a kid and you would ask for 20 cents worth of lollies in a bag? That is the level of politics —

Ms Kealy — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, perhaps rather than giving his critique of the members of the opposition and their contributions, the member would like to go back to debating the bill at hand.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! It has been a wideranging debate covering a number of issues, and I note the member does not have long to conclude his contribution. I would encourage the member to continue.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — To explain for the record, the reference to the milk bar was that the focus of the milk bar owner is on the little things, like a bag of lollies, rather than the big, strategic things. The member for Benambra said, ‘You’re introducing the VPA bill because you do not trust local government to deal with population planning and decisions’. That is not it at all. How on earth could you replace a strategic approach, like the VPA and everything else we have debated in this chamber — relying on 79 councils to make individual decisions, albeit with an oversight planning role through the state government, and catering for Melbourne’s New York City approaching day — with a VPA authoritative organisation and some strategic planning?

Then you have got the member for Mount Waverley, who drew some ridiculous longbow between Waverley Park — something that his leader, the then minister for planning, monumentally stuffed up, not this side of politics — and this bill. I still do not understand that context.

This is a very important bill. I commend the Minister for Planning. I commend the existing staff of the organisation and the outgoing CEO. This is the kind of stuff that people will look back on in 20 years and say, ‘That was foresight. That was architectonic stuff that actually led to a better quality of life and better and more sustainable population growth for Victoria and Melbourne’. I support the bill.

Mr WATT (Burwood) — I rise to speak on the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. I note that the overview talks about how the primary objective of the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) will be to provide assistance and advice that is in accordance with the objectives of planning in Victoria, as set out in

section 4(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 — namely, providing for the fair use and development of land. I will come back to what is fair, but what I will say is ‘fair suck of the sauce bottle’.

It also says that the VPA’s objectives will include collaborating with government agencies, such as departments and statutory authorities, and with councils. That is the bit I want to get on to: ‘and with councils’. I was at an urban planning special committee meeting last night for the City of Boroondara. It was quite interesting. I know that this particular proposal I am about to talk about has already been discussed in previous contributions, and I am pleased that the joke of a planning minister is actually here to listen to this contribution. It is a disgrace what this government is doing to my community. It is an absolute disgrace. The fact that the planning minister —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! I advise the member for Burwood that members have to use parliamentary language at all times. You cannot refer to the Minister for Planning as a joke.

Mr WATT — If the minister wants to say something —

Mr Wynne — Withdraw!

Mr WATT — I withdraw. Let me just get to the point. The particular development that I am talking about is 2–18 Markham Avenue, Ashburton. I refer to the council agenda of yesterday where the council makes it very clear that the government is taking over a development site for no good reason other than the fact that it could not possibly get approval for it through the council because the council would never allow such a poor development as that which the government is trying to ram through. The government is trying to ram through 250 units. They have actually changed the proposal; it is not as dense. There were 252, but now there are only 250 units.

The minister is about to approve 250 units in Ashburton when 85 per cent of them do not actually meet the government’s high-density residential development guidelines. The council says:

- viii The development fails to comply with the requirements and objectives of clause 15 and the guidelines for higher density residential development with regard to the following matters:

The extent and duration of shadows cast over Markham Reserve, the Ashburton Community Garden and Gardiners Creek Reserve;

- ix The development fails to comply with the standards and objectives of Rescode with regard to the following matters:
 - standard B1 — neighbourhood character;
 - standard B2 — residential policy;
 - standard B6 — front setback;
 - standard B7 — building height;
 - standard B8 — site coverage;
 - standard B9 — permeability;
 - standard B21 — overshadowing; and
 - standard B22 — overlooking;
- x The development fails to comply with the better apartments design standards with regard to the following matters:
 - functional layout;
 - energy efficiency;
 - solar access to communal open space;
 - private open space;
 - landscaping;
 - accessibility; and
 - integrated water and stormwater management.

significant trees and space for replacement tree planting and the scale of buildings around the perimeter of the site.

...

The development is inconsistent with the objectives of the general residential zone, because it seeks to achieve an outcome that delivers dwellings at a density that exceeds what could reasonably be considered ‘moderate growth’ having regard to the specific context of the land and the adopted preferred character for the precinct.

...

The inclusion of the market value of the land in the cost of the development is fundamentally flawed and results in an overdevelopment of the site.

...

The objective of achieving a ‘cost neutral’ delivery of public housing is not necessary, and the consequential provision of 190 private dwellings in the form proposed will cause an unreasonable detrimental impact on the site, the local area and nearby residents.

...

The development would cause unreasonable detrimental social effects, as it would entrench the isolation, stigma and disadvantage attached to public housing, through the failure to propose a genuine ‘tenure blind’ proposal.

...

The failure to carry out formal public notice to abutting and nearby property owners and occupiers and the removal of third-party appeal rights is unwarranted and is a denial of natural justice.

...

Council is qualified, capable and experienced in assessing and determining planning applications of equal or greater complexity than is currently proposed, within the time frames allowed for by the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and should be maintained as the responsible authority for the site and the planning authority for the development application ...

And as I said, 85 per cent of the units do not comply. This is a government development with government design standards. What a joke! The report says:

The development fails to provide sufficient on-site car parking or bicycle facilities for residents and visitors.

...

The development fails to incorporate sufficient traffic management strategies to mitigate the amenity impacts that would be caused by post-development increases in traffic volumes.

...

The development would have an unreasonable impact on the amenity and function of Markham Reserve and the Ashburton community garden due to visual bulk and overshadowing.

...

The development fails to achieve a net increase in public housing within the City of Boroondara, having regard to the net loss of public housing at this site and within Bills Street, Hawthorn, in recent years.

...

The development fails to comply with council’s adopted neighbourhood character policy with regard to the retention of

It is an absolute disgrace. The report says:

The design concerns raised by the Office of the Victorian Government Architect and the Victorian Design Review Panel have not been adequately addressed with regard to the following matters:

Achieving a landscape-led design;

Retention of established on-site trees;

Impact of the development on the sensitive public realm interfaces to the east and south with regard to the extent and duration of shadows and visual bulk ...

Here is a good one. The council is supposed to make comment, but:

Council has not been provided with a complete copy of the planning scheme amendment application, as the proposed

incorporated document, revised ordinances and draft conditions have not been supplied.

How is the council supposed to make a comment on this, Minister for Planning, when you will not give them all the information?

Another thing that I found interesting that was discussed at this particular meeting was the fallacy that the development is going to be of lesser height. The report says:

In the absence of architectural plans for the public to view or a detailed explanation of all changes that have actually been made to the plans, the summary by Places Victoria of the amendments made is considered to be superficial and in many instances, officers disagree with how the amendments have been described. For example:

It is stated that the sixth storey has been removed from building F, which implies a significant decrease in the height of that building. In fact, the central part of the building that faces towards Markham Reserve (the east elevation) has been increased in height by 900 mm (from RL 47.8m to RL 48.7m).

It is stated that the levels of the basement have been lowered to follow the natural fall of the land. According to the basement level 2 floor plan, the finished floor levels of the basement have not been altered from (north to south) RL 32.5m, RL 32.2m, RL 31.5m, RL 29.5m and RL 29.0m. The lowest floor of apartments within building F (located on basement level 1) have a finished floor level of RL 32.8m, as they did in the plans considered by council in December.

