

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

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

**Tuesday, 22 August 2017**

**(Extract from book 10)**

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## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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(from 10 November 2016)

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The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER (to 25 February 2017)

**Deputy Speaker**

Ms J. MAREE EDWARDS (from 7 March 2017)

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

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**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

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The Hon. P. L. WALSH

**Deputy Leader of The Nationals**

Ms S. RYAN

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*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

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

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

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

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

<sup>5</sup> Elected 14 March 2015

<sup>6</sup> Elected 31 October 2015

<sup>7</sup> Resigned 2 February 2015

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

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

### **Legislative Assembly committees**

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

**Standing Orders Committee** — The Speaker, Ms Allan, Ms Asher, Mr Carroll, Mr Clark, Ms Edwards, Mr Hibbins, Mr Hodgett, Ms Kairouz, Ms Ryan and Ms Sheed.

### **Legislative Assembly select committees**

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

### **Joint committees**

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

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

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

**Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee** — (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Halfpenny, Mr Richardson and Mr Riordan. (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Ramsay and Mr Young.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Tuesday, 22 August 2017**

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

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

### ABSENCE OF MINISTERS

**Mr ANDREWS (Premier)** — I advise the house that the Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence will be absent from question time this week and that the Minister for Public Transport will answer in her place. Further, the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services will also be absent from question time this week and the Minister for Mental Health will answer in her place.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

#### Australia Day

**Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition)** — My question is to the Minister for Local Government. Minister, do you stand by your comments made on 17 August on 3AW, and is it now government policy, when you said in relation to Australia Day that —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

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

**Mr Merlino** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Deputy Premier will come to order.

**Mr GUY** — Is it now government policy when you said in relation to Australia Day that there should be a debate about whether the date, 26 January, is appropriate or not?

**Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Local Government)** — I thank the member for his question, but of course in any debate around such an important issue as Australia Day, consultation is the key. Leadership for change is about taking people with you, and unfortunately the Greens have not done this in Yarra or in Darebin.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask members to cease shouting and interjecting across the chamber. I need to be able to hear the minister's answer. It is very early in question time. I do not wish to remove members from the chamber this early, but I will if I have to.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — Let me be clear: as Minister for Local Government, as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and as Minister for Industrial Relations, I stand by the right for an Australia Day public holiday — no doubt about that.

**Mr Guy** — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question was not around whether the minister wanted a day off; the question was whether or not 26 January is supported by this minister as Australia Day, as the day for our country to celebrate, not as a public holiday.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Attorney-General will assist the house. With the assistance of government members, I call the Leader of the House.

**Ms Allan** — On the point of order, Speaker, the minister could not have been more emphatic in answering the question and in being relevant to answering the question. We all know the Leader of the Opposition is desperate for the world to look outside the bubble that he thinks we are all in with his mobster mates. We all know what he is —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Ms Allan** — I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw what he just called me.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Members will come to order. The member for Warrandyte!

**Mr R. Smith** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — The member for Warrandyte is warned. The Leader of the House has asked for a comment to be withdrawn.

**Mr Guy** — I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER** — The Leader of the Opposition has withdrawn. There is no point of order.

**Ms HUTCHINS** — This is exactly why we are reviewing the Local Government Act 1989, because at

the heart of this debate is the fact that we have councils that did not consult widely enough with their own ratepayers around this very important issue, and it is an important issue.

The federal government has really left a massive void in this area by not stepping up. It is not the role of the state government to be debating what date Australia Day should be; that is the role of the federal government, and we know that they are incapable of having respectful conversations with their community.

The Local Government Act review will look at how we can better enforce deliberative engagement between councils and ratepayers, and I look forward to those opposite supporting those amendments when I bring them to the house, because in this current situation, where we have had just last night the City of Darebin and last week the City of Yarra take these decisions without sufficient community consultation — and we are hearing that loud and clear through the media, through social media and through our communities — there is real need for councils to consult widely around such important change.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) — In the interview you went further, claiming that Australia Day has not been banned by the City of Yarra and that there is more to the story than is being reported in the media. Minister, what is the ‘more to the story’ that you claim, and is it your policy to back Australia Day in all councils on 26 January or not?

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Frankston is warned.

**Ms HUTCHINS** (Minister for Local Government) — Can I reassure the residents of both Yarra and Darebin and residents in other councils that may be considering going down this track of making this change around the council-deemed celebrations on that day that they have the absolute right and the encouragement of this government to be celebrating Australia Day as they see fit. There will not be any council officers peering into people’s backyards while they have a barbecue. That is the scaremongering that comes from those opposite. Those opposite are more concerned with having some trevally with the underbelly than they are with community consultation and what goes on in local government.

**Ministers statements: housing affordability**

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) — I rise to update the house on a meeting I had this morning with Venessa Quinn. Venessa has two young children, a son and a daughter, and in the past six years she and her family have had to move house four times — four times in six years — due to property sales taking place shortly after they had signed 12-month leases. They have been renters for a considerable period of time, and it has been very difficult.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — Those opposite can laugh all they want and mock all they want. Yet again it will be this government that delivers the equity and fairness that renters like Venessa and many more have been calling for for a long time.

This morning we announced that we will deliver changes to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to provide for long-term leases — leases beyond five years — with all the statutory protections that are given to shorter term leases under the Residential Tenancies Act right now. At the moment lease agreements beyond that term are in effect prohibited or at least do not have the protections, the balance or the fairness for both parties — the tenant and the landlord — that are badly needed.

That is why the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation and I made these announcements this morning. It forms part of our broader housing affordability commitments, not least of which are the abolition of stamp duty for first home buyers on all homes worth up to \$600 000 and of course the significant cuts to stamp duty for properties up to \$750 000 and the first home owner grant being doubled to \$20 000 in regional Victoria. Of course we know this is going to benefit thousands of homebuyers and also renters who are saving for a house or those who simply need more secure circumstances. We will stand up and put people first while those opposite mock things they would never do.

**Fire services**

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) provided two batches of submissions to the upper house fire services inquiry on USB sticks containing 1136 submissions, all from public sector employees. Minister, can you guarantee that all submissions sent first to the DPC were forwarded to the upper house inquiry and that their contents were not shared with

DPC officials, with any other public servants or with the United Firefighters Union (UFU)?

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Macedon has been warned.

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Emergency Services) — There are no questions on crime today, are there? There are no questions on crime, not from the friend of organised crime over there.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

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

**Mr Guy** — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance — their deal with the United Firefighters Union is a crime. It is a law and order question. It is entirely a law and order question, you crook, you complete crook. It is a —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Premier will come to order.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition! I ask the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition to assist in the smooth running of the house.

**Mr MERLINO** — He is not desperate much, is he? No, he is not desperate much. Not that the Leader of the Opposition has any interest in this, but there is such a thing as the *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees*. That places constraints on how public sector employees contribute to public debate on government policy. Our fire services are a unique mix in that they have public sector employees as well as volunteers. We wanted to ensure that Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and Country Fire Authority (CFA) employees were given equal opportunity to contribute.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Opposition members will come to order.

**Mr MERLINO** — Equal opportunity —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Kew and the member for Ripon are warned.

**Mr MERLINO** — We wanted to give equal opportunity to all firefighters to contribute to the public debate without risk of misconduct, so DPC invited CFA and MFB employees to submit their views by providing written submissions to the department. The process was managed by DPC, and all employee submissions were provided directly. In answering the Leader of the Opposition's questions, all submissions were provided directly to the select committee without consideration or change, and that is appropriate. We did not want to deter or interfere with the submission process. Nearly 2000 submissions were made.

**Mr Walsh** — On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, the question went to the fact of whether that information was shared with other DPC officials, whether it was actually shared with other public servants or, more importantly, whether it was shared with Peter Marshall, the secretary of the UFU.

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

**Mr MERLINO** — Nearly 2000 submissions were made to the select committee of the upper house. The majority of them were in favour of reform, and that is what the Andrews government will deliver.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! When opposition members come to order, the Leader of the Opposition on a supplementary question.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) — Like any other parliamentary inquiry, all submissions from MFB employees to the upper house fire services inquiry were vetted and inspected by the Department of Premier and Cabinet before they were allowed to be submitted to the Parliament. Minister, why did your government censor and gag MFB employees from submitting evidence of bullying directly to this parliamentary inquiry?

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Before calling the minister, I warn the member for Mordialloc, the member for Footscray and the member for South-West Coast to cease interjecting across the chamber.

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Education) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his supplementary question. I completely and utterly reject the supplementary question. The submissions were

provided directly to the select committee without consideration or change, as is appropriate.

**Ministers statements: South Melbourne Primary School**

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Emergency Services) — I wish to update the house on a new primary school the Andrews government is currently constructing in Fishermans Bend. This school is one of 56 new schools that the government is delivering and one of two government vertical schools that will open next year alongside Richmond High School.

This school will provide up to 500 student places from prep to year 6 students, and enrolments are now open. The school is now more than halfway complete. It is truly an impressive construction site: the first five levels of the building are now structurally complete, with works on the roof as we speak, and the facade is nearing completion to all faces of the building.

I have had many discussions with the irrepressible member for Albert Park about the importance of this new school to his community, given the significant enrolment pressures faced by his local schools, but the Ferrars Street school and the precinct in Fishermans Bend has not come without significant cost. The much-needed park over the road, which will service students at this school, cost taxpayers \$19 million.

The point is, it did not need to cost this much. The Leader of the Opposition’s overnight rezoning of Fishermans Bend in 2012 delivered windfall profits to developers and Liberal Party donors, something an independent panel called ‘unprecedented in the developed world’.

Our government believes in proper planning and investment in essential community infrastructure like our schools. We do not do dodgy deals with developers. We do not do dodgy deals with donors to line their pockets like the Leader of the Opposition —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The minister has concluded his statement.

**Fire services**

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. On 25 May you told this house about the equal opportunity and human rights commissioner’s report into bullying and harassment in the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA), principally by the United Firefighters Union (UFU), that:

I am very much looking forward to the report and responding to the report accordingly.

Minister, why have you now personally intervened and misused your executive privilege to prevent the now-completed report from being released to the public?

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Emergency Services) — I had anticipated the member for Euroa would be the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, but the lying member for Gembrook continues in his —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I remind members that the use of that word is unparliamentary.

**Mr MERLINO** — Thank you, Speaker, I apologise. Let me be quite clear to the member for Gembrook. The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) itself sought legal advice in regards to whether its draft report — it is not finalised — attracted executive privilege, and subsequently —

**Ms Staley** interjected.

**Mr MERLINO** — Do you want the answer or not?

**The SPEAKER** — The member for Ripon has been warned.

**Mr MERLINO** — The commissioner — VEOHRC — sought legal advice about executive privilege and subsequently the government communicated —

**Mr Guy** — You have intervened.

**Mr MERLINO** — No, incorrect. The government communicated this claim to the committee and subsequently to VEOHRC. The government has not seen a copy of the draft report. We have been told by VEOHRC it is not ready for publication, and as I have said in this forum and outside, it is the government that requested VEOHRC investigate diversity and other issues in our fire services.

We look forward to the finalisation and the publication of that report, and we will respond accordingly. But we are not waiting for the VEOHRC report; we are doing a number of things. There is \$2.5 million for a diversity and cultural change program across both the CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria, when it is established. We have committed to quadrupling the number of female career firefighters from 100 to 400, and we have committed to increase to 15 per cent the number of women in leadership roles in the CFA. We are committed to diversity. We have requested this report, and we look forward to responding to it.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — The member for Bass will cease shouting across the chamber.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — You are nothing but a liar.

**The SPEAKER** — Order!

**Mr BATTIN** — I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER** — I have just warned on the use of that word. The member for Gembrook, to continue without using that word.

**Mr BATTIN** — After being briefed on the contents of this report and the culture of bullying being meted out by the UFU within the MFB and the CFA, and knowing how damaging this is and the release of this report will be to the upper house votes, why will you not make this report available before the vote in the upper house on this piece of legislation?

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Emergency Services) — The report is not the government's report; the report is the work of VEOHRC. The government is advised that the report is in draft, that it is not ready for publication and that it is also subject to undertakings in the courts. These are not decisions of the government. The member for Gembrook should inform himself before he asks stupid questions.

**Mr Battin** — On a point of order, Speaker, first of all, he did not answer the question as required, and he used very unparliamentary language towards the end, and I ask him to withdraw.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Gembrook has asked for some comments to be withdrawn.

**Mr MERLINO** — I was reflecting on the question, not the member, but I do withdraw, Speaker.

**Mr Walsh** — On a point of order, Speaker, that is not the appropriate format for a withdrawal, and I ask you to have the minister withdraw appropriately to this house.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The minister has withdrawn the comments.

## Ministers statements: Fishermans Bend

**Mr WYNNE** (Minister for Planning) — I rise to update the house about the work of the Andrews Labor government — I am going to do it a second time — to recast Fishermans Bend and give a growing postcode a great community to match. We are getting the planning right because Victorian families deserve the best. It is a big job because Fishermans Bend was described to me by a senior private sector planner as 'the Wild West'. We have put in place tough new controls, spelling an end to free-for-all development. We are putting the finishing touches on our comprehensive framework for the Fishermans Bend of the future. I can inform the house that construction is already underway on an 8000-square-metre park, something I know the member for Albert Park is so passionate about.

It is all about righting the wrongs of the former Minister for Planning, now Leader of the Opposition, whose overnight rezoning gave a windfall to a select few. And do we not know who they are! Fishermans Bend was a dog's breakfast when we came to office. It is little wonder why an independent advisory committee said the work of the former government was 'flawed', that the scale of proposals was 'alarming' and that there was no reliable plan 'for infrastructure to be delivered on time or at all'. Victorians are all over this issue. It is clear that the alternative Premier, by his actions at Fishermans Bend and his choice of dinner guests, has neither the temperament nor the judgement to run the state.

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is departing from the requirements of a ministers statement. He is debating the issue, and he is in breach of standing order 118. I ask you to bring him back to order on all counts.

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

**Mr WYNNE** — We are delivering the schools and the parks, and we are planning for the transport and the infrastructure. Under our watch Fishermans Bend is going to be a first-class place to live, work and raise a family.

## Political donations

**Ms SANDELL** (Melbourne) — My question is to the Premier. Revelations that the Leader of the Opposition's lobster dinner companions were allegedly trying to avoid disclosure of donations to the Liberal Party brings into question whether we have sufficient political donation laws in Victoria. In fact in Victoria any donation under \$13 500 can be kept secret, and

donations over this amount do not need to be disclosed until months after an election. Premier, will you bring us into line with other states and commit to reform donation laws in Victoria, including disclosure, within seven days?

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) — I do thank the member for Melbourne for her question. Well, one hardly knows where to begin really. The Greens ask a serious question, but I feel obliged to point out that they themselves have had some difficulty with disclosing very large donations for their own political party — I have already put that on the record a number of times. What I will do though is pick up on the commentary in the question, where the member for Melbourne indicated that the conduct of one particular member of Parliament in this chamber —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — Well, well, well. We have found our voice now, have we? This is the problem.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! We need to be able to hear the Premier's answer.

**Mr ANDREWS** — Thank you so much, Speaker. This is the problem. When you take their money, when you drink their wine and eat their food, you are left in the mess that the Leader of the Opposition is in — a fraud when he pretends to care about victims of crime; a fraud when he pretends to lecture people about probity. He is a very loud fraud: he protests a lot today. But when you take their money, when you conspire —

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is in repeated breach of standing order 118 about imputations. I ask you to direct him to comply with the standing order and to observe a proper approach and language in his address to the house.

**Mr ANDREWS** — On the point of order, Speaker, the question referred to the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition. The question was ruled in order, and I am simply answering the question within the standing orders. If the Leader of the Opposition has been offended by anything I have said, then he ought get to his feet and explain why.

**The SPEAKER** — I uphold the point of order. There were imputations contained in the Premier's answer.

**Mr ANDREWS** — Speaker, thank you so much for your guidance.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — No, no, I do.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Members on my left!

**Mr ANDREWS** — That is the noise they made when they read the *Age* last sitting Tuesday and they found out where this one had been out for dinner. The member for Melbourne has asked a serious question, and I would agree with her that the conduct of some does call into question the adequacy of our electoral law. When people who are senior office-holders in a political party are found to have conspired to hide donations from alleged organised crime figures — when you are out to dinner with those alleged organised crime figures and when you cannot get your story straight on whether there were 25 people at the dinner or 12 people at the dinner or seven people at the dinner or whether you drank the wine or you did not drink the wine — there are some people who are not fit to sit in that chair, let alone this one. Member for Melbourne, you have made the point very well, I think.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Melbourne is entitled to have her question heard in silence.

*Supplementary question*

**Ms SANDELL** (Melbourne) — I understand the temptation of the Premier to take pot shots at the other side, but it really is a distraction from my question and from the key issue. The question was, and I reiterate: will this government take any action to reform our sorely lacking political donation laws in Victoria, given they are some of the weakest in the Western world?