This whole process has been an absolute sham. Somebody made a comment at the council meeting last night that the only thing this government understands about consultation is the first three letters: con. This is an absolute con. It is disgraceful that this government tries to ram this sort of crap through in my area. It is a disgrace. Hang your head in shame. You have not seen the last of it yet.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — Following that performance, it is a pleasure to rise and speak sensibly about the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. It is also a pleasure to have the Minister for Planning with us in the house. I do commend him on providing us with this bill and delivering again on another Andrews Labor government election commitment. In this case it is a commitment to create the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), a body that has the role of planning for new communities and jobs across Victoria.

We really do need this bill, because there was quite a bit of confusion and, shall I say, tardiness and slowness out there in the planning area under the previous government. It is very encouraging for those on our

side of the chamber, for those people in the development industry, for those people who work in councils and for those people who are trying to buy a new home that this government is providing some clarity and direction around planning for Melbourne and indeed Victoria. We all know that if you plan well, if you do the best planning — and indeed that is essential — then it will allow for the best possible livability to be provided for all Victorians, but it will also allow us to best accommodate the growth that Victoria is currently experiencing.

I was listening to the member for Kew before, who I think led off on this bill. In fact I heard him on the radio on Friday as well. I think Jon Faine was quoting from an article in the paper about him being an energetic labrador who needed a bigger playground or something. I think he was referring to him leaping down from the back bench maybe to a frontbench position. I thought that was an interesting way of looking at the member for Kew, and I thought: what do labradors look like? So I went to the *Bondi Vet* site and had a bit of a look. It says:

Labradors are thick set, large dogs with a strong body and big head.

I wondered, ‘How do labradors behave?’. The website says:

Labradors are loyal, loving and affectionate dogs that thrive in close family life.

I thought, ‘You know what? The member for Kew got up and spoke a little bit about growth’. He actually said he did not oppose growth — I am glad to hear that, because growth means jobs for everyone — but he did nevertheless tell another tale about how, you know, we do not want too many people coming here to Melbourne. I was trying to work it out, because I have always thought him to be somewhat of an advocate for freedom of movement, the free market and all that sort of stuff we hear from those advocates from the Institute of Public Affairs.

Mr Wynne interjected.

Ms GRALEY — Let a thousand flowers bloom and all that sort of stuff, as the Minister for Planning says. But you know what? You know what the member for Kew was actually on about with all of this sort of stuff?

Mr Edbrooke — Himself!

Ms GRALEY — Well, ‘big head’ — maybe. But I reckon the energetic labrador is actually dog whistling here. I am going to call it out for what it is. He is actually dog whistling. He is actually saying, ‘We will

choose who will come into this state and where they are going to live'. You must be very careful, I say to those opposite, just to make sure that this inclusive state, this welcoming state, this prosperous state, is a place for everyone and that those values are shared by everyone. I will move on to discuss the bill in fuller detail on the basis of that gentle warning.

It is very important that we get planning right. I have witnessed, as I said, good planning and poor planning. I have seen it in my own electorate in the City of Casey and I have seen it elsewhere. I am very impressed by the fact that this new authority will in fact have a forward plan. It will have direction. It will provide strategy. We will not have incidents like — what was it? Guygrad, I remember calling it — Fishermans Bend, a development developed in the image of the former Minister for Planning, now Leader of the Opposition, and his friends.

In fact what the VPA will be doing is releasing a forward plan which will cover an additional 17 new suburbs to be planned by December 2018. It will deliver zoned land for another 100 000 lots and ensure our pipeline of available land remains strong.

Mr Wynne — Which goes to the question of affordability.

Ms GRALEY — And, as the Minister for Planning has quite correctly pointed out, the provision of land is intrinsically linked to the affordability of housing for everyone.

The VPA is planning for jobs and business growth in Melbourne's six national employment and innovation clusters. One of the big issues that faces people moving to the outer suburbs is that councils — for example, Casey — have not provided for any job provision, any business hubs or any manufacturing possibilities in the local area. People spend most of their day on roads going out of the area and then coming back to their homes. Frankly, a lot of them are looking for local employment just for this very reason, but the council has failed to provide sufficiently well zoned or appropriately zoned land such that those businesses and companies can locate in the City of Casey.

I am glad to see that there is a bit of retrofitting going on on behalf of the City of Casey, but I have got to say that there are a lot of residents a bit concerned about that too. If you do not get your planning right in the first place, you get people who buy into boutique housing in residential areas, and they feel pretty peeved when you decide to put something at the back of them that is not another house that looks like theirs. The VPA will

provide guidance on development and forward planning such that councils can get these things right.

The fact of the matter is, as we know, that while there have been precinct structure plans recently approved in Rockbank, Craigieburn North and in my own area of Casey Central, these have taken far too long. I am very pleased to see that as part of this bill there is new funding accompanying it. It is not talk, it is about action as well, because as well as introducing the bill the government recently announced that the VPA will receive \$16.4 million over four years for its Streamlining for Growth program. This is both for regional and for metropolitan communities, and as my parliamentary colleagues from regional areas have pointed out, for the first time they are getting some really strong input into planning in their regional areas.

We would like to see people go to live in regional areas; it is a great lifestyle. My husband and I started our married life living in Bendigo, and it was a great place to live, work and raise a family. I would commend that country lifestyle to many people who are thinking about living in a country area but also for the affordability of the housing in those regional areas. What is important about this funding — it is a criticism I have heard in the past, and I have heard it from all sorts of stakeholders in the planning industry — is that there have been delays in the strategic planning system, and this funding and this bill will allow for the delivery of projects that provide employment growth and increased housing choice, diversity and affordability. I am very pleased to say that in most cases the planning authorities work really well with councils, and I hope that this funding and this bill will further facilitate that.

I would like to finish by saying that this bill is very, very important. We want to make sure that Melbourne does retain its reputation as a very, very livable city. We also want to make sure that Victoria continues to be an inclusive, welcoming community. Getting planning right means that when people come to live in Melbourne and Victoria they can afford a house — they can live in a nice suburb or they can go and live in the regions if they choose to and contribute to the growth of those regional areas — but it really is a very important step in making sure that Victoria continues to be a great place to live, work and raise a family. I commend the minister for bringing this bill to the house and I commend this bill to the Parliament.

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I am pleased to sum up on what I think has been a very good debate on what is a very important bill. The Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016 fulfils another election commitment by the Andrews government. It is

important that we consider this bill in the context of what our state is experiencing in terms of record growth and indeed prosperity right across Victoria.

By 2051 our population is projected to be in the order of 8 million people. Growth of this magnitude does present significant challenges, but it also requires, I would argue, a new approach to planning and infrastructure delivery right across the state. It clearly calls for planned growth, the right housing and jobs in the right locations, partnerships with local communities so that new suburbs reflect the special values of a place and partnerships with infrastructure providers so services are rolled out where and when they are needed. That is why it is so important that the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) will continue to play this incredibly important strategic role on behalf of government — informed of course by the important forward work that Infrastructure Victoria is undertaking in looking to the next 10, 20, 30 years in terms of the big infrastructure that is going to be required to sustain our position in Victoria and indeed Melbourne, the world's most livable city.

The VPA was officially launched in August of 2016, growing out of the existing Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) and its predecessor, the Growth Areas Authority. In December last year, I am delighted to say, we were able to secure a new chair for the VPA, one of I think Victoria's, if not Australia's, most distinguished public servants in Jude Munro, who would be known to many people in the house here. She is a person with extensive experience in local government but was also of course the CEO of the biggest municipality in Australia, the City of Brisbane. She brings to this role very, very extensive experience, and we were delighted that she accepted our invitation to take up the chairmanship of this new body.