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) — The member for Melbourne asks a question and reflects on the conduct of a particular member of this place whose conduct and the conduct of the people he associates with does call into question the adequacy —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — You see, there are some who ran a CFMEU campaign three years ago, no doubt paid for with Mafia money — and how did that go for you? How did that work out for you?

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — Just keep it coming. Honestly, there are some people whose conduct, and the conduct of the people they associate with, does call into question the adequacy of our laws, and the best approach to those laws would be a nationally consistent approach so that nowhere in Australia can anyone behave the way this one behaves.

**Ms Sandell** — On a point of order, Speaker, the supplementary question was very clear. It was relating to whether this government will take action on political donations. I ask that you rule the answer unresponsive and direct the Premier to respond in writing.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I will consider that manner at the conclusion of question time. I do warn the member for Frankston and the member for Kew again to cease shouting across the chamber.

### Ministers statements: Victoria police centre

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Police) — I rise to update the house on the work that we are doing to build a new police headquarters and precinct in Melbourne.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — The minister will resume her seat. The member for Warrandyte will leave the chamber for 1 hour for reflecting on the Chair.

**Ms NEVILLE** — In fact on Friday I joined the Chief Commissioner of Police as we formally marked the commencement of that police headquarters.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Warrandyte has been asked to leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

### Honourable member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

**Ms NEVILLE** — This project will support 1000 new construction jobs, over 100 apprenticeships and traineeships and have over 80 per cent local content.

This is Victoria Police's first purpose-built precinct since Russell Street in the 1940s. It will bring together 2500 law enforcement officers into a secure facility, providing them with the equipment and the tools they need to fight serious crime. It will have the monitoring and assessment centre, the family violence command, the counterterrorism command, the special operations group and the critical incident response teams, and it will be joined with the City West police complex, co-locating these commands with some of our other

significant commands like the gang team and the organised crime team.

Some might try to laugh off organised crime and underplay its role in causing harm. They might argue that consorting with organised crime figures does not matter, that it is not much of an issue outside the Melbourne bubble. The tentacles of organised crime reach right across our state, right across our regions and right across our community. It is involved in murders, in firearms, in drugs, and it is involved in terrorism and youth crime. It matters to the thousands of police, many of whom I have met, who fight each day to disrupt organised crime in Victoria because it causes such harm. It matters to IBAC, who today are holding a conference specifically on how vulnerable public figures are to organised crime. We do not laugh about it; it is not a bubble. We want to stop the tentacles right across our state.

### Fire services

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. Your government was forced to resubmit its submission to the fire services upper house inquiry after being caught out intentionally misleading the inquiry by claiming to have consulted 730 brigades and 35 000 volunteers. Minister, now it has been proved that this claim was a deliberate deception, what is the correct number of volunteer brigades that you actually consulted with, if any?

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Emergency Services) — I thank the member for Gembrook for his question. There are none on crime today. Let me inform the member for Gembrook that, with the parliamentary committee, there were eight public hearings and almost 2000 submissions. There were dozens and dozens of forums attended across the state by either myself, other members of Parliament, the emergency management commissioner or the chief officer of the Country Fire Authority (CFA). We have been consulting through the Country Fire Authority Performance and Policy Consultative Committee with both career and volunteer firefighters. We have been engaging with the sector for many, many months.

Directly in relation to the question that the member raised, there was an incorrect number that was provided by the CFA. They subsequently corrected the record for the select committee, as is appropriate. When I speak about correcting the public record, not once has the member for Gembrook corrected the public record in regard to his comments about Black Saturday.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — Minister, during the entire CFA enterprise bargaining agreement saga, which the Premier said he had fixed 433 days ago, you have driven out a minister, the CFA chair and board, the CFA chief fire officer, the CFA CEO, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade chief fire officer and deputy fire officer, and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade CEO: you have driven out hundreds of years of firefighting experience and trashed the work of 60 000 volunteers, and yet after all that your bill still may not pass the Parliament. Minister, has all this carnage been worth it just to please Peter Marshall?

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Emergency Services) — Is that the best they have got? What we will not do is cut \$66 million from the fire services budget. What we will not do is go to the tennis while the state burns. What we will not do —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — The member for Kew and the member for Ripon will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

**Honourable members for Kew and Ripon withdrew from chamber.**

**The SPEAKER** — I ask members on both sides of the house to cease interjecting across the chamber.

**Mr MERLINO** — What we will not do is ignore the dangers of Fiskville. What we will not do is deny presumptive rights to all firefighters. We will not do any of that.

**Mr Guy** — Split the bill!

**Mr Battin** — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, we are actually referring directly to who has gone and this bill going through, all to please one person and the United Firefighters Union. I ask you to guide the minister back to answering the question.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The end of the question was very broad and open-ended. I ask the minister to continue.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The end of the member's question was: has all this carnage been worth it? It is a broad question. I think the minister is being relevant to the question.

**Mr Battin** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the member for Gembrook to cease interjecting.

**Mr MERLINO** — They talk about splitting the bill. I do not know if they split the bill at the Lobster Cave. I do not think they did — I think it was all covered.

**Mr Battin** — On a point of order, Speaker, I simply ask that you act on that, because you know exactly what that point of order is. It is a disgrace that he can get away with it and you are not doing anything.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the member not to reflect on the Chair.

**Mr MERLINO** — As we know the bill is in the other place. We have had a parliamentary committee. The report was handed down last week. We are considering the findings and the recommendations of that report, we are engaging with upper house members and we will continue to do that in good faith.

**Ministers statements: port rail shuttle**

**Mr DONNELLAN** (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — It is a great privilege to rise to update the house on the work the Andrews government is undertaking around the port of Melbourne, very much to improve the amenity for the local community and also to improve productivity for the freight industry by protecting the freight corridors around Fishermans Bend, which obviously service Webb Dock. We know that the Webb Dock facility is amongst the most automated in the world, and it is a great facility. But we need to very much act now to ensure that we also get a whole lot more freight onto rail, and that was what I was doing on Sunday, making an announcement with Minister Chester that was about releasing the \$58 million to ensure that we have a more robust port rail shuttle option going through Victoria. That is very much about ensuring we move congestion away from the centre of the city.

I note that as the Minister for Ports I also have other responsibilities, not just landside but obviously waterside. I notice that in recent times a shovel-nosed lobster had popped up in Port Phillip Bay. I know the member for South Barwon would know what a shovel-nosed lobster is: it is a very rare lobster that you do not often get. What I want to do as the Minister for Ports is ensure that we make the shovel-nosed lobster welcome in Port Phillip Bay and ensure that we have enough supply so that Bill Ferg at the Lobster Cave can actually put the shovel-nosed lobster on the menu. We want to make sure that not only is the southern rock lobster there but also the shovel-nosed

lobster, which looks like a bit of a bulldog, is pretty short but is a very tasty meal. I am sure it is a nice thing to sit down with supporters and friends and tuck into a shovel-nosed lobster.

## CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

### Mornington electorate

**Mr MORRIS** (Mornington) — (12 962) My question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I refer particularly to Main Street in Mornington and the southern section between the Nepean Highway corner and the first pedestrian crossing, which is more than 800 metres distant. The section carries a very high volume of traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, but there are no means for pedestrians to move from one side of the road to the other. Centrelink is located at the midpoint, and there is a steady stream of pedestrians dodging between cars in order to attend to the conduct of their business. Indeed, as members would be aware, many Centrelink clients are older Victorians and consequently not as nimble or able to dodge moving vehicles as is desirable under the circumstances. So accordingly I ask: will the minister provide the current traffic counts for the southern section of Main Street, together with any details of plans to provide a safe crossing in this section and the planned timing of any proposed works?

### Broadmeadows electorate

**Mr McGUIRE** (Broadmeadows) — (12 963) My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I ask on behalf of a constituent: what plans for bike paths does the Victorian government have for the electorate of Broadmeadows?

### Lowan electorate

**Ms KEALY** (Lowan) — (12 964) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. Mr Ric Walsh has contacted me, deeply concerned that he has no way of returning home to Warracknabeal from work in Melbourne following Labor's cut to the only evening public transport service to the region from 27 August. Mr Walsh states:

I work in Melbourne during the week and return home to Warracknabeal after work on Friday nights. I catch the 6.26 p.m. train at Southern Cross to Ararat and board the Ouyen-bound V/Line coach at 8.45 p.m. to Warracknabeal, arriving at 10.30 p.m.

Public Transport Victoria has decided to cease this service. If the service is to cease, I have no way of getting home to Warracknabeal.

Accordingly I ask: will the minister provide information on how people like Mr Walsh can travel from Melbourne to Warracknabeal in the evening following Labor's cut to public transport services in our region?

### Geelong electorate

**Ms COUZENS** (Geelong) — (12 965) My question is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. I am impressed to see another major event has been added to Victoria's impressive schedule of events — the Targa Florio, a vintage car rally which will tour through parts of my electorate and the surrounding region. This is a truly impressive steal for Victoria, as this is the first time that the rally will take place outside Italy. During the four-day event, more than 200 classic cars will travel across some of our best regional areas, from the Great Ocean Road and the Bellarine to the Mornington Peninsula, Gippsland and the Yarra Valley. I expect many Victorians, including constituents of mine, will flock to this event to see the cars, which will include 101 Ferraris competing in the popular Ferrari Tribute. My question for the minister is: while classic car enthusiasts will enjoy the rally, what are the economic benefits to the Geelong community?

### Benambra electorate

**Mr TILLEY** (Benambra) — (12 966) My question is to the Minister for Police. How many Victoria Police agricultural liaison officers are deployed across the state, and where are they? Stock theft and rural crime have become a major issue in my electorate, and I understand that we are not alone. The demands on police resources in our regional and rural communities mean officers are finding it increasingly difficult to deal with the additional workload as well as the increasing complexity and sophistication of rural crimes. Rural communities need to know how many agricultural liaison officers there are, where they are and have access to statistics on the efficacy of their work.

### Yan Yean electorate

**Ms GREEN** (Yan Yean) — (12 967) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: what is the process that responsible road management authorities, including local government, ought to use to review speed limits on local roads? Due to population growth, there are many local roads in rural areas of the Yan Yean electorate which are now being used as rat runs. These roads are windy, closely treed and home to much wildlife, including kangaroos, and are carrying much higher traffic flows than they were designed to.

Constituents in my communities are questioning the default 100-kilometre speed limit on some rural roads and also some 80-kilometre speed limits, so they would appreciate them being reviewed.

### Ringwood electorate

**Ms RYALL** (Ringwood) — (12 968) My constituency question is to the Treasurer. I wrote to the Treasurer's office on 23 May, almost three months ago, on behalf of a constituent regarding land tax. Three months on, my constituent has still not received a response. According to the constituent, the base threshold of \$250 000, upon which the State Revenue Office Victoria calculates land tax, has not been adjusted since 2009. There have been four local council site valuations in this time. Will the Treasurer please answer my constituent?

### Sunbury electorate

**Mr J. BULL** (Sunbury) — (12 969) My question is for the Minister for Education. What is the latest information regarding the time line for design and the awarding of a contract for important building upgrades at Diggers Rest Primary School? The Andrews Labor government is building the Education State, and it made a \$151 000 investment in this wonderful school. Earlier this year I was thrilled to stand alongside principal Rachelle Hedger to make the announcement and see the excitement on the faces of staff, students and parents. This is an important upgrade at this school, which will experience significant growth in coming years. Can I ask the minister for the latest information on design and contracts for this important and much-needed project?

### South-West Coast electorate

**Ms BRITNELL** (South-West Coast) — (12 970) My constituency question is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. What are the processes and policies in place for periodic inspections of department housing? A welfare group in my electorate has raised concerns about the number of department properties sitting vacant in Warrnambool. Around 32 are sitting empty, awaiting repair. This is at a time when waiting lists are growing and there are ever-increasing instances of homelessness being reported. The group is concerned department staff are not able to inspect properties regularly and intervene early enough when damage is done. This then means that when tenancies on these properties end a significant amount of repairs are required, at significant cost to the taxpayer, and the property is then taken offline. I am told they are vacant for between three months and two years. Private rentals are often subject

to six-monthly inspections, and defects and damages are listed for the tenant to repair. With access to housing and homelessness a growing concern, it seems unreasonable for houses to be sitting empty for months on end while welfare agencies are scrambling to find emergency accommodation for those in need.

### Pascoe Vale electorate

**Ms BLANDTHORN** (Pascoe Vale) — (12 971) My constituency question is for the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, and I ask: what state government funding is available to promote social cohesion in the electorate of Pascoe Vale? Yesterday I met with the chair of the Victorian Lebanese Community Council and Pascoe Vale constituent, Mr Michael Kheirallah, to discuss a number of issues of importance among the local Lebanese community. He is a strong advocate for his community. In particular he is committed to engaging Lebanese young people and ensuring they have the resources and role models they need to help them successfully transition into adult life. Young people face many challenges and pressures in the modern world, and these challenges are often compounded for individuals and families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. It is important the government provides the resources to ensure that individuals from CALD backgrounds have the same opportunities as any other member of our community, and so I ask the minister what support services and funding might be available.

## SERIOUS SEX OFFENDERS (DETENTION AND SUPERVISION) AMENDMENT (GOVERNANCE) BILL 2017

### *Introduction and first reading*

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Police) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 and the Corrections Act 1986, to consequentially amend other acts and for other purposes.

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

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Police) — The bill continues the implementation of the Harper review, ticking off a further 14 recommendations, including the establishment of an independent statutory body, removing the management of the scheme from the Adult Parole Board of Victoria and creating multi-agency panels of responsible agencies to coordinate service delivery to those offenders put on the scheme.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read first time.**

**RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT  
(LONG-TERM TENANCY AGREEMENTS)  
BILL 2017**

*Introduction and first reading*

**Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation) introduced a bill for an act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to provide for tenancy agreements for a fixed term of more than five years, to make consequential amendments and for other purposes.**

**Read first time.**

**LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL 2017**

*Introduction and first reading*

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

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to make provision for the long service leave entitlements of certain employees, to repeal the Long Service Leave Act 1992, to make consequential amendments to various other acts and for other purposes.

**Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — I ask the minister to provide a brief explanation of the bill beyond what has been reported in the media.**

**Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Industrial Relations) —** Certainly this bill goes to making the Long Service Leave Act more accessible, more modern, to the current workforce. It looks at making amendments to the leave entitlements under the act so that they are in line with the commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009 and the standards around parental leave being able to be taken up for two years without a break in continuous service when it comes to the entitlements of long service leave. The bill also protects those workers who may transition from business to business due to the sale of their business in being able to have the protections of their entitlements transferring across, and there are also provisions in the bill to make the act clearer and more easy to read for both employers and employees.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read first time.**

**CAULFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE  
BILL 2017**

*Introduction and first reading*

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

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to establish a trust to manage the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve for racing, recreation and public park purposes, to provide for related matters and to make consequential amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

**Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — I seek further explanation of the bill.**

**Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) —** The purposes of this bill are to provide for the future use and management of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve; to establish a new independent management body — the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust — with requisite functions, powers and duties to manage the reserve; to provide for modern governance arrangements for the new trust; and to provide a mechanism to define areas of the reserve that may be used for each of the purposes for which the land is permanently reserved — that is, racing, recreation and public park purposes.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read first time.**

**PETITIONS**

**Following petitions presented to house:**

**Safe Schools program**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petitioners request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria call on the Labor government to scrap the Safe Schools program and develop and introduce a comprehensive anti-bullying program supported by both school communities and parents.

**By Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (461 signatures).**

**Voluntary assisted dying**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents in the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house their concerns that the Andrews Labor government is introducing a bill to allow euthanasia or voluntary assisted dying in the state of Victoria.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria call on the Andrews Labor government

to not proceed with the introduction of legislation to allow euthanasia or voluntary assisted dying in Victoria.

**By Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (15 signatures).**

**Greyhound racing code of practice**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of residents of Victoria requests that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria ensure the Andrews government liaises with, and listens to, the grassroots element of the greyhound racing industry in Victoria and significantly alters its draft code of conduct for the keeping of racing greyhounds to provide a final document that does not attempt to ban the industry by stealth with overregulation, but rather allows the industry to grow and prosper, while upholding strong animal welfare standards.