I should also pause at this point to also indicate that, as has now been made public, the CEO of the VPA, Peter Seamer — who would be known to both sides of the house and is a person with extraordinary respect and a person with long local government experience but also a person who has really steered the direction of the Growth Areas Authority to become the MPA and now the VPA; Peter has been talking to me since late last year — has indicated that now he has contributed 10 years to the functioning of the organisation he feels it is time for him to move on to other opportunities. I am pleased to advise the house that we will shortly be announcing a further strategic role for Peter within government. I want to acknowledge the extraordinary work that he has undertaken over those 10 years to really shape the way that the Growth Areas Authority and indeed the MPA have functioned. He has been very

much a part of the architecture of the further development of the MPA to become the VPA. We very much look forward to Peter's continuing involvement with government activity. We see a very broad and expanded role for the VPA going forward.

I was interested particularly in the initial contribution by the member for Box Hill, who opened the debate on behalf of the opposition. He framed his contribution essentially around the question of population. In that respect he was absolutely correct, because one of the principal roles of the VPA is not just as an advisor to government — that is in fact only part of its work — but is actually to do the work of a planning authority. It is a planning authority in its own right. I want to assure the house and indeed assure the member for Box Hill that that is one of its principal roles. It will play a really crucial role and an ambitious role right across the state by assisting the government in the planning for inner-city sites like Arden-Macaulay. What an extraordinary opportunity that we have there. It is a site virtually on the doorstep of the city. For those members who are not absolutely clear where it is, it is just to the south of the North Melbourne football ground. Essentially it is a parcel of land, primarily in state government ownership and some local government ownership as well, that is virtually contiguous to E-gate — again, a parcel of land right on the doorstep of the city centre.

No other capital city in Australia has got this extraordinary opportunity to develop land so close to the centre of the city. That there will be a Melbourne Metro rail stop underneath Arden is really a gift, because we have the opportunity to now plan this precinct in a way that is absolutely connected to this most extraordinary investment by this government of close to \$10 billion in the Metro Tunnel, which at its peak is going to be moving 30 000 people an hour.

Ms Knight interjected.

Mr WYNNE — And my good colleague says, 'And opening up extraordinary opportunities for access from regional Victoria as well'. It will completely change the shape of our city. That is why you want organisations like the VPA to be playing a crucial and strategic role, to ensure that we actually get the planning and infrastructure in place to get these sorts of such rare precincts right for the long-term future of our city. We know that we are going to have to house this additional 100 000 people every year, year on year on year, and this government is up for the challenge because we want to ensure that the VPA, through the strategic work that it will undertake, will

paint the vision but also practically plan for how we are going to house this population.

What does that mean? It means that we are going to be in a partnership. When members like the member for Benambra essentially accuse us of saying, 'Well, we're going to usurp the role of local government', this is completely false. We will be working alongside local governments, as the MPA has done for years and years on end. Can I point you to some of the collaborations that are occurring already? I have already spoken about Arden-Macaulay. Let us look to where the MPA was doing much of its work and now the VPA is. The VPA is working closely with the Moorabool Shire Council to assist in the preparation of the Bacchus Marsh urban growth framework plan. The VPA, with the City of Wodonga, is preparing a plan for Leneva-Baranduda with the capacity to accommodate a significant proportion of Wodonga's forecast future growth. The VPA is working with the City of Greater Bendigo on Plan Bendigo. The VPA is working with the Greater Shepparton City Council to assist in the preparation of the Shepparton north-east precinct structure plan, and on it goes.

So we are looking for a much broader scope for the VPA, and they are out on a number of fronts in regional Victoria. But in every instance they are working in a collaborative way alongside local government — not seeking to usurp local government but to work alongside them. This is why this is such an important initiative for this government.

To the member for Euroa, just dealing with flying squads, flying squads in the past were available to, again, assist particularly some of our smaller regional councils that did not necessarily have the full planning expertise available to them. I can inform the member for Euroa that the government recently announced that the VPA will receive \$16.4 million over the four years for its Streamlining for Growth program, benefiting regional and metropolitan communities. The program will help to unlock delays in the strategic planning system and speed up the delivery of projects to provide for employment growth, increased housing choice, diversity and affordability. The VPA will continue to partner with regional and metropolitan councils. That is the enhanced role for a flying squad. So the member for Euroa can be very comforted by the fact that we will practically ensure we continue the partnership we have with many of our regional councils.

The member for Narre Warren South most importantly talked about the critically important role that the VPA is planning for jobs and business growth in Melbourne's six national employment and innovation clusters,

including the established clusters of Parkville — what an extraordinary success story this has been with the investment of our government in that precinct — Monash and Dandenong South and the emerging clusters of Latrobe, Sunshine and East Werribee. What we want to ensure is that people can live and work within their own locale as far as they possibly can so that everyone does not necessarily have to commute into the city for work and spend a significant amount of time away from their families.

Obviously we have a significant program that we have committed to, with the release of an additional 100 000 lots to ensure there is a pipeline of available land that remains a strong pipeline for development. We know there is significant demand in our growth corridors, and there is an important role to play on strategic sites in our established suburbs as well.

If you think about this in a broader framework, we are talking about enhanced capacity in regional Victoria. Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Latrobe Valley — all great opportunities there. We have our growth corridors with 100 000 lots in the pipeline. Our established middle-rung suburbs as well have a crucial role to continue to play and of course we have these inner-city sites, which are so unique that we simply have to ensure that we get the planning for these right.

A couple of other things just to wrap up. The member for Mount Waverley claimed that the taxes of hardworking Victorians will go to waste with the establishment of the VPA. He argued that consultants will raid the public purse through design fees, such as for new logos and new stationery. Luckily I am able to assure the member for Mount Waverley that the VPA's new look, its new logo — I am pretty much colour blind, so I am not sure exactly what the colour is —

Mr R. Smith — It was Liberal blue.

Mr WYNNE — Was it? Is that right? Well, there you go. It was developed in-house by the authority's more than capable staff. Not one dollar was spent in the establishment of the VPA's new logo or its new branding.

I do not know if I want to finish with this, but I guess I have to. I understand that the member for Kew commented on what he saw as the lack of a requirement for the VPA to consult or integrate its work with transport agencies. The bill does in fact deal with this issue in a number of ways. First, clause 10 requires the VPA, in performing its functions, to have regard to the functions of other agencies, including transport

agencies. The example in clause 10, page 9 of the bill requires the VPA to:

... have regard to the functions of agencies under the **Transport Integration Act 2010**.

Secondly, the bill at clause 103 will amend the Transport Integration Act 2010 to make the VPA an 'interface body' under the act. Section 25 of the act states:

(2) An interface body must have regard to the decision making principles ...

Thirdly, clause 35 of the bill states that the VPA must establish systems for cooperation with other agencies generally. So can I assure that firebrand, the member for Kew, that there is a full integration of planning and transport because we know just how important it is to ensure that we have a coordinated approach to planning in the state, and planning has a fundamental role to play in that.

This is an important bill. I think this is the bill that people will look back on in time and say, 'This was a bill that was far-reaching in terms of the Andrews government'.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time; by leave, proceeded to third reading.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

CONSUMER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 November 2016; motion of Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation).

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — It is a great privilege to rise today to add my contribution to the Consumer Acts Amendment Bill 2016. This is a wideranging bill, which seeks to make minor technical amendments to six acts: the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, the Conveyancers Act 2006, the Motor Car Traders Act 1986, the Sale of Land Act 1962, the Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1989 and the Veterans Act 2005.

Of course it is essential that we do have a robust legislative framework to protect consumers. It is

important that we have that level of protection so that people are not misled, deceived or taken advantage of, and we need to make sure that we have got appropriate investigative bodies to ensure compliance with the acts and legislation. The bill makes minor technical changes that act to improve and close off some of the loopholes that are available. However, I do have concerns that while we might be covering a great number of acts in the amendments contained in the bill, we do not actually perhaps go to the level of improvements and amendments that we need to see. It may actually be a missed opportunity in some regards with the elements of the changes that have been put forward.

Firstly, I would like to address the amendments in relation to the Sale of Land Act 1962. The main purpose of this element of the amendment is to clarify that a person wishing to exercise their right to withdraw from a contract to purchase land may serve the termination notice on the estate agent engaged by the vendor to sell the land. This is in relation to an interesting case that was heard just last year, *Tan v. Russell* [2016] VSC 93, whereby somebody had put forward an offer to purchase a residential property. However, they gave notice, as is their legal right to do so, to pull out of that sale during the three-day cooling-off period. Of course this right to call off a residential contract is a statutory right, which was created in 1982.

However, as has been outlined and covered very well by the Law Institute of Victoria (LIV), there are elements of the Sale of Land Act, specifically in relation to section 31, whereby the notice of the cooling-off period or notice to service a cooling-off period is to be provided on the vendor or his agent. Interestingly the agent, in terms of the common-law sense of agency, does not include a real estate agent. So of course what has happened in this case is that somebody has given notice that they wish to exercise their right to withdraw from their offer of sale during this cooling-off period. It was given to the real estate agent, as is a longstanding practice within the real estate framework. Then what happened was the sale fell through and the vendor took legal action to say that that was not actually the appropriate mechanism to notify that you were going to withdraw from the sale during the cooling-off period.

A legal case did eventuate from that, and the finding was in favour of the vendor. I refer to a paper that was written by the Law Institute of Victoria, which was published in May 2016, entitled *Property: Cooling Off*. It is very clear in here that while the purchaser had three days to act, there was no address for the vendor in the contract to provide notice of the

cooling-off period. There was a conveyancer listed, but perhaps the same argument would apply to the conveyancer, in that notice could not be given because of their lack of address.

This makes a nonsense of this section. With respect, the decision is wrong. This is sound advice. It was appealed, and I do note that there has been a further appeal to the initial ruling, whereby the decision was overturned. However, the first case as it was heard did result in a financial penalty to the individual who did try to exert their cooling-off rights. They were given a legal charge of the difference of cost between what they had offered and what the vendor eventually sold the house for. It is very, very good to see that this element of the legislation appears to have been closed — in that there is greater security and understanding around cooling-off periods — that there is specific terminology around how you can give notice during the cooling-off period and that it does specifically include a real estate agent. However, I have got concerns about other elements of this amendment.

Something that I have raised is around the notification of the interest of the purchaser to activate their withdrawal from sale during the cooling-off period. It does specify within the legislation that this notice must be given to an address. It does not specify what this address might be, and in modern practice we all know that an address can take many different forms. It may be a residential address, an address of the agent or an address of the vendor, which may or may not be known. Of course we have also got web addresses and other electronic addresses, so I think that in some ways there is a missed opportunity to further look at the definitions that are outlined within this legislation to ensure it does reflect modern practices and to further take steps to ensure that loopholes that may occur within legislation cannot be exploited and removed from the intent of the legislation, which is of course around protection for consumers to give them that opportunity to have some thinking time after they have made a major purchase, to ensure that it is the right thing for them, to ensure that they have put all of their checks and balances in place and to give them the right to withdraw from that, relating back to that statutory right to cool off from a residential contract which was created back in 1982.

It is interesting to note that this recommendation, on the back of the *Tan v. Russell* case, was made via the Law Institute of Victoria *Consumer Property Acts Review Issues Paper No. 3* on the back of a general review of Victoria's real estate and related legislation initiated by the former Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation. There are a number of

recommendations which are made by the Law Institute of Victoria in their submission. Of course it is very positive to see that there has been this amendment to the legislation to close the loophole around cooling-off periods and the definition of an agent to include real estate agents specifically within the legislation. However, there are other recommendations contained within this paper that have not been addressed which are specifically related to the Sale of Land Act.

I would put to the minister: why have not all recommendations that have been put forward by the Law Institute of Victoria been incorporated into the Sale of Land Act amendment? Some of these recommendations seem to be quite non-controversial; they seem to be related to things such as definitions. I refer to part E of the issues paper, 'Modernisation of the Sale of Land Act', and to question 65, which asks: 'How can the current definitions be improved'. LIV recommends:

... the definitions of 'land' and 'mortgage' need to be updated to reflect a more contemporary meaning; and

... the term 'prescribed contract of sale' should be revisited because it does not describe the type of contract to be entered into. Consideration should be given to using the term 'off-the-plan contract' which is now a recognised term in practice.

So perhaps rather than focusing on seven different acts and updating them to reflect modern practices, it may have been an opportunity for the government to look at other amendments, more technical amendments, that could be made so that we could look at updating all of the legislation at once.

Another recommendation made by LIV that I would ask the minister to provide input as to why it has not been incorporated into this review of the Sale of Land Act is around recognition of the fact that different concepts are required for different types of land subdivision, so we could look at that concept of greenfield subdivisions, for example, small building or townhouse subdivisions and larger building or tower subdivisions. This is also in response to question 65 of the document. I would ask that the minister look at considering those before the bill passes to the other house, which I assume that it will. It is an opportunity to make all of these minor technical amendments.

If we are going to look at one element of the legislation, then surely we should take this opportunity to get it right. My father would always say to me, 'Do it once and do it right'. It would be good to see that the government did a thorough job of this, rather than just amending small sections.

Another main provision of this bill is around changes to the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012. This is really based around trying to remove some red tape for organisations, specifically charity and not-for-profit organisations in Victoria. I note that I have got a number of charity not-for-profit organisations or incorporated associations in my electorate of Lowan in western Victoria. Whether it is the Apex and Lions clubs, the sporting clubs or the RSLs, they all do an absolutely fantastic job. They are manned largely by volunteers, whether it be for fundraising, whether it be in support of people or whether it be for the provision of activities, such as sport and recreation activities or other social events to keep people engaged and interested in our area. I would like to make note of the people who are involved in these organisations, because they do an absolutely fantastic job and probably do not get as much recognition as they should. We have had some challenges around this element of the legislation, and I will go to that in greater detail in a moment.

This part of the legislation will basically mean that the minister has an opportunity to exempt an organisation or a group of organisations from submitting multiple annual reports. For example, the 6000 charities and not-for-profit organisations in Victoria have annual reporting requirements to both Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. There is no point in having that duplication. This amendment to legislation will mean that the minister can exempt that body from providing two annual reports. In that example there might be a memorandum of understanding with CAV to provide an annual report just to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, so that agreement will remove duplication but ensure those reporting requirements are still delivered upon.