**By Ms KEALY (Lowan) (104 signatures).**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered that petitions presented by honourable member for Forest Hill be considered next day on motion of Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill).**

**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE**

***Alert Digest No. 11***

**Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 11 of 2017* on:**

**Domestic Animals Amendment (Restricted Breed Dogs) Bill 2017**

**Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Real-time Prescription Monitoring) Bill 2017**

**Game Management Authority Amendment Bill 2017**

**Justice Legislation Amendment (Body-Worn Cameras And Other Matters) Bill 2017**

**together with appendices.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered to be published.**

**DOCUMENTS**

**Tabled by Acting Clerk:**

*Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978:*

Orders under s 17B granting licences over:

Alexandra Gardens

Mordialloc-Mentone Foreshore Reserve

Order under s 17D granting a lease over Sandringham Beach Park

*Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984* — Notices under s 32(3)(a)(iii) in relation to Statutory Rules 57, 68 (*Gazette S256, 1 August 2017*)

Ombudsman — Investigation into Victorian government school expulsions — Ordered to be published

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

Ballarat — C203

Banyule — C98

Bayside — C139

Boroondara — C183

Brimbank — C170

Cardinia — C215

Casey — C227

Darebin — C160

Greater Dandenong — C143

Greater Geelong — C331, C354

Greater Shepparton — C195

Hepburn — C67

Kingston — C154

Knox — C162

Latrobe — C87 Part 1, C87 Part 3

Manningham — C119

Melton — C180

Monash — C130

Moonee Valley — C163, C164, C170

South Gippsland — C110

Stonnington — C172

Wangaratta — C66 Part 2

Whittlesea — C207

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

*Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* — SR 84

*Radiation Act 2005* — SR 83

*Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:*

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 75, 83, 84

Documents under s 16B in relation to the *Port Management Act 1995* — Approval of wharfage fees for Station Pier determined by the Victorian Ports Corporation (Melbourne), a designated state port entity

Surveyor-General — Report 2016–17 on the administration of the *Survey Co-ordination Act 1958*

*Water Act 1989*:

Abolition of Murrayville Groundwater Supply Protection Area Order 2017

Revocation of Murrayville Groundwater Supply Protection Management Plan.

## ROYAL ASSENT

### Messages read advising royal assent to:

#### 15 August

**Corrections Legislation Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2017**

**Crimes Legislation Amendment (Public Order) Bill 2017**

**Disability Amendment Bill 2017**

**Sentencing Amendment (Sentencing Standards) Bill 2017.**

#### 22 August

**Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017**

## APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

### Messages read recommending appropriations for:

**Domestic Animals Amendment (Restricted Breed Dogs) Bill 2017**

**Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Real-time Prescription Monitoring) Bill 2017.**

## LAW REFORM, ROAD AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

### Membership

**The SPEAKER** — I have received the resignation of Mr Khalil Eideh, MLC, from the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee effective from today, Tuesday, 22 August 2017.

## RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

### Quorums

**The SPEAKER** — The manager of opposition business took a point of order last sitting week to bring

to my attention that when the bells rang for a quorum during the debate on the matter of public importance some members left the chamber. I was not in the chair at the time and so I was not aware of this. Standing order 29(1)(b) sets out that when the bells are rung for a quorum no member may leave the chamber. I remind all members of this requirement.

### Answers to questions without notice

**The SPEAKER** — On 10 August the member for Warrandyte took a point of order in relation to the responsiveness of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change's answer to a supplementary question from the member for Caulfield regarding energy prices after January 2018. I have reviewed the transcript and consider the answer responsive.

Also on 10 August, the manager of opposition business took a point of order regarding the responsiveness of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change's answer to a substantive question from the member for Caulfield about Hazelwood power station. I have reviewed the transcript and consider the answer responsive.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Program

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

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 5.00 p.m. on Thursday, 24 August 2017:

Domestic Animals Amendment (Restricted Breed Dogs) Bill 2017

Justice Legislation Amendment (Body-worn Cameras and Other Matters) 2017

Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

Racing Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2017.

In making a few observations on the government business program that is before the house for consideration today — and I would urge, encourage and invite all members to support the government business program that has been put forward by the government — there are a number of important pieces of legislation that will no doubt excite some interest and debate from honourable members.

Can the house note also that in addition to the four bills that are on the program I have indicated to members of

the Assembly the government, should time permit — and I think time will permit — would like to go through a substantial number of budget reply speeches through the take-note mechanism that is on the notice paper. I indicate that this may be the final opportunity for members to speak on what has been an outstanding budget handed down by the Andrews Labor government, about which people cannot say enough. I can understand why there is great enthusiasm by those on our side who wish to speak on this bill, so I am sure that the budget take-note motion is one that people will be keen to speak on. However, I do flag that this may be the last week that is available for members to make their contributions.

I am hopeful, as I said, that particularly the manager of opposition business is of a mind to support the government business program this week. I know they may be a bit distracted by other matters that are going on in the opposition, as we witnessed in question time today. However, we have a good program this week. There may be other requirements on the Assembly that I will talk to members of the house about during the course of the week. They may also take up some of our time, but I am hopeful and confident that we can manage issues that arise appropriately during the course of the week. With those few comments and observations, I commend the motion to the house.

**Mr CLARK** (Box Hill) — The government's proposed business program this week is a relatively light one. Indeed there are a number of measures that the government is now proposing to deal with that could and should have been brought to this Parliament much earlier than they have been. I think it is a sign of the government's difficulty in organising itself and difficulty in doing the hard work that is necessary of a government that it has taken so long to bring these measures to the Parliament.

Indeed it also needs to be asked why the government is still leaving languishing on the notice paper the Transparency in Government Bill 2015 and the amendments made by the Legislative Council. It seemed the government was very keen to talk in high-flying terms about transparency when it was in opposition and when it brought in a bill that did not do all that much about transparency, but when the bill was amended by the Legislative Council to put some real obligations of transparency on the government, the government very quickly lost interest in the subject. We now have the bizarre situation of a bill that was introduced by the government in 2015 remaining on the notice paper in a week in which there would have been ample opportunity to deal with it.

The opposition do oppose the government business program. We do so for the reason I have stated time and time again: the government is failing to deal with the disgrace that hangs over this house — the disgrace and the misconduct and the rorting by the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker, the members for Tarneit and Melton — and that does need to be dealt with.

I see the member for Essendon is in the chamber, and no doubt he is about to leap to his feet, as he usually does. It will be interesting to see whether he delivers his usual message that members should get over it, stop being concerned about the matter and move on. This is not something that members should get over or move on from; it is something that needs to be dealt with because this house needs to uphold proper standards of Westminster democracy. Unfortunately we are seeing them neglected and abandoned by the government in many different respects when it is seeking to rush legislation through this Parliament with minimal opportunity for community input when it suits, while leaving other bills languishing on the notice paper even though it committed in opposition to legislating those matters.

It is important that this house does uphold the standards of this Parliament and that it does bring members to account. As I have said time and time again, the conduct of the members for Melton and Tarneit should be referred to either a special select committee or the Privileges Committee to be dealt with, and we are not going to let that matter rest. For that reason the opposition opposes the government business program.

**Mr McGUIRE** (Broadmeadows) — It is a privilege to contribute to debate on a business program of a big-picture government which is driving our great state with triple A financial management and economic and cultural development, highlighted by Melbourne being rated the world's most livable city for a record seventh successive time — there it is! And, as the Leader of the House put it, here may well be the last chance for members to actually speak to the budget, which of course is the financial blueprint that underwrites this prosperity and, dare I use the phrase, jobs and growth, because it is the Victorian government that delivers that.

The Economist Intelligence Unit's livability index ranks 140 of the world's cities, and Melbourne has been rated highest, securing perfect scores for health care, education and infrastructure. These are the core values and the key issues that the Andrews Labor government has pursued. This is a government that works hard to build on such assets every day and to continue to deliver for all Victorians. I would actually invite all MPs to take part in the small business roadshow touring

the state, with 500 events to help create opportunities for this critical sector of our economy that appreciates what has happened in the budget with the lowering of payroll tax and cutting of red tape for key —

**Mr Watt** — On a point of order, Speaker, the member for Broadmeadows has been speaking for quite some time and is yet to come to the motion before the house. I would ask for him to speak upon the motion that is before the house. We are talking about the business program. We are not talking about convoluted stuff happening outside of here; it is what is happening in here. It is the program. It is this week. I would ask you to bring him back to the motion.

**Ms Allan** — On the point of order, Speaker, as I indicated in my contribution in moving the motion and as I indicated in my correspondence to members during the course of last week, part of the government program this week will include the take-note motion on the budget. It does not attract the guillotine at 5.00 p.m. on Thursday; however, it is very much part of the government's business program this week. Out of courtesy to all members of the house we provide them with this information in advance via the normal correspondence that is received on a Thursday afternoon. Therefore the member for Broadmeadows is truly within the relevance of the motion in referencing the budget and the contents of the budget as part of his contribution.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I do ask the member for Broadmeadows to come back to debating the government business program. It is entirely appropriate to reference items not on the program, as the manager of opposition business did, but the debate should be about what is on the program.

**Mr McGuire** — Thank you, Speaker. We will also debate legislation to help protect the community against sex offenders as part of almost \$600 million allocated in the 2016–17 budget to funding Victoria Police for a range of public safety measures, including the deployment of body-worn cameras to all frontline police officers. Such investments in equipment and technology are designed to ensure Victoria Police remains at the leading edge of responding to gangland crime —

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, I think the member is defying your ruling. He is entitled to talk in broad terms about the budget, but he is not entitled to start —

**Ms Allan** — He wasn't. He was talking about body-worn cameras.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Without assistance from the Leader of the House.

**Mr Clark** — My understanding was that he referred to measures in the budget. To the extent to which he is doing that, he is out of order. If he is referring to the body-worn cameras, he is entitled to refer to that to the extent to which he is supporting it being on the government business program.

**Mr McGuire** — On the point of order, Speaker, I thought it was self-evident but I am clearly talking about what is on the government business program, which includes a bill that goes directly to body-worn cameras. That is exactly the narrative that I am outlining. If I was not interrupted and we did not have naysayers on every point, I would be able to finish.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! There is no point of order. The member for Broadmeadows did proceed to list the items on the agenda and the importance of them being on the government business program.

**Mr McGuire** — Thank you, Speaker. Just to emphasise, this is about Victoria Police responding to gang-related crime, gun crime, terrorist threats, family violence and the scourge of ice. I would have thought that the opposition would support that. Body-worn cameras will be used by frontline police. This is a critical point in the government strategy to actually address these issues.

The Attorney-General, in his other role as the Minister for Racing, has brought in amendments to the Racing Act 1958 to support changes to the constitution of Racing Victoria to ensure that the board is independent and that conflicts are minimised and appropriately managed. In this context I want to remind the house of the significance of the thoroughbred racing industry. It generates more than \$2 billion in value annually across the Victorian economy and sustains almost 20 000 equivalent full-time jobs, many in regional and rural Victoria. This again is another important initiative that goes to what the government wants to do, how it actually can create economic growth and how it makes sure that economic growth actually goes right throughout the state.

They are the critical issues that this government is addressing, and this is part of the big-picture approach that it is taking. You would think the opposition would at least give a round of applause for Melbourne being acknowledged again.

**Mr Watt** interjected.

**Mr McGuire** — Everybody else can acknowledge it. The member for Burwood guffaws. That is hardly the appropriate response. This underscores the hard work of the government, unlike the proposition that the manager of opposition business was trying to raise. This is the critical point of how you actually get the strategy right, have the vision, have the plan and then show how that actually plays out through the legislation in the different sittings that we have. This again is another government business program that goes directly to those critical issues.

**Mr Hibbins** (Pahran) — I am glad we all got those points of order cleared up. Just on the points raised by the member for Broadmeadows about celebrating Melbourne becoming the most livable city, it is a cause for celebration for everyone. Everyone is patting themselves on the back. Sure, why not? Get a piece of the action, but I think it is also cause for a bit of reflection on those people who do miss out in our society and who are not sharing in the benefits of the world's most livable city and some of the challenges we are facing to keep our city the most livable in the world, so I would just caution against overdoing it with the celebration and taking credit for that one.

The issue the Greens have with the government business program is not the bills on it or whether they should be debated but is again with the fact that this house is not referring the members for Melton and Tarneit to the Privileges Committee. There has of course been an amount of commentary and criticism of those members and what has happened there, which is completely justified. Even more so, there is now criticism of this house for not taking the appropriate course of action. So we have got two issues there: the individual conduct of those members and now, because of the failure of this house to act, criticism of this house for its failure, which is incredibly disappointing. The clear course of action is to refer those members to the Privileges Committee, to allow the Privileges Committee to investigate the matter further and propose any sanction it should feel appropriate and then for that committee to report back to this house and for the house to take it further. It is a clear course of action. Again I cannot see why the government is not taking that action. It is incredibly disappointing. The Greens will not be supporting the government business program until that takes place.

**Mr Pearson** (Essendon) — I am delighted to rise to my feet today to support this outstanding government business program. In the words of Guns N' Roses, you have got to keep pushing for the fortune and fame. When week after week we come into this place with a government business program like this, can I tell you,

we are in an abundance of fortune and an abundance of fame. It is just fantastic.

There are four items on the agenda this week, as the Leader of the House eloquently demonstrated. The leader also indicated that the budget take-note motion will provide an opportunity for other members to make a comment around that. In my capacity as the chair of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, I would like to put in a shameless plug for the outstanding transcripts that are now online. If members are looking at trying to delve into a bit more information about this outstanding budget, they can learn a lot more as a consequence of the 60 hours that I and my fellow colleagues spent forensically pulling apart this magnificent budget.

I note the contribution of the manager of opposition business, and I know the manager of opposition business does like *Animal Farm*. Like Boxer in *Animal Farm*, he is just trudging along doing his leader's dirty work. It was the same tired, tedious and repetitious contribution from the member for Box Hill. It is just tedious, and clearly he is not prepared to put his back into it. What I find interesting is that the Leader of the House and I are often here to hear the contribution of the manager of opposition business. But in all my time in this place, short though it may be — I usually spend every single government business program debate here — not once have I seen the Leader of the Opposition come in here to support the manager of opposition business in doing his work. Not once has he been in here to support the manager of opposition business.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr Pearson** — I think the Premier has got a bit more on his plate than the Leader of the Opposition, but then again, if we look at recent events, you would think that would be the case.

Instead, like the good valet that the manager of opposition business is, he comes in and does his leader's bidding. He does his dirty work. He again talks about airing the tired allegations about the members for Tarneit and Melton, both of whom are subject to a police investigation, as, for that matter, is the member for Ovens Valley. But interestingly, the manager of opposition business does not refer to the member for Ovens Valley in relation to a police investigation either.

As I have said across the chamber to the manager of opposition business on many occasions, if we look back at the Westminster expenses scandals from 15 years ago, there is a proper process to go through. You do the investigations, and then the house can determine what

is a fair and appropriate response. That is exactly what happened in Westminster with its expenses scandal. But instead, in a fit of pique and a rush to judgement, the manager of opposition business is happy to flounce over and ride over parliamentary procedure and processes, obviously probably at the instigation of the Leader of the Opposition.

These allegations against these members are serious, but it is interesting that when we had the last debate on the government business program, after the allegations of the Leader of the Opposition wining and dining with an alleged member of the Calabrian Mafia, the response by the manager of opposition business was to say:

... someone unexpectedly bringing someone else along to a dinner.

Truly, that was his defence for why the Leader of the Opposition — the alternative leader of this state — was seen wining and dining with the alleged head of the Calabrian Mafia. It just does not bear scrutiny. It is just ridiculous. Since that time we have seen more and more come out from this alleged dinner. I think that where we currently stand in terms of whether the Leader of the Opposition drank wine or did not drink wine is that we have established that he sipped but did not swallow, I think. That would be the extent of it. He sipped, but he did not swallow the Grange. It is just truly extraordinary.

And once again we have my good friend the member for Prahran, who always lines up to kick the Labor Party and always professes to care for the working class, but not once does he pick his finger up and put his back into supporting the workers. The first chance he gets he throws his lot in with those opposite — this disgraceful, ragtag coalition of the most unworthy, undeserving members of this place. It is just woeful. He does not mention the member for Ovens Valley. Why would he? He does not fight the National Party; he does not care about the National Party. His only purpose in being in this place is to attack and criticise the Labor Party. It is just so pathetic. As I have said on numerous occasions — and despite his protestations that he is the progeny of teachers — the member for Prahran is nothing more than a class traitor. I commend the government business program.

**Mr CRISP (Mildura)** — Well, well, well, what an interesting contribution to learn about parliamentary privilege and selective memory from. I rise to talk on the government business program. The Nationals in coalition are opposing the program again not on its content but on the principles that have been very well laid out by the previous speaker in particular, the manager of opposition business.

The business program includes the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, which is mainly to do with some housekeeping around some renaming and other matters; the Racing Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2017; the Domestic Animals Amendment (Restricted Breed Dogs) Bill 2017, which is back — as we unfortunately expected, this is a difficult one for this Parliament and for other parliaments; and the Justice Legislation Amendment (Body-worn Cameras and Other Matters) Bill 2017, which I think is a good inclusion as we start to move ourselves into the next century with this.

But I do also want to talk about the Transparency in Government Bill 2015. This is important. It is important to the community. It sits on the orders of the day but is not part of the government business program. These amendments are back, and I think there is a fair amount of demand from the public to see this issue dealt with and dealt with in a way that will help restore some of the respect for this Parliament, which has been damaged by events over this year. With those words and my failing voice, The Nationals in coalition are opposing the government business program.

#### House divided on motion:

##### *Ayes, 44*

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

##### *Noes, 39*

Angus, Mr	O'Brien, Mr M.
Asher, Ms	Paynter, Mr
Battin, Mr	Pesutto, Mr
Britnell, Ms	Riordan, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Ryall, Ms
Burgess, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Clark, Mr	Sandell, Ms
Crisp, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Dixon, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Fyffe, Mrs	Smith, Mr T.