We do need to make sure through this change that no reporting requirements are eroded. We have all heard of instances where there may have been some mismanagement within an organisation, and we need to ensure, particularly when finances are involved, that there is a level of transparency for the general community around that. If the minister provides or authorises an exemption from meeting reporting requirements to one regulatory body, and if there is a difference in the level of reporting that is required, then either that exemption should not be authorised or provided by the minister or the higher level of reporting requirements is the one that is defaulted to. We do not want to water down our regulatory system; we want to make sure that our organisations and particularly our not-for-profit charity organisations still have that level

of requirement so that we have a clean and transparent system. This will save a lot of time and money in some instances for some of our most important bodies.

There are also amendments within this part of the legislation which will allow electronic transfer of information between regulatory bodies to enable sharing of annual reporting information and access to information submitted to CAV via the myCAV system. Essentially this will meet the requirement for public inspection of annual reporting of documents. You will be able to print out a copy from myCAV in a format that looks like a printable document and a final document, rather than a straight copy or print of the submission template with the boxes included. It will be a cleaner version that will be available to the public for inspection.

I would like to refer to some issues that have been raised through my electorate office regarding myCAV. They continue to come in, even though the government has been trying to push towards electronic submission of annual reporting requirements for two years now. I refer to two constituents in particular. One is James Parker, who is linked to the Balmoral and District Lions Club. They do a fantastic job in Balmoral, and you see them at absolutely every event, often raising money through sausage sizzles. They always have a lucky chocolate spinning wheel. They do a lot to support the local community and donate a lot of money to the region. The other one is Jeff Pay of Natimuk Agricultural and Pastoral Society. This is a fantastic group that runs a great annual show every year. It seems to just go from strength to strength. They make a real difference to making sure that we celebrate our agricultural and pastoral strengths in our region and bring people together at a really fun event over and over again. It is great to be able to get along and support that organisation and the great work that they do.

These organisations have very, very similar concerns around accessing myCAV in that often in rural areas there is an inability to access the internet, and there is an older demographic. It is not unusual to hear that an organisation has had the same secretary for 20 or 30 years. We have people who are very, very good at their role as secretary, are very proud of what they do and are volunteers within their organisation and their community, but they might not have access to the internet. They may have never used a computer before. They might not have the computer skills. There is that fear of change, and there is not a lot of training available from the government to get them to be able to use myCAV, or they may just not have a computer. We have people who take a lot of pride and joy in their

volunteer roles, but they cannot perform that duty if there is a mandatory requirement to submit online.

I note that there has been some response from the government in saying that these organisations would be able to provide a hard-copy submission of their annual reporting requirements on a one-off basis for their first year. I call on the minister to extend that. I think that year on year we are going to have fewer and fewer organisations that will wish to submit something in hard copy. It is not going to be onerous to provide this support for these organisations, so I would ask that permitting hard-copy submissions of these organisations annual reporting requirements be continued for at least another five years until we have intergenerational change and better access to the internet and computers. We need to ensure that these very small volunteer organisations, which make a big difference to our local community, continue to be supported into the future so they can support our communities in return.

I would like to move on to the Motor Car Traders Act 1986. This is another significant element of the bill which will close a loophole. The amendments will enable a motor car trader to dispose of a motor car vehicle for the sheriff of Victoria subject to a security interest. At the moment infringement management and enforcement services — that is, the sheriff — can seize a vehicle for unpaid fines. Then the vehicle is sold to a licensed motor car trader to assist to raise funds to pay for those fines. Currently a motor car trader cannot dispose of a vehicle that has a security interest registered against it on the national Personal Property Securities Register (PPSR). Unfortunately there have been a few cases where the sheriff has seized a vehicle for disposal by a licensed motor car trader. However, prior to sale individuals linked to the vehicle owner — it might be a partner, a business associate or a colleague — have registered a security interest on that vehicle, which essentially prevents the motor car trader from selling the vehicle. The amendment contained within this bill will exempt the licensed motor car trader from the requirement to procure the cancellation of a security interest prior to the sale of vehicles they are disposing of on behalf of the sheriff.

It is important to note the sheriff's office in Victoria can continue to execute a warrant despite a Personal Property Securities Register security interest, but it is a loophole that needs to be closed off and this amendment will seek to do that. We are not quite sure how many instances of abuse of this loophole have occurred. We do know that 421 vehicles were seized by the sheriff's office last year and 208 were sold at auction. There are a couple of examples that have been

disclosed of people who have exploited this loophole, including one where the sheriff's office was left unable to sell a seized vehicle after seizing a truck owned by a company and valued by RedBook at \$15 800 in relation to warrants totalling \$21 000. The following day the wife of the company director registered an interest on the Personal Property Securities Register. Despite a number of applications, the registrar of the PPSR refused to remove the interest, so of course the motor car trader was left in a period of limbo where they could not dispose of the vehicle and the sheriff's office warrant was still there.

There are other examples. There is a second example of the sheriff's office seizing a vehicle in walking possession. When the officers returned to remove the seized vehicle they identified a new interest on the PPSR. This amendment will seek to remove that loophole and to ensure that we do have a system where the sheriff's office can seize a vehicle and dispose of it in order to pay off any outstanding fines.

There is a minor amendment within this bill in relation to the Conveyancers Act 2006 which will generally bring the act into alignment with other acts in the consumer affairs portfolio in relation to inspectorate powers and penalties.

There is also an amendment to the Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1989 to enable the registrar of second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers to waive, refund or reduce fees. This is where they might apply to set up in a certain area, they have paid their fees and for whatever reason — it may be a council rejection — they cannot set up their business in that area, perhaps because there is another nearby business. This will enable the registrar to waive that fee so that they can apply to set up in another area.

The final area of amendment is around the Veterans Act 2005. This is to update some of the changes that were made recently, in 2015. It is also just to update the patriotic funds, which were established nearly 100 years ago. The act does need minor modifications so that smaller RSLs or inactive sub-branches can be restructured and operate under the umbrella of a larger, more central RSL sub-branch to facilitate ongoing fund management arrangements. That is something that particularly hits rural Victoria, where we have an older demographic and membership of RSLs is diminishing over time.

Currently there is a requirement for proof and agreement by the Veterans Council for this to occur, for RSLs to go under a larger sub-branch. This amendment essentially makes the allocation of funds more flexible

and transparent and will enable the RSL and Legacy to do their work effectively. They do outstanding work and it is fantastic to see the fundraising efforts by the RSL to support war widows and returned servicemen and women and their partners and families. I think that this amendment will do well to support these people.

There is an amendment to remove the wording of the 2015 amendment. It does not alter the express purpose of the original fund because sometimes the express purpose was not stated. There is also an amendment to provide that financial support is not limited to injury or death related to time of service. This better reflects where the current needs are for partners of servicemen and women. For example, I recently met an elderly widow whose husband had died of old age, but he had been a serviceman. She was not able to access support through the RSL because her husband had died of old age rather than injuries related to his time of service or on the field of battle. These changes were requested by the Returned and Services League, and both the RSL and the Victorian Veterans Council have been consulted and recommended this. We obviously support that in terms of ensuring we have appropriate support and access to funds that our returned servicemen and women deserve.

Mr EREN (Minister for Veterans) — I am delighted to be speaking on the Consumer Acts Amendment Bill 2016. The objective of this bill is to amend a number of acts in the consumer affairs portfolio to improve their operation, clarify their requirements and update outdated references.

The bill amends the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. It also amends the Conveyancers Act 2006, the Motor Car Traders Act 1986, the Sale of Land Act 1962, the Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1989 and of course — importantly for me as the Minister for Veterans — the Veterans Act 2005. To that end, as the minister, I have said on many occasions that I am very proud that, out of all of my portfolios — sport, tourism and major events — veterans is the one that I am very passionate about. It is clearly bills like the one before the house that make veterans' lives a lot easier. I thank the minister involved for her efforts in bringing this bill to the house.

I would also like to thank a previous Premier of this state — a wonderful Premier — Steve Bracks for being the first state premier to have a portfolio dedicated to veterans. That happened over a decade ago, in 2005. Of course we saw the first minister in 2006, and then other states and territories followed suit. Obviously it is great to see that a lot of the other states and territories have now taken up what we had done right here in Victoria.

It is predominantly a federal jurisdiction — there is no question of that — but what we do is at the grassroots end of the veterans community that we are in touch with, and assisting them in all that we can.

The amendments to the Veterans Act 2005 will enable the director of Consumer Affairs Victoria to approve the amendment or adoption of a new trust deed for a patriotic fund where the purpose of a new deed or amendment deed is consistent with the purpose of a patriotic fund as specified in section 23 of the Veterans Act. This amendment will alter the current section 23(2), which states that the director must not approve the amendment of a trust deed or the adoption of a new trust deed unless the amendment or the new trust deed is consistent with and does not alter the objects and purposes of the patriotic fund.

As members may know, many patriotic funds were established following World War I, and there are currently approximately 596 funds in Victoria. Funds were raised by Victorian communities to assist returned soldiers and their families in many different ways. Since the time when the patriotic funds were first set up we have seen many changes to our ex-service organisations community, such as the merging of RSL sub-branches, particularly in rural and regional areas, and therefore the objects and purposes of the patriotic funds have shifted accordingly.

The amendments to the patriotic funds trust deeds will ensure that patriotic funds can continue to be used for the purposes specified in the act. The amendments will also see the expansion of the purposes for which patriotic funds can be applied under the act. This will enable patriotic funds to be applied for the assistance of a greater number of service personnel, ex-service personnel and dependents of both.

An example of what this means for our valuable servicemen and women is that a requirement that veterans and serving members of the Australian Defence Force prove their need for assistance is a direct result of their service will be removed. This obviously means that more veterans can access these very important funds. Currently a literal reading of the act means that a veteran must prove this before they are eligible for assistance even if they are in urgent need of assistance.

The amendments will also remove the requirement that any relief, assistance or support of dependents of servicemen and women is contingent upon that serviceman or woman having died as a result of their service or duty. This means that patriotic funds can provide support to a wider range of dependents in the

veterans community. This is exactly what the RSL and other organisations of veterans have been asking of government — that is, to make it more streamlined and to make it more accessible for the veterans community. These amendments have been requested, as I have indicated, by the RSL. It is good to see that they have been so engaged with the government in relation to making sure that these sorts of funds are accessible to as wide a range of veterans as needed.

The Veterans Act 2005 replaced the Patriotic Funds Act 1958 and since then the regulatory powers of the Patriotic Funds Council of Victoria have been transferred to the director of Consumer Affairs Victoria. Victoria is the only state in Australia to have regulated patriotic funds under a specific statutory framework. This ensures that there are appropriate reporting obligations to ensure there is prevention and detection of maladministration. There is nothing worse than hardworking veterans selling badges day in and day out and trying to raise these funds and then, because of maladministration, those funds dwindle away and the veterans do not have access to them.

Today, patriotic funds are used in providing welfare services and clubrooms for former and serving defence personnel. They are also used to support commemorative and educational activities. The value of trust funds is in excess of \$640 million with about two-thirds of that figure in land and building assets. Funds are collected in numerous ways, as many of us would be aware and many have no doubt taken part themselves, from the annual Legacy appeal to the sale of badges and poppies on Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, Vietnam Veterans Day and other significant military milestones. These appeals continue to support the welfare of veterans families.

Our role in the house is to ensure we support our veterans community in any way we can. One of the significant ways in which we are undertaking to assist the veterans community, on top of the great work this bill will do, is a new strategy that the Premier announced last year to help 250 veterans who are transitioning back into civilian life to find jobs in the public sector. That is such an important part of looking after our veterans in a way that actually helps them, by transitioning them to jobs that are meaningful and pay really well. The public service is obviously an area that is a new venture, and this government has taken that on to make sure that veterans are placed in jobs that are meaningful and valuable.

This strategy will be a key component of our government's response to the *Veterans Sector Study Report 2015*, which gave us a better understanding of

our ex-servicemen and women's needs. There were 14 recommendations made arising out of that report, and they will go a long way in assisting us to safeguard the welfare of our veterans. We have accepted each of these recommendations and will be responsible for ensuring they are all acted upon.

The employment strategy will be developed over the next 12 months and will help veterans apply for public sector jobs with advice and interview tips. We are also proud that we are already giving support to our local RSLs to deliver a program to address social isolation. We have allocated \$400 000 over four years to the RSL Victorian branch to provide welfare services to veterans facing social isolation. We are also proud of the \$1.3 million investment that we have made in the Richmond veterans housing project, which we funded so that young veterans facing crisis can find their feet again with short to medium-term accommodation. In our 2015–16 budget we also allocated \$1.2 million over four years to extend free public transport to all totally and permanently incapacitated and extremely disabled ex-servicemen and women. To date, about 138 veterans have benefited from the extended free travel passes.

Every year we continually, on a bipartisan basis, need to do what we can for those who have served in the past and continue to serve our state and our nation. It is incumbent on us to come up with pieces of legislation like this that make their lives a lot easier. That is the least we can do. This is a great bill, and I wish it a speedy passage.

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) — I rise to speak on the Consumer Acts Amendment Bill 2016. The object of this bill is to make miscellaneous amendments to a number of consumer acts to improve their operation. Of course this is something that we did constantly when I was Minister for Consumer Affairs. Obviously as time moves on it is really important that we move with the times, and some of the amendments in the bill are catch-ups and bug fixes, if you like, for the system. These sorts of bills come through the house quite often. What will hopefully be achieved is that the acts that are being amended will operate better, the requirements in them will be clarified and any outdated references will be updated. As I said, this is a bit of a catch-up bill that fixes up some bugs in six acts.

The main provisions include an amendment to the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, which enables the minister to make an order exempting either one or a class of incorporated associations from reporting requirements and enables the Registrar of Incorporated Associations to enter into

information-sharing arrangements. This is incredibly important, and I will talk about it in a minute.

The bill amends the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 to align provisions concerning investigations in that act with relevant provisions in the Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012. The bill also enables the inspection and provision of electronic records under that act. The bill also amends the Conveyancers Act 2006. I might go into a bit more detail later on the bill's amendments to the Motor Car Traders Act 1986, the Sale of Land Act 1962, the Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1989 and, as we have heard about at length, the Veterans Act 2005 to clarify the ability of the director of Consumer Affairs Victoria to consent to the amendment of an existing trust deed or the adoption of a new trust deed, provided that the purposes of the amended or adopted trust deed are consistent with the purposes of a patriotic fund set out in section 23 of the Veterans Act 2005. The bill also expands the class of persons who can benefit from patriotic funds.

If we have a look at some of the provisions that are coming up, the idea is to remove the duplication of annual reporting if we are looking at the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, because sometimes there is a single entity or a group of like organisations that are having to report at a state level. Then of course charitable and not-for-profit organisations are quite often not only reporting to Consumer Affairs Victoria but also reporting to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. This affects about 6000 of those not-for-profit organisations here in Victoria, so it certainly is a good step forward for them.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Tomcar Australia

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) — (12 260) My contribution to the adjournment debate is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. My request of the minister is for him to make a statement one way or the other as to whether he will classify the vehicle manufactured by Tomcar Australia so that it may be driven on our state's roads.