Gidley, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Guy, Mr	Staley, Ms
Hibbins, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Hodgett, Mr	Tilley, Mr
Katos, Mr	Victoria, Ms
Kealy, Ms	Wakeling, Mr
McCurdy, Mr	Walsh, Mr
McLeish, Ms	Watt, Mr
Morris, Mr	Wells, Mr
O'Brien, Mr D.	

**Motion agreed to.****MEMBERS STATEMENTS****Claude Ullin**

**Mr M. O'BRIEN** (Malvern) — I rise to pay my respects on the recent passing of a friend and much-loved member of the Stonnington community, Claude Ullin, AM. Claude made an extraordinary contribution to local government and his community, serving as a councillor for 25 years, first for the City of Malvern and then for Stonnington City Council. As an indication of the respect in which he was held by his fellow councillors, Claude was elected mayor an extraordinary five times. Beloved by his colleagues and by council staff, Claude was an enthusiastic advocate for his community. Claude loved local government because he said that it is, and I quote, 'the most efficient form of government because we make decisions and get on with doing the job'.

Claude moved from a successful career in advertising to establishing an acclaimed art gallery focusing on Aboriginal artists. However, Claude's passions, apart from his children, of whom he was immensely proud, were his community and the arts. Claude stood down as mayor and from Stonnington council at the end of 2016. This year Claude was appointed a member of the Order of Australia for his services to the arts, multiculturalism and local government. Claude was a longstanding member of Prahran Rotary and a Paul Harris Fellow. He epitomised the Rotarian creed of service above self. Personally, Claude was a good friend and a trusted source of wise counsel, even if his fashion sense was far braver than mine.

Vale, Claude Ullin. Like me, Stonnington is poorer for your passing but richer for having known you. I pass on my sincere condolences to Claude's family and his many, many friends.

**Ninos Elya**

**Ms KAIROUZ** (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation) — I recently attended a very special event for the Australian-Assyrian

community and Assyrian Church of the East, the consecration of His Grace, Ninos Elya, as the bishop of the newly created archdiocese of Victoria and New Zealand. I was honoured to attend this event along with my state parliamentary colleague in the Council Nazih Elasmr.

The story of His Grace, the bishop, is one that I think all migrants can draw inspiration from. Born in Baghdad in 1985, His Grace arrived with his family as a nine-year-old migrant in western Sydney. I can only imagine the hardship and suffering His Grace and his family must have experienced, having lived through the Gulf War in Iraq, before coming to Australia to start their new lives. His Grace is a shining example of the migrant story, being consecrated as a bishop for the archdiocese of Victoria and New Zealand at the age of just 32. I look forward to working with His Grace as he takes up his residency here in Victoria, and I wish him all the very best.

**Mount Atkinson**

**Ms KAIROUZ** — Last week I was excited to attend an event with my good friend the Minister for Planning in my electorate of Kororoit to launch the detailed precinct structure plan for Mount Atkinson, a new suburb just south-west of Caroline Springs. This new community will boost housing affordability and create local jobs. I am proud that our government has agreed in principle with the developer for the delivery of two schools, community facilities and land acquisition for a future train station. Sports grounds, a conservation reserve, community centres and kindergartens are also funded under a separate agreement with Melton council.

**Andrew Bulmer**

**Mr T. BULL** (Gippsland East) — I congratulate Lindenow farmer Andrew Bulmer, who was last week named Australian Farmer of the Year. A major employer in the region and a great person, he is a well-deserved winner. I have no doubt that he will be a great role model for young farmers nationwide.

**Fire services**

**Mr T. BULL** — I wish to comment on the findings of the committee responsible for the inquiry into the Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017, which recommended that the bill be withdrawn from Parliament, and if not, that it be rejected by upper house members. The committee heard the government failed to consult properly on the issue, and this is exactly what volunteer firefighters have told me in many discussions. I was glad that local Country Fire Authority members

were able to both make submissions and present at the Gippsland public hearings.

### Palliative care

**Mr T. BULL** — It was with pleasure that I welcomed the Liberal-Nationals' commitment to an additional \$140 million to improve palliative care services in Victoria, ensuring terminally ill patients and their families can get the support they need. A number of constituents have contacted me, saying we must improve access to palliative care for those who need it, and this record funding injection will help to allow for that.

### Victorian Greyhound Awards

**Mr T. BULL** — It was great to attend the Victorian Greyhound Awards in Melbourne last Friday. I offer a very big 'well done' to Rob Britton, who scooped the pool. His greyhound Fanta Bale won greyhound of the year and also stayer of the year. He won metro trainer of the year and he also won the Ned Bryant 'Silver Fox' Award for outstanding achievement. It was interesting that Ned Bryant's sons, John and Michael, were present on the night — I happened to do the Kokoda trek with them about three weeks ago.

### Minister for Women

**Mr T. BULL** (Gippsland East) — Also, having just read the member for Northcote's statement, I wish to put on the record my best wishes for her recovery.

### Education funding

**Mr RICHARDSON** (Mordialloc) — Everyone in this place agrees with the notion of every child having the best quality education and access to the best opportunities for the future. Our investment in schools in Victoria is second to none. We are determined to make our schools the best they can be and make our state the Education State. In 2011 the Gonski education funding reforms were so essential in how we better resourced and funded our schools — it gave us a blueprint, it gave us a map towards supporting and resourcing our schools appropriately.

Unfortunately the federal government has once again turned its back on Victorian schools and has corrupted the Gonski education funding reforms. In particular Catholic schools in my electorate will be harmed by the corruption of the Gonski education funding reforms. Schools like St Joseph's Primary School, St Louis de Montfort's primary school, St Patrick's primary school, St John Vianney's and St Brigid's primary school are schools that support local families and make up a substantial part of our education sector. In fact 22 per

cent of students are educated in our Catholic sector. So why then is the federal government backing away from these important reforms and putting more and more pressure on these families? I call on the federal government to stand up, and for the federal opposition leader, Bill Shorten, to fight against some of these cuts because Victoria stands ready to properly fund the Gonski education funding reforms.

### Physician-assisted dying

**Mr CLARK** (Box Hill) — A local resident who is an oncologist has taken up a statement endorsed by 101 Victorian oncologists opposing the introduction of doctor-assisted suicide laws. Because it is not in the form of a petition, it cannot be tabled, so I raise it now. The doctors endorsing the statement work in 20 hospitals across almost every region of the state. They include Professor John Zalberg and 20 other professors and associate professors. They write:

We do not believe that it is possible to draft assisted dying laws that have adequate safeguards to protect vulnerable populations, especially those with incurable cancer, progressive neurological illness, the aged and disabled. These groups of people experience high rates of depression and isolation ...

Physician-assisted dying places people at risk of coercion that is both active and passive. As a consequence of assisted dying laws, society reassesses the value of life; and the individual is taught to devalue their own life ...

Physician-assisted death is not, by definition, medical treatment. It is not palliative care ... Assisted suicide is in conflict with the basic ethical principles and integrity of medical practice and undermines trust in the medical profession. We strive to eliminate suffering but not the sufferers themselves ...

Without easy access to quality palliative care, some may request physician-assisted dying as they feel they have no other choice. This is especially so for people who live in rural, regional and remote areas and for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who have less access to palliative care services ...

We are dismayed that the multiple recommendations made by the Victorian parliamentary inquiry into end-of-life choices ... to strengthen palliative care have not been actioned.

The statement concludes:

The United Kingdom Parliament resoundingly rejected an assisted dying bill in 2015 as there is no 'safe system' and we urge the Victorian Parliament to do the same.

### Marriage law postal survey

**Ms SPENCE** (Yuroke) — I rise today to support a yes vote in the upcoming marriage equality postal survey. The Yuroke electorate and indeed the state of

Victoria is home to many LGBTI individuals, couples and families. Their relationships should be treated with the same respect and value as those of their friends and neighbours in our community. Equality before the law is a fundamental mark of fairness and social progress. I am pleased with the progress we have made in recent years, including legalising adoption equality in this place, but as a nation we have not come far enough.

Celebrating a wedding of friends or family is always very special and memorable. I was thrilled to celebrate the wedding of my good friend the member for Sunbury to the beautiful Jasmine last year, and next year my niece Sam will be married in Tasmania. But I also want to know that Sam's sister has the option to marry if she chooses to do so, that other friends and colleagues in same-sex relationships have that option and that friends like Justin and Ryan, who travelled across the globe to be married in Texas, have the option to do so here surrounded by family and friends — and I want to be able to celebrate those weddings with them all.

I urge all residents of the Yuroke electorate and across Victoria to ensure their enrolment is up to date on the Australian Electoral Commission website before 24 August and to send a strong message to the federal Liberal government that quite simply the law needs to recognise that love is love by voting yes when ballots are distributed next month.

### **Minister for Women**

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — First of all, I would like to extend on the record our thoughts to the member for Northcote. Any person that puts their hand up for public life, with the criticisms and the positives that happen with it, deserves the support of every person in this chamber when they face these difficult times. We send our support to her and her family, and we wish her all the best.

### **Cardinia Shire Council kindergartens**

**Mr BATTIN** — The Cardinia Shire Council went through a tender process recently and awarded the organisation of a number of kindergartens currently run by Kinders Together to another organisation, Bestchance, against the wishes of local families. Kinders Together is a cluster organisation that has been running 18 kinders throughout Cardinia for the past four or five years, and parents have had the opportunity to vote for that at various times — they could opt to come on board. The Cardinia council has overridden the rights and the voices of those parents, who have fought against this. A petition prepared by the parents has attracted over 1000 signatures. They have put in

writing a request that the council overturn the decision to award the operation of these kinders to an organisation that as parents they do not want to engage with. We all know that parents should have a say in this, and the final say.

The matter actually came up at another council meeting. The council opted to not reverse its decision. Although four councillors did vote to reverse the decision, five did not. Now the families and parents feel they have not got a voice at all. I have received emails, texts, phone calls, Facebook messages et cetera from parents out there. They are concerned, and all they want is the best for their kids. It is time the council acted.

### **Moonee Valley sports carnival**

**Mr PEARSON** (Essendon) — I was delighted to attend the Moonee Valley interschool sports carnival last week, where I saw my daughter Caitlin run in the 800-metre race. It was such a special day, not least for me as a proud parent, but also it was great to see so many girls compete in their events wearing their hijabs. In a week where we had the offensive and appalling conduct of Pauline Hanson wearing a burqa, I was enthralled by the athletic prowess of these girls. This is the face of a modern tolerant community. This is modern Australia.

The Parliament was conceived by our forebears as an institution to advance the interests of the state, while protecting the rights and freedoms of the individual. By her appalling behaviour, Pauline Hanson has simultaneously weakened the power of the state and undermined the religious freedoms and liberties of the individual. She is a bigot, she is a disgrace, and the sooner she is thrown out of the Parliament, the better it will be for our nation.

### **Buckley Street, Essendon, level crossing**

**Mr PEARSON** — On Saturday I attended a community forum with interested constituents to brief them on the next stage of the removal of the Buckley Street level crossing. This magnificent project will transform our community and leave a legacy that we will all be proud of.

### **Essendon District Netball Association**

**Mr PEARSON** — I am pleased to have been able to present the end-of-season medals and trophies at the Essendon District Netball Association over the past two weeks. Congratulations to Richard Randell for his tireless efforts in promoting this great game.

### St Monica's Auskick

**Mr PEARSON** — Last week we saw St Monica's Auskick wrap up for another year. Every year St Monica's Auskick keeps on getting bigger and bigger. Congratulations to Vince Leone, the members of his committee, the barbecue crew and the coaches and volunteers for all their labours and endeavours.

### Ray Thomas

**Mr PEARSON** — A shout-out to local ALP identity Ray Thomas. I recently belatedly presented his 40-year membership medallion and certificate for the mighty Australian Labor Party, Victorian branch.

### Maribyrnong Park Football Club

**Mr PEARSON** — Finally, it was fantastic to attend the recent Marby Lions business lunch with the federal Leader of the Opposition, the Victorian Attorney-General and Susan Alberti.

### Red Cliffs East Primary School

**Mr CRISP** (Mildura) — I was delighted to attend the Red Cliffs East Primary School recently to speak to the students in years 4 to 6. The students had definitely done their homework and had some very tough questions waiting for me. One of my favourite tasks is having the opportunity to speak to students about the role of the state government. The enthusiasm and attentiveness shown by these children was very rewarding.

### Mildura Great Australian Vanilla Slice Triumph

**Mr CRISP** — After 14 years in Ouyen, then five years in Merbein, the Great Australian Vanilla Slice Triumph held its first event in its new home in the Mildura mall on Saturday. The weather was kind, and around 5000 people rolled out to experience the event. I was privileged to have access to the judging tent, which could have proved very dangerous with my sweet tooth. Congratulations to the organisers, and of course big congratulations to Hudaks Bakery for taking out first prize.

### Mallee Almond Blossom Festival

**Mr CRISP** — Spring is fast approaching in my electorate, so once again I was fortunate enough to head across to Robinvale for the 10th annual Mallee Almond Blossom Festival. With around 4500 people attending this year's event, organisers are hailing it a great success. An added bonus this year was a performance

by the Australian Recording Industry Association Hall of Fame inductee Russell Morris of *The Real Thing* fame. Congratulations to the organisers and all the volunteer staff for making this a must-attend event.

### Battle of Long Tan commemoration

**Mr CRISP** — I joined local Vietnam veterans last Friday in marking the 51st anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, which always is a very sombre event.

### Sunraysia Rugby League grand final

**Mr CRISP** — Finally, congratulations to the Chaffey Titans for their big win over the Mildura Tigers in Saturday's Rugby League grand final. In the AFL we are made aware that the big men fly, but in rugby it is where the big men collide, particularly the Pacific Islanders that are resident in my community.

### Ballarat AFL match

**Mr HOWARD** (Buninyong) — Saturday was a great day for Ballarat when AFL football was played for the first time at the newly upgraded Eureka sports precinct. While some said it would never happen, the Andrews government, working with the City of Ballarat and the Western Bulldogs, ensured that this dream became a reality. I will leave it to the member for Wendouree to talk more on this.

### Country Fire Authority Sebastopol brigade

**Mr HOWARD** — Today I want to talk about Sebastopol fire brigade, whose members have been keeping our community safe since it was established in February 1886. Last Tuesday I was pleased to hand over the keys of a new \$94 000 Ford Transit vehicle to the brigade captain, Ben Cary. This custom-built specialist response vehicle will be used at incidents involving liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) or liquefied natural gas and is the first in the state to be fitted with new LPG burner technology that improves the safety and efficiency of gas flare-offs. The vehicle is also fitted with portable mobile lighting and salvage equipment.

This was made possible by the Andrews government's commitment to the volunteer emergency services equipment program as well as community support for the brigade, particularly from the Buninyong and District Community Bank.

### Country Fire Authority Ballarat brigade

**Mr HOWARD** — On 12 August I was pleased to attend the Ballarat fire brigade's service awards presentation night. Over 20 brigade members received

service awards on the night including life members treasurer Russell Harris, for 45 years of service, ex-captain John Harris, for 40 years of service and Peter Rae, for 35 years of service. I would like to congratulate all award recipients and all of our Country Fire Authority volunteers for the outstanding work they do in providing continuous emergency response to our —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson)** — The member for Shepparton.

### **Greater Shepparton Sports Hall of Fame**

**Ms SHEED** (Shepparton) — When Edna Harling crossed the stage in her neat black suit, the crowd rose to their feet and there was a standing ovation. At 102 years of age Mrs Harling only stopped playing her beloved lawn bowls competitively three years ago and was being honoured for her illustrious six-decade sporting career.

She was one of 27 talented and passionate sportspeople who were celebrated this month at Greater Shepparton's inaugural Sports Hall of Fame. An extensive nomination and assessment process saw inductees chosen from across the gamut of sports — Paralympic swimmers and tennis players, Olympic runners and hockey players, cyclists, motorcyclists, shooters and boxers as well as croquet and badminton players. We are a strong sporting community, and it was wonderful to be able to celebrate their impressive feats. Congratulations to all the inductees and to their friends, families and the volunteers who have supported them in reaching their goals.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the Greater Shepparton City Council, the *Shepparton News* and all those who worked so hard to establish the hall of fame and to celebrate it with such a wonderful event.

### **Country Fire Authority Tatura brigade**

**Ms SHEED** — It was also a great pleasure to attend the presentation dinner for the Tatura urban fire brigade on Saturday night. Tatura is a small town of 5000 people with a strong Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteer brigade, and it was wonderful to see their dedication honoured with awards celebrating decades of service. Tatura CFA has secured new land for its fire station, and I wish them well with the building of the new station, their relocation and their plans for the future.

### **Austin Health**

**Mr CARBINES** (Ivanhoe) — I am pleased to report to the house on some key achievements at Austin

Health in 2016–17. Austin Health's elective surgery list was at an all-time low with a final figure of 2273, well under the target of 2340. It performed the highest number of elective surgery operations ever, with 12 558 operations. Overall surgery increased 5 per cent from the previous year and 21 per cent over the past five years. The health service also finished with a positive financial result. We saw the completion of the \$15.23 million Austin Hospital emergency department short-stay unit. Its expansion provides increased treatment capacity and improved patient flow through the emergency department. An additional two intensive care unit beds were also opened in this past year.