With the closing of major brand car manufacture and assembly across Victoria, Tomcar will stand as one of

Australia's only local vehicle manufacturers. Their all-terrain vehicle has prompted rave reviews from all those who have seen it and has been taken up for use by the mining and agricultural sector as well as the military from a variety of jurisdictions at home and abroad. In addition, Tomcar's new electric vehicle stands as Australia's first-production electric car and has opened up a whole new world of opportunities for this innovative manufacturer. A wide range of politicians over the years have seen the vehicle's range of capabilities demonstrated and have been struck by the passion of its producers. This family-owned business epitomises the can-do spirit of Victoria, a spirit that needs to be assisted so that they and their product can reach their full potential.

At present the vehicle stands outside of VicRoads criteria for classification. Because of this bureaucratic red tape, the vehicle cannot be driven on Victoria's roads. The removal of this small hurdle will open up Tomcar's vehicle to a broader market: farmers whose properties do not abut will be able to move the vehicle between those properties, country vehicle owners will be able to make the short drive to their local town and the mining sector will be able to use the vehicle with far greater flexibility.

Staff from the minister's office have met with Tomcar. They were presented with a demonstration of the vehicle and the details of the barriers were explained in detail. My understanding is that the family was very appreciative of the visit and of the discussion that took place. It has been some months since that visit, however, and the family is no closer to knowing whether there is a commitment to classification of their vehicle or not. So, on behalf of these amazing innovators and in the spirit of wanting to promote these contributions to Victoria's manufacturing community, I ask: will the minister confirm whether or not a classification for Tomcar's vehicle will be finalised?

Residential planning zones

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — (12 261) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Planning. The action I seek is for the minister to review the site coverage and permeability standards that control development in residential zones and consider ways that they can be improved moving forward.

There has been some concern for some time in my electorate around what increased apartment development means for drainage. There are certainly significant parts of my electorate that are located on flood plains, so this is a real issue. Since the introduction of the former government's residential

zones in the City of Glen Eira there has been increased apartment development in Melbourne. Of course we have to acknowledge that that is also a result of the significant growth in Melbourne, but what that has meant is that people are concerned about more concrete structures, resulting in less permeable surfaces. Currently in the City of Glen Eira in the neighbourhood residential zone, which is the majority area, the permeability standard is 25 per cent, and in the general residential zones and the residential growth zone it is 20 per cent. So my request is that the minister consider ways that we can improve on that.

Port Welshpool livestock transport

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — (12 262) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Ports, and the action I seek is an explanation of what happened around this time last year, 31 January 2016, when 59 animals sadly died as a result of a crossing from Tasmania to Port Welshpool, in my electorate of Gippsland South. The explanation I am after is regarding a range of things: what the government knows, what action it has taken in relation to this unfortunate event, and in particular what happened. The minister will be aware that there has been a fair bit of media coverage of this over the past 12 months, particularly through the *Weekly Times*, where the state political reporter, Kath Sullivan, has been following this story and recently wrote an op-ed headed 'Livestock transport: silence over cattle deaths is startling'.

As I said, there were 59 cattle involved. They were dairy cattle headed for Greenham and Sons abattoir in Tongala from Tasmania, and it appears that there was some freak weather that was not anticipated which knocked a number of cattle over. Unfortunately there were eight dead on arrival. What happened after arrival, though, is the question we are seeking more information on. It is alleged by the operator that they were barred by Gippsland Ports from unloading any cattle for about 6 or 7 hours. I understand that there are not unloading facilities there are other than onto trucks, so that may well be understandable, but there is a bit of a shroud of secrecy, it appears, around this issue. I appreciate that the Minister for Ports may need to seek advice from the Minister for Agriculture, because there will be potentially a role for the agriculture department and also questions over why it took so long for a vet to get to Port Welshpool — accepting, of course, that this was a Sunday, so there may have been issues. But I think it took 6 or 7 hours.

I strongly support the livestock sector. I want to make that very clear here. I reject the calls that were made at the time — a kneejerk reaction — for such shipping to

be banned or suspended, because we saw what a disaster it was for the northern cattle industry when the then Labor government cut the live export trade to Indonesia, and there are still people recovering from that. I am not suggesting any kneejerk reaction with respect to this matter. I just call on the minister to provide an explanation of what the government knows about the event, what action it took, what action it is taking and how we will do our best to ensure that the welfare of animals is protected and that events such as this do not happen again in future.

Daylesford rail bridge

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — (12 263) The matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Regional Development in the other place, and the action I seek is that the minister brief me on what is being done to lower the road that runs under the East Street rail bridge in Daylesford. Currently the height of the heritage bridge is too low. It restricts access to business and industry, forcing tall trucks along residential roads which have their own weight and size restrictions. Of course some trucks do try to go through and have in the past damaged the bridge, which in turn disrupts the Daylesford Spa Country Railway, one of the region's most popular tourist attractions.

The last Liberal government said that lowering the road was 'an economic and employment responsibility', yet they did nothing about it. They were right in one respect, however. This is an important issue to the community of Daylesford and one that needs to be rectified urgently, not only for the businesses of Daylesford but also for those who live and work in the area. By lowering the bridge we will see more business, more jobs and safer roads. This is something that this government does so well, and I want to see it happen in Daylesford. The matter has been lingering for too long. It needs to be fixed. I call on the minister to brief me with possible solutions as soon as she can. I look forward to hearing from the minister.

Leadbeater's possum management

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) — (12 264) I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and the action I seek is for the minister to immediately conduct a review of the current Leadbeater's possum management plan. The current Leadbeater's possum management plan included the agreement to conduct an extensive survey of potential possum habitat to improve or update the information around possum numbers. It also mandated that a timber harvesting exclusion zone of 12.5 hectares would be placed

around every colony found. It was also agreed that once the number of colonies reached 200, the setting aside of areas from timber production would be reviewed. The number of colonies found in the survey work and third-party reporting has now reached 423. This indicates that the possum is far more resilient than once thought. It is certainly not critically endangered, and more importantly the management plans that have been implemented are certainly effective.

In 1996 the first Leadbeater's possum management plan was introduced with the support and agreement of the timber industry. It is very obvious that this plan has worked, given that the increase in surveys has led to a significant increase in possum numbers found. The timber industry was comfortable with the 1996 Leadbeater's possum management plan and able to work with it with minimal long-term impact on resource availability. Over the past two years more than 4000 hectares of production forest has been removed from timber harvesting plans because of the decision to declare a 200-metre buffer around each colony.

This has had a direct and potentially disastrous impact on the Victorian native forest industry, in particular Australian Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH) in Heyfield. ASH has no supply contract beyond June this year. Due to the reduction in available harvesting area because of the current Leadbeater's possum management plan, ASH is only being offered a supply contract of 80 000 cubic metres, some 70 000 cubic metres less than a viable volume. It will be forced to close if something is not done about providing immediate access to the resource.

The survey work for the possum is currently being conducted primarily in areas of native forest earmarked for timber production. The possum numbers being found by the surveys are most likely to continue to increase, especially if the 94 per cent of public native forest that is already set aside in reserves and parks is surveyed more extensively. The minister must commission a review of the Leadbeater's possum management plan immediately and return those areas excluded from harvesting back to industry. There must be a return to managing the Leadbeater's possum on a landscape-wide basis rather than on an individual colony basis. This could save the Heyfield mill and put the broader industry back on a viable footing.

Dower Park, Kangaroo Flat

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — (12 265) My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Sport, and the action I seek is for the minister to support the

Kangaroo Flat Football Netball Club in its grant application for two new acrylic multipurpose netball and tennis courts and lighting at the Dower Park complex in Kangaroo Flat. Dower Park and indeed the Kangaroo Flat Football Netball Club, which was founded in 1862, have a long and proud history. Indeed the George Edwards Stand, named after Uncle George Edwards, reveals the community connection that the park has to local families from the Kangaroo Flat region, like the Edwards family itself.

Dower Park is a popular recreation reserve located off Station Street in Kangaroo Flat. Of course the Kangaroo Flat netball A-grade team were the 2016 champions. The Dower Park master plan reinforces the need for improvement of all sporting facilities and particularly facilities that service the informal recreational needs of the community. The park and the sports club are utilised by many different sports. I was recently pleased to announce our \$100 000 grant to the Kangaroo Flat Cricket Club for new nets. The bowling club is also located on the site. The master plan identifies the need for new netball and tennis courts, which will enhance Dower Park and provide fabulous new facilities for the many netballers and tennis players who call Dower Park their home ground. I ask the minister to support this funding application.

Western Highway duplication

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — (12 266) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Planning, and the action I seek is that he intervene tomorrow in the planning scheme using his ministerial powers under section 20(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to issue a planning extension for section 2b of the Western Highway duplication project to ensure it retains valid planning approval to keep going. I note the minister holds the power to get the Western Highway duplication project moving again. This power to intervene in the planning scheme should always be used judiciously, and keeping the Western Highway project moving is an ideal use of this power.

VicRoads has released a statement confirming that works have stopped on this project. The VicRoads statement says:

VicRoads has suspended construction of the Western Highway duplication between Buangor and Ararat due to an administrative issue with the planning permission for the duplication.

We are working to find a solution and will keep the public informed as we progress.

The solution is clear: the Minister for Planning must intervene. This road-widening project is the single

largest rural roads project in Victoria, duplicating the Western Highway from Ballarat to Stawell. It has been going on for some years and has some years to run. Unfortunately it became clear yesterday that the planning permission for section 2b, which is the section that is currently being progressed, lapsed in 2015. This is a terrible, terrible administrative error and shows the incompetence of this government in letting these planning permits expire. This project, which is a major employer across the region and is a very big employer of the earthmoving works and other businesses in the area, has now come to a stop. Members would be aware that you build roads in dry conditions, and as the famous saying goes, winter is coming.

There is no reason for the planning minister to sit on his hands and not get this project going again. It is an administrative failure by this government that has driven this project to stop, and it is important to my electorate and the people of western Victoria and to the many, many jobs that are supported by this project that it get going again. The minister can act. The minister clearly has the power under section 20(4) of the Planning and Environment Act to issue a planning extension to get this going. He should act. He should act tomorrow so we have no further delays on this project.

EpiPens

Ms WARD (Eltham) — (12 267) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Health, and the action I seek is for the minister to write to the federal Minister for Health seeking action regarding EpiPens and their availability. Last week I was contacted by a local parent concerned that she could not purchase an EpiPen with an expiry date beyond 1 November 2017. Her child, who has severe allergies, has begun kindergarten this year and is required to provide an EpiPen for their attendance. They also need to have an EpiPen at home.

As you know, Minister, the state government subsidises two EpiPens per year. As the only EpiPen she can purchase — and she has contacted numerous pharmacies — expires in November, she will be forced to purchase another EpiPen for December for the kindergarten at full cost. Given that EpiPens are supposed to remain valid and safe to use for 18 months from the date of manufacture, can the minister please write to the federal health minister to seek action to ensure parents can purchase EpiPens that reflect the expected longevity of these essential items from the date of manufacture rather than less than 12 months.

Mansfield Secondary College

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — (12 268) My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for him to make funds available in the 2017–18 budget for stage 2 of the Mansfield Secondary College redevelopment. In May last year Mansfield Secondary College was allocated \$3 million in the 2016–17 state budget to upgrade ageing facilities. That was pretty amazing; I think it was the only investment made in my electorate in the budget papers. It was just 12 months ago that I requested the minister to provide the capital for that redevelopment. What was allocated in the budget was approximately half of what is required. Now I call for the other half to be delivered.

I visited the secondary school last week. I had the pleasure of attending the first assembly of the year for the senior students and then for the junior students, where I was able to present an award to a particularly deserving student, Britney Allen. I have also had the opportunity to view the plans for stage 1 of the development. This is exciting and it will be good, and I am pleased that it can be completed in two stages. However, I am very worried that this means the current government will fund stage 1 and then park stage 2.

Mansfield Secondary College is the only secondary school in the Mansfield Shire. Mansfield itself is a wonderful community, and that would have been evident to you when you visited in October 2016. Minister, I know you will have seen the old building to be replaced and you will have understood that part of this building will remain until funding for stage 2 is received. You will have also noticed that there is no gymnasium on the site. Stage 2 includes building a gymnasium, among other things, which is very much needed. There is a basketball stadium in town, but it is not close to the school. The school assemblies are held at the Mansfield Performing Arts Centre adjoining the school, and two assemblies are required as there is no facility to accommodate all the students at once.

Mansfield is in a growth phase. It has many young families. The council is considering long-term planning to accommodate this growth. Obviously an increase in growth will require a corresponding increase in services and facilities. The numbers at the primary school are growing, and it will not be long before these students are at the secondary school. It is so important that stage 2 does not get left behind. It makes complete sense to be able to dovetail it straight into the completion of stage 1 so that disruptions to the students and the staff at that school are minimised.

Carrum Downs Recreation Reserve

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — (12 269) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Sport, and the action I seek is for the minister to support Frankston City Council's application for \$100 000 from the Country Football and Netball Program to complete the \$1.055 million redevelopment of oval 2 at the Carrum Downs Recreation Reserve. The reserve is located in Carrum Downs in my electorate of Carrum. This is a tremendous community full of young families, and it is growing. A current lack of open spaces and playing fields is putting significant pressure on the existing facilities.

The proposed redevelopment of oval 2 will include a new surface, irrigation, fencing, interchange benches and coaches' boxes. It will complement the new sports and community pavilion due to commence building soon, and it will support the growth of Carrum Downs Junior Football Club, Carrum Downs Auskick and Skye Football and Netball Club as well as create a regional hub for cricket, football and soccer. This redevelopment will lift local sports participation, particularly for women and girls, and encourage more members of my local community to become active and to participate in and enjoy the benefits of grassroots sport. My community and I look forward to the minister's support.

Responses

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I would like to thank the member for Eltham for her adjournment question and her very passionate commitment to her local constituency. I am more than happy to look into the matter that she has raised. All pharmacists have a professional and legislative responsibility to make sure their medicines are supplied in a way that is lawful and complies with their code of practice. The commonwealth government is responsible for the regulation of medicines. Somewhere between those two responsibilities I am sure we can find someone to look into the issue that she has raised on behalf of her constituent. I thank her for her ongoing interest in the health and wellbeing of the people of the community of Eltham.

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — A range of members have raised a number of issues, and I will pass those issues on to the relevant ministers.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 7.21 p.m.