We recall when those opposite, under the Kennett regime, sought to privatise the Austin Hospital. A consequence of that was of course the election of a Labor government under Steve Bracks. The people in my community in the north-east of Melbourne have not forgotten the commitments of those opposite in relation to Austin Health.

I was also very pleased to be with my community for Vietnam Veterans Day at the repatriation hospital site, a campus of Austin Health. Again, this is a place that is very important to my community and the veteran community at large. I commend Austin Health and the thousands of staff who work there.

### **Police vehicle ramming**

**Mr WELLS** (Rowville) — This statement condemns the Andrews Labor government and the Greens for their recent disgraceful failure to support the Liberal-Nationals' ramming of police cars legislation, which would have seen the dedicated and hardworking members of Victoria Police now have active legislative protection with police car rammers facing a minimum sentence of two years in the slammer.

The Liberal-Nationals' legislation, if supported, would have seen the deliberate ramming of police vehicles made a specific offence, with offenders facing a mandatory minimum jail sentence of two years and a maximum of 10 years. The legislation actually passed the Legislative Council 20 to 18, but in an appalling display of partisanship which now leaves police without adequate specific legislative protection against car rammers, the Andrews government and the Greens combined to vote against the legislation being introduced into this house.

The Liberal-Nationals' legislation had largely been welcomed by all except for the Andrews Labor government and their Greens mates. There was another incident just last week — on Monday evening,

14 August — in which a 20-year-old offender allegedly first hurled an item at one police car and then rammed another police car in Springvale, injuring a police member. One can only shake one's head in disbelief as, had the Liberal-Nationals' legislation been in place, the offender would be facing serious mandatory minimum jail time. Victorians deserve much better.

### **Minister for Women**

**Mr EDBROOKE** (Frankston) — I would also like to extend my best wishes to the member for Northcote and her family. She is an extremely strong and well-respected member of this house.

### **Frankston Primary School**

**Mr EDBROOKE** — It was a super-exciting day at Frankston Primary School last week as the Premier cut the ribbon on the school's new \$850 000 prep centre and declared it officially open. There were plenty of smiles all round in this refurbished building that now matches the high level of education and care that the school community provides at Frankston Primary School.

At the time I was elected there was not really much going on as far as investment in our local schools; we have dramatically changed that situation in the last two and a half years. At this point in time we have nearly two-thirds of Frankston schools funded and the undertaking of capital projects to improve their buildings. Thanks to the staff, students and parents for making this project possible and letting us visit.

### **Young Street, Frankston**

**Mr EDBROOKE** — We welcome the new shops that are opening during the Young Street precinct revitalisation: the Comic Place, the Young Cafe, Grill'd, St Vinnies, Yatra, the Hasty Gamers internet cafe and the South Side Supper Club. We have also had the Stereo Espresso Cafe expand, and the ORS Group employment service, Passion for Nails hairdressers and Centralfield Technology relocate to Young Street, Frankston.

The project will be completed in late October and, as a Frankston councillor stated last night, it is going to look fantastic. Whilst we have not seen an increase in the average business closure rate in Young Street since the redevelopment began, we do have a record number of businesses that are opening in the Young Street precinct and choosing Frankston to be the place where they trade, which is truly exciting.

### **Monterey Secondary College**

**Mr EDBROOKE** — Congratulations also to the couples at last week's Monterey Secondary College presentation ball. I was honoured to be a special guest and proud to see so many students that I had met before, dressed up and dancing with their families looking on.

### **Benambra electorate tourism**

**Mr TILLEY** (Benambra) — The north-east has the best food and wine in Victoria, and I can now offer further proof. Last week Thousand Pound Wine Bar & Store in Rutherglen, the heart of the big, bold red country, was judged the best wine bar in the state of Victoria. It was a class field that included some of the fancy metropolitan Melbourne wine bars of our latte sippers and all that carry on. Anyway, our country folk are doing it well. It also proved what we in the north-east already knew — that our hospitality industry is a leader in its field, rich in tradition and at the same time at the cutting edge of emerging food trends. I congratulate Denis Lucey, whose food I am sure many of you have partaken of down at Bottega in Bourke Street, which is on the Parliament side of Exhibition Street, who joined with Eliza Brown of All Saints Estate and the team at Rutherglen that started this venture a bit over two years ago.

This is not just a one-off. In Benambra we are blessed with award-winning restaurants, wineries and now bars. Provenance at Beechworth is rated among the best in the country year in and year out, while David Kapay at Miss Amelie in Wodonga is drawing on his experience in kitchens run by Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver. These are just two in an almost endless list. I know many in this place will know of our great wineries, but you really should do yourself a flavour favour and head to the north-east to see what else is on offer.

### **AFL International Cup**

**Ms SULEYMAN** (St Albans) — Recently I was delighted to attend the 2017 AFL International Cup gala on behalf of the Minister for Sport. The AFL International Cup includes 18 nations and over 26 teams from all around the world. I was especially honoured to meet the captain of Pakistan's Shaheens women's team, Myra Ahmed, the first Muslim woman to be selected as a member to play in the women's world AFL team.

### Henryk Sławik Award

**Ms SULEYMAN** — On another matter, I was also extremely honoured to attend and be the guest speaker at the Henryk Sławik Award of 2017. Henryk Sławik was a great man — a brave and selfless man — who saved several thousand Jews between 1940 and 1944, a hero, inspiration and role model to the rest of the world. Congratulations to the Henryk Sławik Award 2017 recipients Sue Hampel and Frances Prince on their valuable contribution in promoting interfaith dialogue and education, as well as their commitment to preserving Polish Jewish heritage, culture and customs. And a very big thankyou to Izydor Marmur, the president of the Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants, for organising yet again a very successful event.

### Ringwood chamber of commerce and industry

**Ms RYALL** (Ringwood) — I had the pleasure of attending the Ringwood chamber of commerce and industry's annual general meeting and congratulating them on a fabulous year. I extend my congratulations to the new president, Kerry Atherton, and commend the outgoing president, Tony Hart, for the fabulous work he has done over the years of his presidency. It was fabulous at the dinner to hear the story of three-time Olympian and Commonwealth Games gold medallist in swimming, Belinda Hocking. Her determination, grit and passion as a woman in my community are outstanding.

### National Tree Day

**Ms RYALL** — During the winter break my electorate of Ringwood celebrated National Tree Day both in the community and in our schools. Whitehorse City Council did a fabulous job engaging over 150 people in tree planting and transformed part of the track just off Kett Street in Nunawading. It was fabulous to join the Antonio Park Advisory Committee at Antonio Park for National Tree Day. I commend their work and the wonderful way they care for our community at Antonio Park.

### East Ringwood Reserve

**Ms RYALL** — The new Coopersmith Pavilion was officially opened at East Ringwood Reserve, bringing together East Ringwood Football Club, East Ringwood Cricket Club and the Chin Community Victoria. Ringwood now has a fabulous new facility that will accommodate so much activity for our local community. I was so pleased to announce in 2014 that our multicultural infrastructure grant was able to

provide \$500 000 so our Chin community could have a home to operate from and to participate in sport and other activities in our local area. Congratulations to East Ringwood football and cricket clubs, our Chin community and Maroondah City Council.

### Murrumbeena sports facilities

**Mr DIMOPOULOS** (Oakleigh) — In June I rose in this place on an adjournment matter directed to the Minister for Sport in relation to investment in sports and sports facilities in Murrumbeena in my electorate. At the time I specifically referred to Murrumbeena Tennis Club, Murrumbeena Football Club and Murrumbeena Cricket Club. I am pleased today to update the house and report that this government has provided Murrumbeena Tennis Club with a grant of \$15 000 to help install new lights. These lights will be a great boost to the club, allowing more people to train and compete later into the evening.

I am also delighted that we have provided \$10 000 towards a feasibility study to upgrade the Murrumbeena Recreation Reserve, home to the Murrumbeena football and cricket clubs. This study will investigate options for a brand-new multisport pavilion at this location to potentially include and support the angling club, the bowls club and other clubs, as well as the football and cricket clubs. This will be the first step in an overdue upgrade to this pavilion.

I thank the Minister for Sport for his work in sport. He has a very detailed understanding of the needs of local community, grassroots sport and the clubs in my community in particular. He understands that it is not just about increasing participation and keeping people fit but also about the social connection that sport brings to individuals in our community.

### Australia Day

**Ms STALEY** (Ripon) — Today I rise to celebrate and reflect on the Australia Day celebrations across the electorate of Ripon. I do so in light of today's extraordinary response in question time by the Minister for Local Government, who refused repeatedly to acknowledge the importance of Australia Day as our national day of celebration and instead promoted debate about its role and centrality to our national life.

Australia Day is one of the most important days across Ripon for us to reflect on what it means to be an Australian. I usually attend four or so different celebrations, and I will mention just some of them. In the Pyrenees the celebration is moved around the shire every year. It is a time for civic reflection, renewal, awards and joy. They put the bunting up and they sing, and we have

a marvellous time. In Maryborough, at Station Domain, there are shire awards and, innovatively, medallions for new births. That is a way to get really disadvantaged people involved in civic life. At Stawell's Cato Park, again there are awards, there are fireworks and there are citizenship ceremonies. Of course I start the day in Creswick with a flag-raising ceremony. We celebrate Australia Day in my electorate.

### **Jobs Victoria Employment Network**

**Ms KILKENNY** (Carrum) — Last week I was fortunate to meet Nor Atikah in Seaford. I joined the Minister for Industry and Employment and the member for Frankston to announce some additional funding for a terrific organisation called The Bridge as part of stage 2 of the Jobs Victoria Employment Network, placing 1200 people into work. The Bridge helps disengaged young people and culturally diverse communities, as well as young people who have had contact with the justice system, to find meaningful jobs. The Bridge will use the additional funding of more than \$840 000 to place a further 90 young people from south-east Melbourne into employment.

Nor Atikah is one of those young people who is already in employment thanks to support from The Bridge. Nor is 21 and comes from Malaysia. She arrived in Australia as an asylum seeker. She told me that it took her a while to get a job. I asked her what the biggest challenge was. She said that, for her, it was her cultural background as a Muslim woman wearing a veil. Unfortunately the timing could not have been more poignant, meeting Nor in the same week that Pauline Hanson played dress-ups in the federal Parliament. But then I told Nor that what Pauline also highlighted is that whilst we already have members of Parliament who are Muslim, we do not yet have a member of federal Parliament who wears a headscarf and that perhaps Nor might be that member one day.

Nor has been working in her current role for six months. With her incredible, positive attitude and extraordinary work ethic she is already providing training for Afghan and Indian women who have just started working at her workplace. Our young people have so much potential, but sometimes they face challenges which make it that little bit harder for them to find and retain work. However, with support we can help these young people.

### **Indian community**

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) — It was a joy recently to visit The Grange P-12 College in Hoppers Crossing and Rangebank Primary School and celebrate

the fact that they are the only two schools in Victoria that teach Hindi. Happy 70th Indian Independence Day anniversary to all our Indian people.

## **PARKS AND CROWN LAND LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017**

### *Second reading*

### **Debate resumed from 7 June; motion of Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change).**

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — I rise today to speak on behalf of the coalition on the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, and I will put it on the record to start off with that we will not be opposing this bill. We will be speaking about some of the concerns that we have with the bill, but obviously there are some areas in it that we will be supporting as we go through.

Just so we are aware, in the gallery today we have representatives of the Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna, known as ANGAIR, who are committed volunteers from down that way. We all know that our parks do not operate without the volunteers from our 'friends of' groups, and we thank them very much for everything they do down there through the Otways with ANGAIR. It is fantastic, and we on all sides of the house do appreciate it. We do not always agree in this Parliament, but we do agree on one thing: we do thank our volunteers in the parks. It is not just at that park; it is at many parks across Victoria. I am lucky that my electorate covers part of the Dandenong Ranges, but our 'friends of' groups make a huge difference within our parks across the state to make sure that people can access them. They generally help out with cleanliness and they also help out with the weed invasions et cetera that come through a lot of our parkways.

I recall when I grew up in Tecoma — this is a very, very quick story and totally off the topic — we went through the area with one of our 'friends of' groups up there just prior to a new chain food outlet opening there. Some of you may be familiar with McDonald's in Tecoma. Just prior to its opening we went through to help out with some weed eradication. The first thing we found was three packets of McDonald's chips, and that was before McDonald's had opened up there, which raised lots of concerns through the local area. Our 'friends of' groups assist with that, and we thank them very much.

The purpose of this bill is to add the Anglesea Heath into the Great Otway National Park, and this is

obviously seen as very important, particularly for the local groups down there. It makes additions, excisions and corrections to other parks and reserves; changes the name of the Canadian Regional Park to Woookarung Regional Park; changes the name of Mount Eccles National Park to Budj Bim National Park; amends the approach to making, varying and revoking codes of practice under the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987; streamlines the process for appointing litter enforcement officers for Crown land; amends the definition of 'central plan office' to create a universal definition across legislation for consistency; reduces the reporting requirements for the Royal Botanic Gardens board and Zoological Parks and Gardens board; confers on the minister power to prescribe sitting fees and allowances for the National Parks Advisory Council, park advisory committees and the Reference Areas Advisory Committee; allows employees of the public sector to receive payment for their service on the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) and the Zoological Parks and Gardens board; provides that the Royal Botanic Gardens board and the Zoological Parks and Gardens board are responsible for the appointment and remuneration of their CEOs; removes a prohibition on the Royal Botanic Gardens board carrying out a business of selling plants to visitors to the two gardens at South Yarra and Cranbourne; and confers on the minister the power to approve a lease or licence proposed to be granted by the Royal Botanic Gardens board or the Zoological Parks and Gardens board.

One of the sections we will raise concerns about is in relation to the payments. We want to put caution out there when you are talking about payments for people on boards. Most people go on boards anywhere in Victoria for whatever role it is — whether it is health, environment or the local community — because they want to assist. They bring new knowledge, they bring information and a lot of them bring skills from their workplace that are sometimes not directly relevant to what they are talking about or what their day-to-day meetings are about. You may be bringing someone onto a board who has financial skills. Obviously most boards that have funds going through them need to make sure that they are compliant, particularly when they are handling public money. We all know how important that is when you are handling public money.

The concern we have is that now there is going to be an opportunity for people who are working within government or within the public sector to get effectively a second payment when they go onto these boards. The boards that were mentioned are the zoological gardens board and VEAC. I think it is important that we raise concerns around that. We have

issues in relation to who is getting paid what and why they are going on the boards. We encourage people from all walks of life to apply for these boards. We want to see them on them, and we want to see them bring skills to the boards, but we do not want to see the risk or the perception of risk — and perception is reality in a lot of different things — where someone within a department is getting these roles. We raise concerns that they may be doing it for the payments and taking away the skills someone from the private sector might bring to that. I think that is something we do need to raise a concern about, and it is a concern that we would like to see put forward.

Earlier I talked about adding the Anglesea Heath into the Great Otway National Park. I have sitting up behind me the member for Polwarth, who speaks quite regularly about the national parks in his electorate and the importance of areas like the heathland down there, and about making sure that they are protected going forward, not only as environmental assets but also in terms of the assets going back to the community and how they can be utilised by Victorian people and also by tourists coming down to the area.

I have visited the area on a few occasions with the member for Polwarth. I should not say we have been down there more often than I would like, because everyone would like to spend time down in Anglesea — it is a wonderful place to be during summer or winter — but we were down there more often than I would usually be over the summer period when we had issues around the caravan park in that area. We need to make sure that Anglesea survives going forward. We had an issue with the local caravan park. Effectively the government has come in and taken over that caravan park and that has raised many concerns, particularly around leases on Crown land. We spoke about that today, again with the member for Polwarth, who might raise this issue a few times.

This morning we were at the Victorian Caravan Parks Association to open their conference. They have raised some specific issues around Crown leases and what is going to happen with Crown leases going forward and ensuring that they are available. They have also raised issues, which I will just put on record now, around the review of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, which is one of the main ones. The issue they have is around communication. They said they have got some concerns with how it has been dealt with, particularly Delfin, in relation to leases going forward. They want to make sure that there is some open discussion and some planning for what is going to happen so we can have security in those areas.

Part of this bill will also assist with ensuring the environmental assets down there are protected. We all know how important the environmental assets are, particularly down through the Otways. The environmental assets are fundamental to what drives the return from tourism. If you took away the environmental assets, you would not have any tourism effectiveness down there. Whilst we have got a wonderful coastline, many people come through for bike riding and they come through the Great Otway National Park just for a drive. I know I have been down there with my family for bushwalks. I had the pleasure of reopening some of the area for mountain climbing through there. We actually reopened the mountain bike track after a big storm down there a few years ago. I had the pleasure of going down on behalf of the then minister, the member for Warrandyte, to open up that facility and look at what was happening.

Again, when we consider the absolute beauty of some of these particular regions in our environment, we know that we live in one of the luckiest places on earth. As I said, I try and visit, but to live down in that area I could not imagine. Being able to wake up to that beauty every morning and to have the opportunity to go and walk through that as your regular walk is something that people would be so lucky to do. As I said, we thank them for also going through and making sure it is cleaned up.

A big issue that has been raised in Anglesea is specifically around the Alcoa plant. We all know that Alcoa is no longer in Anglesea. That has an ongoing impact on the local economy, an ongoing impact on local jobs and an ongoing impact on local businesses down there. Whilst we have had the issue specifically with the caravan park, we have also had concerns with Alcoa. We want to make sure that going forward, no matter who is in government, when you are doing any changes with Alcoa and working with Alcoa as a business and what is going to happen with that facility in the future, it is going to have the best outcome, number one, for the environment.

Obviously it is going to have an impact on what is going to happen, not just on what is going to directly impact on it. There are a few thousand hectares down there that could be impacted going forward as well. We need to make sure that whatever plans are put in place, it is about the ongoing protection of it, the ongoing upkeep. You cannot just run in there, chuck a few seeds around and then walk away from it. That is obviously not an outcome we want. We understand Alcoa are trying to be somewhat responsible with this, and they have obviously got funding on the table as well.

If we are going to put something in place in that area we need to make sure that, number one, it has a long-term, sustainable approach. We need to make sure that it is something that can be regulated and that the government can work within it and understand the process going forward. But we should not turn a blind eye to other options that are out there, to what can happen within parts of that park for the future to encourage tourism for the area. That will support the local community and that can actually have opportunities later on for money to go back into other environmental assets down there. You could actually bring in a whole new range of funding, a whole new range of expertise and a whole new range of volunteers and other people to come along and assist within that environment there. It does protect that community of Anglesea.

The Great Ocean Road is one of the most wonderful not just environmental assets but tourism assets in our state. We have seen too many reports of people travelling down along that road and spending minimal amounts. I stand to be corrected but I think one report was of around about 12 cents per person per day spent along the Great Ocean Road.

While we are looking at the revegetation and the prospects and planning of what we are going to be doing around Alcoa, I think we need to be looking at how we can create an environment where people want to come down and stay, not just directly there but to support the other businesses. We want to make sure that we have got opportunities for tourism to be increased in that area and that people do not just want to drive through it on their way through. At the moment there are wonderful businesses such as the Yarra Valley chocolatier just down the road. But that is not an environment where you are going to go to and stay for a whole day and night or a couple of nights.

It is something we can also get education benefits out of. One of the things I have noticed through many of our friends groups is the expertise in these friends groups which are fully volunteer. We would love to see that expertise going to the next stage through some education processes. We can see them working with young people of today in schools. I think I would speak on behalf of everyone here when I say we have all been to a day with a friends of group where you have a school group come along. The kids dig, they put trees in, they help replant and they actually genuinely want to learn. There are opportunities for me, as the shadow minister for environment, to go out and speak to some of those schools and discuss that with some of these kids. We all talk about today's future, tomorrow's leaders and all those sorts of things with what is there with our kids. We need to make sure that the education

opportunities are in place with those children and that the expertise of the people working in our parks today, whether they are volunteer or not, can get passed on through the groups there.

There are some great programs. Believe it or not, there is one up at Kaniva College, in western Victoria, where they run a fantastic school program. What they do is actually work with their local groups as well, and I am sure they bring in the volunteers who are the experts. I am seeing some nodding, so I am assuming I am on the right path. They bring in environmental groups. We think that there is our future when you are talking about the environment.

Today on one side of our public gallery we have actually got people who have put years and years of experience into our parks, and on the other side we have those wanting to learn to make sure that we can protect those parks for the future. We might have to go for a coffee after and get all that information passed across. We do thank all of those groups there.

I will refer directly to the changes in the names of the Canadian Regional Park and the Mount Eccles National Park. One of the specific things I did was contact the member for South-West Coast. One of the parks in her electorate is the Mount Eccles National Park, which is going to be converted to the Budj Bim National Park. At first I had to have a discussion with her about what is going to happen with this park for the future, with the naming rights and the name of it. The member for South-West Coast said how proud she would be to actually support that change. She said it is something for the local community. She actually sees the positive impact on tourism in that area when you can start to refer to the Indigenous culture and heritage of that park, when you can start to talk about not just the history of the last 50 or 100 years from white settlement but you can go back and beyond and pass on that education as well. So when we were looking at the change of the name of the park down there, it was fantastic we had the support of the member for South-West Coast on that, and I am sure that the member for South-West Coast will be speaking to it further.

I had the pleasure of visiting what was then Mount Eccles National Park — obviously that name will change after this legislation has gone through — and when I was down there I visited with the previous member for South-West Coast, Denis Napthine, who has knowledge of the history of what is there, and I spoke to local volunteers and community groups about the impact that has on local tourism. There was a group that at one stage may have had some concerns around this, but I understand that by working with the local

group and having the communication lines open with those groups they are actually now more and more encouraged by this name change in that area.

The other name change is Canadian Regional Park to — and I hope I am pronouncing this right; I am going to get a nod or not from the back — Woowookarung Regional Park. I am getting close. I want to say that obviously when you are changing the names, in particular for Canadian Regional Park, which was one that was created by this government, we want to make sure that the message of the history of that particular park goes all the way through the Ballarat region.

I am not going to make a long contribution today. We have a few speakers who want to go into specific areas of this legislation. As I said, the opposition will not be opposing it, but I will finish where I started: on how important our parks and environmental assets are for the environment but also as tourism assets in the future. If it were not for our local volunteers, if it were not for the people who put their hands up to work within those parks, we would not have the parks that we have today. I know that the groups here today would also like to thank the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the Parks Victoria rangers as well who are up in these regions and who work hand in hand to make sure that they get the best outcomes for the local community. I encourage the government — and I know that we will in the future — to make sure that we can work with these parks and work with local community groups to get the best outcomes for local people and their health, for the environment and also for tourism to support our small local communities.

**Ms GREEN (Yan Yean)** — It is with great pleasure I join the debate on the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The first part of this bill is to deliver on the Andrews government election commitment to incorporate the Anglesea Heath into the Great Otway National Park. As has been said by the Premier and by many ministers in this place, we are a government that is about keeping our election commitments. Whether it is environment, whether it is infrastructure, whether it is education or whether it is health, we are absolutely committed to keeping our election commitments.

I was actually in Anglesea about three or four weeks ago. I have got family members who live down there, and it is always a beautiful, beautiful place to go to. It is really relaxing. I had a lovely lunch there. Even in winter those windswept shores and that gorgeous heath —

**Mr Pearson** — Did you take the Danavan there?

**Ms GREEN** — No, I did not take the Danavan this time, member for Essendon.

It truly is a magnificent place, and I have cousins there who run Greenie's Campers. They obviously, with their name, are related to me. I think that this addition will be of great benefit to tourism businesses around Anglesea and also to the amazing volunteers who have worked so hard over such a long period of time. I know that they very much welcome this addition to the park. It is welcomed by them, and it is welcomed by the Victorian National Parks Association and the Australian Conservation Foundation. They have worked hard on this change since the sad closure of the Alcoa business in Anglesea.

Other parts of the bill are changing some names of some parks — in particular one park I know quite well, having spent a lot of time there. We always used to go there on school camps — I went to school in Warrnambool, for those who do not know — and one of the school camps we used to go to was at Mount Eccles National Park. From now on it will no longer be known as Mount Eccles National Park. For some time it has been described as Budj Bim National Park, and it is an absolute jewel in the crown in our Indigenous history. It is the oldest living human civilisation in the world, and there is enormous evidence of that and the way the Gundiṯjmarā people lived a very long time ago. Many people do not know that the remains of stone houses of the Gundiṯjmarā clan down there are actually older than Stonehenge. Stonehenge is something that is known all over the world, but we here in Victoria have the Gundiṯjmarā people, and the remnants of their stone housing and their aquaculture in eel farming dates back to before Stonehenge.

Not only is this a recognition of the longstanding connection to country of the Gundiṯjmarā, but it will be absolutely central to the tourism offer in nature-based tourism, culture-based tourism and Indigenous tourism in this state, particularly in the west of the state, for a long time to come. I sit on the Minister for Tourism and Major Events's ministerial advisory committee on the visitor economy, and this is one of the areas that we have definitely identified for growth. Worldwide the thing that really get tourists going to locations and coming back is not the endless shopping malls. It is not the endless chains of stores, the ubiquitous Coca-Cola, McDonald's, you name it — insert commercial name here. Particularly in retail and clothes shopping there is just more and more sameness worldwide. The point of difference for every country, and particularly countries like ours and states like ours, is the story of our Indigenous people and the way we live our lives. Budj Bim will be absolutely pivotal to that, and I am so glad that our government and

the national government have supported the World Heritage listing of Budj Bim. In the electorate of Buninyong, on the outskirts of Ballarat, the Canadian National Park has been renamed the Woowookarung Regional Park. This connection to country and cooperation with the local Indigenous people is a fulfilment of yet another of our election commitments.

There are also other additions to national parks across the state. There is a small change around the Warrandyte State Park near Warrandyte Bridge. I had the privilege of representing that area up until the last election. I think people are quite aware of many of our famous parks, whether they are along the Great Ocean Road, in the Grampians or in the High Country. We have magnificent national and state parks in the greater Port Phillip region. In the electorate that I represent, the Yan Yean electorate, the spine of my electorate is the Plenty River and the Plenty Gorge Park. I know you, Speaker, have some of that in your electorate as well; it is something that we share. It is also something that the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change shares.

I know the developers who have built new communities along the corridor, particularly around Mernda, Doreen and South Morang, are now saying that that is the jewel in the crown of new estates in Victoria. It is a point of difference for those new suburbs to have this established state park. You have some of the greatest biodiversity values in the Southern Hemisphere in the Plenty Gorge Park. I hope that one day we will have walking and cycling paths there — they are coming as part of Mernda rail — and I would hope that they are as iconic as those that go along the Yarra.

In addition to that park we also have the Kinglake National Park, which runs along the top of my electorate. Until the last redistribution I had the Warrandyte State Park going along the southern boundary of my electorate and then the Craigieburn grasslands to the west. We have some magnificent parks, particularly in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. There are other park assets in the west and in the south-east, like Lysterfield Park. This really is something that I think would have had a significant impact on why last week Melbourne was once again announced the world's most livable city. Having those magnificent parks is crucial to that livability.

Also as part of the bill there is the addition of the Monster Meeting site to the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park. There is also the excision of 2 hectares from the Otway Forest Park to be added to the Great Otway National Park. The Monster Meeting site is very significant. It is near Chewton. It has outstanding cultural significance related to the Gold

Rush era. It is also of potential World Heritage significance. I had the privilege of opening a conference there a few months back in my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism and Major Events. I actually put forward the case of Victoria's gold digging areas across, I think, eight or nine local government areas in Victoria — it may even be more; that is just off the top of my scone — and why there is great merit in those areas. It is not just because of the Monster Meeting site but also because they include some of the most intact gold diggings in the world, more significant than anything in Canada or the US. I think anyone who has been to Cornwall would know — I have not yet, but I would love to; I am a great fan of *Poldark*, the ABC series — that that beautiful area of coalmining has been turned into a World Heritage area.

We have a great future in Victoria with our parks. These additions to our national parks will be, I think, very much welcomed across the community. I am pleased to hear that the opposition is not opposing this bill. Labor has always been the party that supports our national parks and absolutely resourcing them, and I am glad that the minister has been able to redress some of the cuts that occurred under the previous administration. I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms KEALY** (Lowan) — It is a privilege today to make my contribution to the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 because, firstly, it is always a fantastic honour and privilege to be able to add to debate about upcoming legislation and best represent the views of my local electorate, but today is additionally special because we have the fantastic grade 6 students from Kaniva College in the chamber. I would like to acknowledge all of the students who are here. It is a fantastic school community. I had the great fortune of handing out the school badges this year, which I enjoyed doing — I have done that for the last few years — and it is great to see that younger people are involved in parliamentary processes and have the opportunity to travel all the way from Kaniva to hear their local member speak. I appreciate that they are able to come in here and learn a little bit more about how laws are made and about democracy in our state.

In reference to the contents of the bill, this is a wideranging bill and there are elements which are obviously of great interest to people in my electorate. There is a reference in this bill to change the name of Mount Eccles National Park to Budj Bim National Park. Budj Bim is just outside the Lowan electorate, in the south. However, this area is of great significance to our region because it is part of the volcanic trail which stretches through south-west Victoria. In Peshurst we have the Volcanoes Discovery Centre. This is a

fantastic community-run centre, which goes through the history of how the volcano region was created over time and also some of the natural assets that people can go down and see as a tourism opportunity.

I highly recommend that any school groups go through the discovery centre at Peshurst. As I said, it is run by volunteers. They do an amazing job of keeping such a good facility open most of the time, particularly during school holidays. It is a credit to the Peshurst community that they wish to celebrate what is essentially their greatest natural asset in the region and to open up educational opportunities so people can learn about our region just by simply volunteering their time. Thank you very much to those volunteers.

We have a number of issues that have been raised in my office around national parks and Crown land. I would like to relay some of these as part of my contribution on this bill. There is certainly a great opportunity to better build on our tourism in western Victoria, particularly around our natural assets and national parks. We have the Grampians Peaks Trail. I was very proud to be part of the very first pre-election commitment in 2014 to build the first stage of the peaks trail. It is very good that the government has also conceded to building the Grampian Peaks Trail. The development is underway. I was traversing a section of the trail only a few weeks ago. It is absolutely fantastic, but we need to make sure there is wider investment so that we can not only better promote those tourism assets but also show that there are connections between these natural attractions in western Victoria. We need to make sure we bring people from the Great Ocean Road through the Grampians National Park to ensure they can touch on some of that volcanic region, which is very, very important.

Then of course we have the West Wimmera wetlands, some of the best wetlands in the entire world, which are completely underrated when it comes to promotion and tourism. We also have the Little Desert National Park and the Big Desert National Park. I note Little Desert is Victoria's noted dark sky site. For anybody who has an interest in astronomy, it is a fantastic spot and of course home to the Little Desert Nature Lodge. Then we have Wyperfeld National Park. These are all fantastic assets in our region, but we need to make sure that they are better promoted. We need to see government investment in that.

We also need to see better connectivity from a public transport perspective so we can ensure that people who are travelling to Victoria have the opportunity to see these natural highlights of our region. When it comes to public transport obviously local people get great benefit

in having that as well. I spoke in Parliament earlier today about how very, very disappointed I am that this Labor government is actually cutting public transport services in our part of the state. We have seen a cut to services to Warracknabeal. This is not in line with what we should be trying to achieve when it comes to looking after western Victoria. When we are looking after all Victorians we need to improve access to public transport, not shut it down. There is an enormous opportunity to build on our region as a tourism destination through better promoting our national parks and making sure that we do have those improved linkages through our region to get the best economic benefit for our local businesses.

The other matter that I would like to raise in regard to parks and Crown land is in relation to the management of pests. I have received a number of complaints from landholders who own land adjacent to Crown land or national parks. Often you find that the worst neighbours are the national parks, state parks or Crown land. I note that Murray Davis of Dergholm recently contacted me. He also raised a matter at a community meeting I had at Dergholm in a mobile office in regard to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) not undertaking fox baiting in the parks in that region.

As a result we have foxes which are breeding out of control within those parkland areas. They then get on private land and cause an incredible amount of carnage, particularly to the land and other animals; it can even be domestic animals, not necessarily stock. With DELWP not appropriately managing our fox population, they are breeding out of control in preserved areas that are operated and managed by the state and are causing damage on private land. This is something that needs to be addressed by this government. We need to ensure that these pests are appropriately managed.

I will note that pests are not just limited to foxes. We also have an issue around the south-western region in particular, and again I note this issue has been raised by the Dergholm community. It is around the management of kangaroos through that region. The government has extended the kangaroo pet-food trial, which means there is a licence that is available for kangaroos to be harvested and those carcasses to be used as pet food rather than the alternate permit that is available, where you must leave the carcasses to rot.

This is working in our region. We have seen about 15 jobs created in south-west Victoria through the shooters and through the operation of a pet-food abattoir, and there is also a pet-food shop which has opened in Hamilton as well. So we are providing local

jobs and we have got additional services to the region in that people can buy fresh pet food for their beloved pets in the region, but we are also looking at sustainably harvesting our kangaroo population.

Of course when you get kangaroos in their thousands on farmland, they can cause enormous amounts of damage to fence lines, and they do consume a lot of grasses, which has an impact on stock as well. But within the park lands, and our national parks in particular, having kangaroos by the thousands bounding through can damage the habitat and ecological systems, which puts other native animals at risk.

It is something you have to see firsthand — to see a mob of thousands of kangaroos in one area at a time. I think it is exceptionally difficult for people who live in Melbourne to understand exactly the devastation that is caused by kangaroos. However, the kangaroo pet-food trial is working. It ceases in March of next year, and I would call on the government to either continue the trial or, preferably, realise that this has worked and change it from a trial into a permanent system so that we can better manage our kangaroos in rural and regional Victoria.

In closing I would just like to summarise and put on the record the two points that I really would like to see addressed in terms of the government and parks and Crown land legislation in this state. We need to make sure that we do better manage pests and weeds, particularly in those publicly operated areas, but we also need to see greater investment in tourism to best promote our natural assets and build economic growth in western Victoria.

**Mr PEARSON** (Essendon) — I am delighted to make a contribution on the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I was listening with great interest to my friend the member for Yan Yean when she mentioned Cornwall, and I felt it would be remiss of me not to point out that in regard to the descendants of Cornwall their lineage is the original Britons, who escaped to Cornwall and sought refuge after Britannia was occupied by Emperor Claudius in 43AD. They have got that lineage so most people you meet from Cornwall tend to be of a smaller and slighter build, and they were very good miners as a consequence — anyhow, I digress.

I am delighted to make a contribution, and in preparing for this contribution I took a trip down memory lane to 1991. I remember the level of controversy that seemed to envelop this place and the broader community when the Kirner government sought to rename the Grampians Gariwerd. This was work done by Steve Crabb, and it

came about after a two-year consultation process which looked at trying to find a way in which you could name the Grampians and ascribe to the Grampians their traditional name. It created hysterical responses in the community and from the then opposition. I note that it was a topic of some conversation in terms of the appropriation debate of 1991–92. So, for example, Tom Austin on 17 September 1991 called it a ‘stupid decision’ and one of his arguments against it was that:

The names are ones that people could not pronounce or spell.

I note that the former member for then South Eastern Province, Ken Smith, who subsequently became the Speaker in this place, talked about it and said:

I am not sure how much money that cost the Victorian taxpayer ...

this is in relation to renaming the Grampians —

I am not sure how many Aboriginal tribes lived in the area. I am sure Mr Crabb, who is of Scottish descent, would not know too much about the Aboriginal people up there. How can he rename our Grampians? There was no community support for funds to be allocated for the name changes in the Grampians.

He then said:

I remember the beauty of the place but I cannot remember anything about Aboriginal tribes living there. I cannot remember any signs or plaques saying that such and such a tribe actually lived in that area. I do not know where Mr Crabb got his idea from. Perhaps it came to him in the middle of the night and he said, ‘Eureka’, or whatever is the Aboriginal translation, ‘I am going to change the name of the Grampians’.

**Ms Green** — Vision wasn’t Ken’s strong suit.

**Mr PEARSON** — No. The member for Yan Yean interjects. She is right. I do not think vision was the former member’s strong suit.

I put this on the record now because the Kirner government was a very brave and visionary administration. It was very easy at the time for those members to criticise the Kirner government for the things that it sought to do and tried to do, but I note that despite the hysterical reaction that this proposal triggered in 1991 it has now been met with widespread and broad approval. I note the lead speaker for the opposition mentioned the fact that the member for South-West Coast is enthusiastically embracing the notion of renaming local landmarks by their traditional names.

We have come a long way since 1991. As is often the case, it took one administration with the fortitude, the courage and the vision to break through to make it easier for those who have come in their place to

continue with that work. I think that the former Kirner government having done this and Steve Crabb — who is still with us and who is an incredibly bright and visionary person — having been prepared to bring legislation into this place, to have argued for the change and to have gone out to the community and said, ‘This is the right thing’, has made it much easier for our community and for our Parliament to embrace this and recognise that this is a really important concept and an idea which is certainly worth exploring.

Indeed Labor in power has got form in this regard. It was the Bracks government that sought to create the Great Otway National Park. For those of us who go down to the Surf Coast, it is a source of great wonder and great beauty. It is protected for life as a consequence. Speaker, I am reading a very good book at the moment that I would encourage you and others to read. It is Don Watson’s book *The Bush*. Don grew up in South Gippsland and he talks about the land that he grew up on — the farm — and the efforts that his grandparents and great-grandparents went to in terms of clearing the land. He also talks about the destruction of these beautiful forests and the impact that it had. I recognise the fact that these things have passed; these things happened a long time ago. But when we have got legislation like this where we can look at trying to protect our native flora and to provide those protections around it for future benefits, I think it is really important.

I note again the contribution made by my good friend the member for Yan Yean who talked about the fact that the bill is enabling a wider offering for the tourist economy to provide people with the opportunity of frequenting and visiting these places and looking at having a wider and broader experience. Clearly there will be some interstate or international tourists who will be quite taken with the idea of spending their whole time in Melbourne going to Chadstone or the National Gallery of Victoria, for example. But I think finding ways in which we can encourage that regional tourism — and I know the member for Yan Yean is doing a significant amount of work in this place — is really important to try and encourage that movement of tourists from beyond the Hoddle grid and out to the regions so they can look at somewhere to spend money and experience the beauty of Victoria.

I am also quite interested in this bill because it talks about trying to make the assets that we own as a state through the parks more efficient. Certainly I think if you look at the book by Dag Detter and Stefan Folster, *The Public Wealth of Nations*, it talks about the fact that a state can enrich itself by having better and more efficient management of state-owned assets so that you can either get a better outcome or you can do more for

less. Looking at the modernisation that has been proposed in this bill in terms of governance arrangements, reporting arrangements and administrative arrangements, I think it is really quite important that we look at trying to do things more efficiently and more effectively and try to find ways in which we can streamline processes.

I think this bill is also important because of the respect it shows to our first Australians that have lived here for tens of thousands of years. I note that it might have been in the early 1850s — I think it may have been about 1851 or 1852 — when there were very bad bushfires that struck the state. They killed a lot of people and caused an enormous amount of destruction. Don Watson's thesis, which he advances in his book *The Bush*, is that one of the issues at play was that Indigenous Australia used low-temperature fires to try and regularly clear out the bush. They looked after their tribal lands very well, they managed them carefully and they made sure that they properly maintained them.

There was talk that when white settlement occurred in Victoria and as white Australia started to push into inland areas, they could see areas which had been previously well-tended had become overgrown. That was obviously as a consequence of the diseases that quickly spread through white settlement in terms of smallpox, influenza or other forms of disease that had basically laid waste to those tribal communities and ensured that the underpinning land was overgrown. So Watson's thesis is that effectively the reason there was such a terrible fire in the early 1850s was the fact that we had lost so many Indigenous Australians that they could no longer properly care for the land in the way in which they had done for tens of thousands of years. All the ones that were left were probably fighting to survive.

It is a wideranging bill, and I appreciate there will be wideranging comments made. As we stand here in 2017 and we look back to the past and to some of the bile and venom that was thrown at the Kirner government, it is important to recognise now that we have come a long way. We are now far more mature, and we have a far more considered approach to Indigenous relations. We have got far more respect in terms of the way we treat our first Australians. I would like to think a great part of that is due to the visionary work of people like Steve Crabb and the Kirner government, who put this on the map in the first place and made people think about the notion of renaming sites to reflect their Indigenous heritage. For those reasons I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr RIORDAN** (Polwarth) — I also rise today to speak on the Parks and Crown Land Legislation

Amendment Bill 2017. As is often the case in this chamber, I follow the member for Essendon, and I think today he took us on a fanciful journey of history discussing the great achievements of Joan Kirner and Steve Crabb. I am sure that while he was able to find history books that elicited the fact that they may have been responsible for the renaming of the Grampians Gariwerd, I think sadly that is not the main memory most Victorians have of the efforts of Joan Kirner and Steve Crabb in the state of Victoria.

Nonetheless, I digress. I think many of the young people in Victoria who were not able to get into trade schools or technical schools probably remember Joan Kirner's effect on the state of Victoria more than her name change of very, very well-known landmarks in Victoria. However, on that point we will disagree, but I do want to talk a little bit about the Anglesea Heath, which is being spoken about a bit today, and acknowledge, as the member for Gembrook did, the representatives of the Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna, known as ANGAIR, who have come to Parliament today to hear about this addition to both their local area and the state as a whole.

The ANGAIR group is a group I have known for quite some time, first in my role in the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority. They have been a very strong and vibrant community group, and they have done a lot of work both in coastal management in terms of something as simple as finding the plants and establishing the plants at the large roundabout that is at the entrance to Anglesea and also more interestingly in the work that they do in naming, recording, propagating and looking after the many rare and delicate species of plants and orchids and other things along the coastline. In fact they also have a marvellous collection of animal specimens for the area in their care. It is great — particularly for groups like ANGAIR — when a government can share a large part of our state estate with a group that we know will look after it.

Of course the reason that this event has happened is that we have had the closing of the Alcoa coalmine. It is a very large lease. It is about 7500 hectares, I believe, in that area, and of course we are now relying on strong government management and direction in what will become a new area of the township and along the Great Ocean Road and in the Otways more broadly. It is important that we have a government that is going to be prepared to continue to invest in the natural environment and the assets that a community like Anglesea has in the abandoned coalmine area.

We see within the Great Otway National Park from one end to the other what has been a growing national

estate for the community to potentially enjoy, admire, work in, play in and learn from, and yet, sadly, we are seeing a government's inability to fund that properly. I know myself some of the great spots, which I went to as a child, whether it is the waterfalls at Erskine Falls or whether it is Hopetoun Falls, and a number of places there are badly underfunded. There are blackberries, there are weeds, there is a whole raft of problems. If we get a flash flood, basic and necessary infrastructure is wiped away. The government has refused to properly fund parks, particularly in recent years with bushfire threats. Once again in the Otways, where there have been severe bushfire threats, we find that our parks and maintenance budgets are being used for bushfire management and not for maintaining these great natural assets.

We have a wonderful new estate available in the Anglesea area that I for one know will be really well managed and looked after by a great band of volunteers, but what support can those volunteers expect into the future? That we do not know. What support will that coastal environment get? It is very fragile and delicate, and it is under huge pressure from international and domestic tourists on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly basis. For those living in this area these are real concerns that they have about what resources there will be to continue to maintain it. So we welcome the addition of the heathland. We welcome the opportunity for this to be preserved forever for the state of Victoria. We welcome the opportunity for the growth that will come for young people, environment groups and others who will be able to learn from, protect, propagate and grow this ecosystem of plants and animals that have been there and been kept.

On one hand we have what a lot of people have not liked about the mining industry and the coal industry, and in a bizarre twist of fate we have an opportunity where so much land was set aside that was perhaps once to be mined and used but has in fact been left untouched for the last 50 or 60 years now. So the state is getting back a great asset, and it is going to be important that once the huge assets of Alcoa leave the area this state government actually puts its money where its mouth is, puts its real commitment to the environment in place and ensures that groups like ANGAIR continue to be supported and that catchment management authorities continue to be supported, along with any other groups that are there looking after the environment. It is also going to be important that this government attempts to get a really good management plan in place for the other land that is the balance of the Alcoa estate and provides an opportunity for the Anglesea community to benefit and for visitors to benefit and that it does this in a way that works in with

the environment. So with that I too will be supporting this bill.

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) — It is a pleasure this afternoon to speak on the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I am going to begin with a quote that I really love, which is:

If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it.

We must not only protect the countryside and save it from destruction, we must restore what has been destroyed and salvage the beauty and charm of our cities . . . Once our natural splendor is destroyed, it can never be recaptured. And once man can no longer walk with beauty or wonder at nature, his spirit will wither and his sustenance be wasted.

That is from Lyndon Johnson, a former President of the United States. The national parks movement started in the United States, and it has been a great legacy of American administrations across many years. It is due to actions of the people of America that we have national parks around the world. National parks, state parks and indeed our local parks in our communities are very special places for people. I love them and know that they provide not only endless opportunities for us to go and visit and enjoy wild splendour or recreational opportunities but also incredible value in protecting our biodiversity. The range of animal species that you see in these national and state parks is really something to behold, and our parks also of course play a really important role in conserving wildlife.

I saw one of the Wilderness Society's pamphlets recently that had some information about the fact that the threat of wildlife extinction is very real. In fact it quoted some research that talked about endangered species being twice as likely to survive in a national park as they are to survive anywhere else.

Of course national parks are not just about the beauty and wonder; they are a real economic boost to our economy. We know, for example, that half of Australia's 3.1 million overseas tourists go into national parks, and a quarter of all Australians are likely to take a nature-based trip in the next 12 months. I say good on them — get out there and enjoy the wild outdoors and get to see what is an amazing display of beauty, nature and wildlife.

This bill is very important, because not only does it deliver on the government's election commitment to incorporate the Anglesea Heath into the Great Otway National Park — because that is another election commitment that we said we would do and on which

we are now delivering — but the incorporation of Anglesea Heath is important, as even the opposition has conceded —

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

**Quorum formed.**

**Ms GRALEY** — I will resume talking about the Opposition Whip's electorate. This is a very important bill, and I would like to think that he is right behind us in supporting this bill. The bill also makes other additions or alterations to parks and amends the names of two parks. As the member for Essendon has so eruditely put it, Labor governments in the past have led the way in the renaming of parks. It is for the very good reason that we do recognise the cultural heritage and the cultural significance of these parks to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I note that there are two examples of this in the bill. There is a new name for the Mount Eccles National Park. Changing the name acknowledges, as I said, the cultural importance of the Budj Bim area, which has been identified by scholars of the world as being the first engineering project. It dates back at least 6600 years and precedes Stonehenge and the pyramids of Egypt. I will have to go and have a look at that. The other one is of course the Canadian Regional Park, which will be given the new name of the Woowookarung Regional Park to acknowledge the deep engagement of the Wadawurrung people with the park and the local area. Woowookarung means 'place of plenty', which highlights its importance to the Wadawurrung for food, shelter, medicine and culture.

I also note that the bill has in it provisions to modernise governance in relation to several government boards and advisory bodies in the Crown land portfolio. This is very important. These public assets need to be really well managed, and it is very important that we have good governance in place, good management and good boards overseeing what really are treasures for us all. I note that in one case part 9 of the bill amends the Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991. Who does not love the Royal Botanic Gardens? I went there as a kid, and I still go back there as an adult; it is one of my favourite places in Melbourne, and of course also out at Cranbourne. Part 11 of the bill amends the Zoological Parks and Gardens Act 1995. I recently had some friends visit from overseas, and I have to say there is nothing like witnessing an Australian animal with fresh eyes. People are just amazed when they see kangaroos jump and those cuddly koalas go to sleep after having a good feed of eucalyptus leaves.

It is very important that some of our best tourist attractions and places that we all enjoy going to are managed properly and are there for future generations to enjoy. I would like to finish my contribution by acknowledging the great work of the minister in this portfolio area. She is certainly on the side of the environment. She is no climate change sceptic, that is for sure. She knows that climate change is real, and she wants to make sure that we have a suite of legislation that she is constantly bringing into this place that not only protects our environment but makes sure that, as the former President of the United States mentioned, we have a planet worthy of leaving for future generations.

I was looking through some old pamphlets recently and came across the good old G'day Australia posters.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Ms GRALEY** — That is right. It said, 'Kids don't remember their best day of television', and I thought, 'How true is that?'. When I sit down with my family and talk about the good times, we often remember our times out camping in national parks, when we were down there in a caravan, the wombats that wandered into the camp site, the walking tracks with packs on our backs and egging the kids on to get to a beautiful bay where they could swim in a pristine sea or in a lovely cold river. We also remember the camp site marshmallows and the laugh of the kookaburras, and I must admit I did attend a few 'Save the Prom' meetings in my days down at the Prom.

I finish by saying that on this side of the house we are about preserving, extending and creating extra open space, national parks and state parks for future generations, unlike those over the other side who do not have a track record of creating any new national parks. You know that I am all on the side of the development of the great forest national park, so I would like to finish by commending the work of the minister again and wishing this very worthy bill a very swift and, I hope, universally supported passage through the houses.

**Ms VICTORIA** (Bayswater) — I rise to speak on the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I have got to say, I rushed down to the chamber because I thought there were another couple of speakers before me and that in fact one of the speakers before me was a Greens member. But they have now decided to withdraw from this debate. I would have thought that with the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 the Greens, having only two members in this chamber, would actually both want to speak on it. Alas, they have decided not to. On our side of the house we do actually believe that it is incredibly

important to be able to get up and talk about what is important to this state, especially when it comes to parks and the environment.

I want to speak not only as the member for Bayswater but also in my dual capacity of shadow Minister for Tourism and Major Events and shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. We are not objecting to this bill. We think there are certainly some good things that are fairly straightforward about this, and I will get into that in a moment. Some of the provisions in the bill are to add the Anglesea Heath into the Great Otway National Park. There are certain additions, excisions and corrections to other parks and reserves, and I will get into a few of those in a moment.

Importantly the bill changes the names of two very significant parks. It also makes some smaller amendments that need to be done, but there are a couple of things that we would like tightened. There are reporting requirements that have been diminished, and I will get onto those, which of course can lead to a reduction in accountability. Then there are other parts of the bill that I think are not quite clear enough, and there needs to be some clarity around particular payments, which I will come to.

As I said, the bill is fairly straightforward. The addition of Anglesea Heath into the Great Otway National Park is fine. Of course Anglesea Heath adds to the beauty of tourism in that area. As the member for Gembrook said before, in January we were at Anglesea at the caravan park down there. I was there with the member for Polwarth as well. The owners of the caravan park were very distraught, as were hundreds of people standing there in the pouring rain, including constituents of mine. I have never seen such rain; it was very tropical. The people at the Anglesea caravan park and also at other areas around there were objecting to changes to the management surrounding those sites and the lack of consultation around that change of management. It is a great area of the world, leading right onto the Great Ocean Road, the Surf Coast and then further afield. I think there is certainly some merit in what is happening there, but there are other things that are not going so well in that area, and I really do wish the government would address those. From a tourism perspective, it is incredibly important.

The bill makes some additions to other parks, including Croajingolong National Park, Greater Bendigo National Park, Lower Goulburn National Park, Warrandyte State Park, Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park and Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park. It was interesting to hear one of the speakers before talking about the importance of the goldfields region and how it

does take in a fair chunk of the state. I was out in the goldfields region not so long ago, and people are very scared about the creation of additional national parks and the fact that it may well lock up land and take away an incredibly important and somewhat lucrative component of their economy when it comes to tourism. In fact one of the local businesses said that if the park there was locked up as a national park and people were no longer allowed to fossick or use their metal detectors in there, they would lose at least 80 per cent of their business. Of course that would force them to shut down; as far as their finances go, they cannot afford to lose 80 per cent of their business and stay alive. So we need to be sure that when we are doing things with national parks, all of those sorts of things are taken into consideration. It is not just about locking up the environment; it is about the whole grand scheme of things.

There are also changes to park names. Canadian Regional Park will change to Woookarung Regional Park. Mount Eccles National Park will change to Budj Bim National Park, and of course that is now up for World Heritage listing. It is an incredibly important historical site not just for Aboriginal Victorians, not just for Victorians or Australians but in fact for the world if we look at the sorts of relics that have been found there. We know that we have always said that the Aboriginal culture is the longest continual culture in the world. There is certainly proof of it going back more than 6000 years, which predates tourist meccas like the pyramids in Egypt and places like that.

On a trip to China many, many years ago I went and saw Banpo Village — I think that is what it was called, but I am not exactly sure — and some of the relics there were about 5000 years old. If people want to come to something that is truly significant, Budj Bim predates that, and we need to be making more of the fact that from a historic point of view this is a very significant area for the entire world. There is a lot of opportunity there.

The bill also has changes to the definition of the central plan office so it is consistent across legislation.

I talked briefly before about the reduction in reporting requirements for the zoo board and the Zoological Parks and Gardens Board, and also the Royal Botanic Gardens board. I think we need to just wait and see how that works out, but obviously a reduction in reporting requirements can lead to somebody going a little astray, so I will watch with great interest what happens there.

I just want to talk briefly about the botanic gardens and what a great asset they are, not only the one here in town but also the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne. I have been to the Cranbourne gardens,

and the opportunity there for tourism is endless. It is a magnificent place. I know when I was down there that the friends of the gardens were putting on a plant sale to help raise some money. At the moment that is something the friends can do but the botanic gardens themselves cannot, so there are some changes in this bill which enable that to happen both there and at the city site.

I love to visit the city site several times every summer and see the Australian Shakespeare Company, Glenn Elston and his troupe, put on Shakespeare's plays and performances. It is interesting to note that it has been such a success that Glenn got to put it on in Kew Gardens in London. They loved it so much, they have now given him a contract. I believe he is over there at the moment putting on some Shakespeare in the park, something that they had never done in London, and of course it is being done by an Australian, a Melburnian no less. They have certainly embraced it here at the Royal Botanic Gardens and are now doing the same in London.

One thing that does trouble me a little in the bill is the ability for public sector employees to now be able to have sitting fees paid to them if they are on certain boards. That has always been an exception. If you worked for the public service, you certainly could not get paid in a board position. Again it is something we will need to watch very carefully. Nepotism and all sorts of things can creep in, so it is something that I will watch with great interest.

There are, as I said, lots of good things that are going to happen with the introduction of this bill, including the changes to some of the park names, with them now having their traditional names given back to them. For example, Canadian Regional Park, which is up around the whole Sovereign Hill and Federation University's Mount Clear campus area, is in Wadawurrung country. The new name for it has meaning to the local people as a 'place of plenty'. I think it is really important for them to have something that is so symbolic. It was a place for their food, their shelter, their medicine and also their culture. Also there is the name change from Mount Eccles National Park to Budj Bim National Park. As I said, it is now up for an international register. It is really important. That is not far from Hamilton and Port Fairy, down in the Western District. It is something that I think is going to be far more on the tourism radar when people understand exactly what this park contains.

There are, as I said, some good initiatives within this bill. There are some things that I am going to keep a very close eye on, as I am sure will all my colleagues. Those initiatives that are good I hope go through well and do work well in the future, and those that we will

keep a watchful eye on I hope also go well. As I said, we will not be opposing this bill.

**Mr CARBINES** (Ivanhoe) — I am pleased the opposition have indicated they will not be opposing the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I am also pleased that they are spending a lot of time watching the government in action. They certainly did not get around to doing a great deal in the four years they occupied these benches, for which they paid a pretty significant price at the ballot box, make no mistake. In case there are any misconceptions that they did not get anything done when they were on this side of the house, I will outline some of the atrocities they committed on the environment during their time on the Treasury benches, and I will get to them shortly.

I want to start by acknowledging some very significant people in the community, the many community groups and individuals who have advocated over many years for the protection of the very special heathlands of the Anglesea area. Some of those groups include ANGAIR — the Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna — which is a very well-respected and well-regarded organisation over very many decades in the community, the Anglesea Heath Consultative Committee, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Friends of Eastern Otways and the Geelong Environment Council. Certainly, too, there are legends, as they are in that part of the world — people like Joan Lindros, who I got to know during my time as a journalist at the *Geelong Advertiser*, where I had the opportunity to learn a lot more about the environment over very many years and about her staunch support and advocacy over very many decades.

There have also been many very passionate locals, including people like Peter and Christine Forster.

Of course Christine Forster has put her hand up over many, many years as a policy advocate and is someone who has been an innovator and a great contributor to the significant work done in our departments and across our government in an advisory capacity, and we certainly acknowledge her contribution and Peter's. Other passionate locals include Ros Gibson, and I did touch on Joan Lindros, a long-time president of the Geelong Environment Council. Also, I acknowledge Margaret MacDonald, a former president of ANGAIR, and Helen Tutt, immediate past president of ANGAIR. Helen and her husband, Jim, were named Surf Coast shire's 2016 Citizens of the Year. In addition, there is Neil Tucker and of course the late Mary White.

In relation to the heathlands, can I say on a personal note that it certainly is an area that is very familiar to me. In Charles Street, just off Noble Street, near the golf course my grandfather built what was our family holiday house a very long time ago. Unfortunately it is no longer in the family but it certainly was for generations, and at 95 years of age he still reflects on those memories in his place down there in Geelong. But can I say, having built a place there many decades ago, it was an opportunity for my family to understand the very close connection that community has and its advocates have for the environment and to understand that to be here today speaking in relation to those protections in this bill is very significant.

I will just touch on the fact that this bill ultimately delivers on our election commitment to incorporate the Anglesea heath into the Great Otway National Park. The Great Otway National Park was a significant achievement of very many local community advocates and environmental groups but also in particular great leadership from people such as former Premier Steve Bracks and his government at that time in relation to the work that they did.

I will also be touching on some of the amendments to the names of some of the parks and some other administrative processes. In particular on the Anglesea heathlands I just wanted to touch on the Victorian National Parks Association's (VNPA) media release. They noted some of the specific important aspects of the Anglesea heathlands, and I just wanted to commend the VNPA for their advocacy and work in helping inform how the government can best legislate for the protection and the advancement of our environment. They have been a critical partner and also an objective guide I think to how we can better improve public policy in these areas.

The heathlands, and I quote:

... cover 6500 hectares, protect more than 700 native plant species (about a quarter of Victorian flora), including over 100 orchid species.

Listed on the register of the National Estate for their biodiversity value, both in terms of their highly diverse flora and abundance of native wildlife.

An ecological asset of international significance.

...

They are home to more than 100 species of native birds, including the Powerful Owl and Rufous Bristlebird.

Twenty-nine mammal species, including the critically endangered New Holland Mouse and rare species such as the Swamp Antechinus and White-footed Dunnart have been recorded in the heathlands.

That is from the media release from the VNPA on 2 February 2017. So this is a very significant decision in this legislation to incorporate those heathlands into the Great Otways National Park.

Traditional owner groups have also been consulted, particularly in relation to the Mount Eccles National Park and the Canadian Regional Park. The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation has also been consulted in relation to the amendments to the Greater Bendigo National Park and the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park. I just wanted to touch on some of that, particularly from the Ballarat *Courier* of 20 July 2017, and I quote:

Traditional owners have welcomed the renaming of the now former Canadian Regional Park during a smoking ceremony on Wednesday morning.

Byron Powell, an elder uncle indicated, and I quote:

It is a gift to the community, so it is not just Aboriginal land, it is everyone's land.

If you stay in Ballarat, if you live your life in this region, you will be able to say to your kids and your grandkids, you were here the day this land was given back to the community.

I think that says a lot about the traditional custodians of our land, their attitude and their perceptions of what the natural environment means to them and the way in which they give expression to it.

On 31 March 2017 the Warrnambool *Standard* reported in relation to Mount Eccles and the Mount Eccles National Park, which will be renamed Budj Bim and the Budj Bim National Park respectively. I quote Dennis Rose, who said:

We need to look back prior to the 1830s to recognise that there was a rich history in this area for many, many thousands of years prior to some of the written history.

Of course as a Gunditjmara elder he makes those points. The work around the Budj Bim National Park and some of the work that is being done internationally but also to provide economic and employment opportunities for traditional owners as part of that project has been very significant.

To our department in particular I want to thank them for their leadership and work and also the engagement of the local community. That has been a very significant piece of public policy work that has really set the tone for the way in which we want to tackle these issues into the future.

Can I say also, as the minister said in the second-reading speech, that this delivers on the Andrews Labor government's 2014 election

commitment in *Our Environment, Our Future* to incorporate the Anglesea Heath into the Great Otways National Park. When I talk about the Budj Bim National Park, that takes me in particular to some brief comments I want to make in relation to the work of the government under successive environment ministers, both the honourable member for Bellarine and the honourable member for Mill Park.

Since coming into office in 2014 we have legislated, as the Andrews Labor government, to reinstate the ban on cattle grazing in the high country; we have protected national parks from overdevelopment by legislating out 99-year leases; we have delivered Victoria's first biodiversity plan in 20 years — *Protecting Victoria's Biodiversity 2037*; we have begun a review of native vegetation guidelines; established the forest industry task force; legislated to establish the Canadian Regional Park; and completed a full review of the Environment Protection Authority Victoria.

We have conducted significant stakeholder discussions on a new marine and coastal act and reform of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. Marine national parks — currently under threat by the federal Liberal government — were the result of the pioneering work of environment ministers like a former member for Bundoora, Sherryl Garbutt. We will fight vigorously to protect and maintain and advance the interests of our marine national parks.

We have also cut back on ridiculous fees and charges in our camping grounds and parks, which were all about the previous government undermining the capacity and the desire for healthy parks and healthy people. It is all about the need to engage communities and generations of Australians and Victorians. They are the next advocates of the environment and the way in which we take care of that and advocate for it. That means we have to find the right balance to make sure people are encouraged to take their families there and to engage in the natural environment.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research in my Ivanhoe electorate and the very considered advice they provide independently to government for them to make good policy decisions and introduce good laws for our environment, which we have seen here today. I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms BRITNELL** (South-West Coast) — I rise to make a contribution on the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, a largely procedural bill, but one which will make some significant changes to a special place within my electorate.

I know this bill makes amendments right across the state and seeks to add the Anglesea Heath to the Greater Otway National Park, amend the names of Mount Eccles National Park and Canadian Regional Park in relevant acts to reflect their Aboriginal names, streamline various administrative processes in several acts so that they are more efficient and fit for purpose, modernise the governance arrangements applying to several government boards and advisory bodies in the Crown land portfolio, and make several other improvements and amendments. But I will focus my contribution on the proposed change of name for the Mount Eccles National Park in Macarthur in my electorate.

This bill will change the name of the park to Budj Bim National Park, recognising the Indigenous name of the peak from which the park takes its name. It comes at a time when the area is opening up for more nature-based tourism and makes it clear that Mount Eccles is an important part of the wider Budj Bim landscape. This is a significant change and recognises the deep cultural connection the Gunditjmara people have with the Western District's volcanic plain.

'Budj Bim' means high head, and is recognised by the traditional owners as their ancestral creator's body. It is an extinct volcano with the roughly conical-shaped peak rising to 178 metres. Estimates of the age of the last eruption are that it occurred at least 30 000 years ago. The eruptions produced the Tyrendarra lava flow, which flowed towards the ocean at Tyrendarra. These eruptions and lava flows altered the drainage in the area, producing wetlands and swamps, which became incredibly important for the Gunditjmara people in a couple of ways.

The Gunditjmara community developed a system of channels to divert the water of the Darlot Creek into adjacent low-lying areas, trapping eels and fish in a series of weirs and ponds — and I will speak a bit more about that later. The rocky landscape also helped them survive the Eumeralla Wars. Settlers disturbed the hunting grounds, spreading out the kangaroos, which meant the Gunditjmara people would hunt cattle and sheep into the stony rises and use them for food. Settlers were not able to ride their horses onto the stony country, meaning the Gunditjmara people were able to fight a guerilla campaign and save themselves from a complete genocide.

The peak was named Mount Eeles in 1836 by Major Thomas Mitchell after William Eeles of the 95th Regiment of Foot, who fought with Mitchell in the Peninsular War. A draftsman's error meant that the name was rendered 'Mount Eccles' in 1845. The area was proclaimed a national park in June 1960, and

covers some 55 square kilometres and has around 40 000 visitors a year.

Mount Eccles National Park is Victoria's first co-managed national park. The partnership between Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Parks Victoria was formalised with the establishment of the Budj Bim Council. The council forms part of the 2007 native title settlement agreement between the Gunditjmarra people and the Victorian government, bringing them together to manage the area's significant landscape. In 2004 the national park, Lake Condah, the former Condah mission and the Tyrendarra area were put on the Australian National Heritage List as the Budj Bim National Heritage area, one of only three landscapes in Victoria on that register.

In January this year I was pleased to be at Lake Condah to be with the traditional owners as the Prime Minister announced the landscape had been included on Australia's tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage listing. It was a momentous day, one that the traditional owners have long worked towards. They knew this part of their country was special and significant, and they have worked tirelessly to ensure its significance has been shared with the wider community. We were shown through the site's aquaculture system, and the guides' connection to country was clearly on show. They were passionate and protective of this special place. It is a place where you get a spine-tingling sensation, knowing you are looking at a system which redefines history.

The 30-kilometre system of channels, weirs, holding ponds and trapping areas used to farm eels and fish has been carbon-dated back some 6600 years, predating the Egyptian pyramids and Stonehenge. The large settled Aboriginal community used woven baskets to trap eels, which were smoked in the hollows of trees and used for food and trade with other tribes. Further down the road at Tyrendarra a fire in 2006 uncovered remnants of about 70 stone huts. Built in a horseshoe shape, they are unlike anything else found in Australia and indicate settled villages.

Together with the extensive aquaculture system, the remnants of the huts have changed the perception that Indigenous Australians were nomads and foragers. Budj Bim shows that the local Aboriginal people were the first organised, intensive farmers in the world. These weirs and channels are equivalent to the way sheep and cattle farmers farmed, with fences put up to contain their stock and to manage their feeding, breeding and numbers. This aquaculture system did exactly the same thing, but for eels and fish rather than sheep and cattle. The ingenuity is incredible.

The Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation is running increasingly popular tours of the landscape. You cannot help but be in awe of the fighting spirit and ingenuity of the Gunditjmarra people, and I would encourage every member of this place to make a visit to and experience this wonderful place for yourself.

I have known many of the people involved with preserving and promoting this extraordinary landscape for many years. I met many of them during my time as the unit manager of the Kirrae Health Service at Framlingham — people like Aunty Eileen Alberts and her niece Tanya; Michael and Sandra Bell and their beautiful boys who have grown into amazing young men; Denis Rose; and of course Damien Bell from the Winda-Mara community. They are just a few of the many terrific Indigenous people across the electorate of South-West Coast that I have met, worked with and called friends for many years.

I gained a deep understanding of the local Aboriginal culture while working at Framlingham, where I had many interactions and dealings with the other Aboriginal cooperatives right across Western Victoria, in fact across the whole state, particularly Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative in Geelong, Winda-Mara in Heywood, Dhauwurd Wurrung in Portland and Gunditjmarra in Warrnambool. From my work there I began to get a better understanding of the challenges the Indigenous population face. This name change is a small gesture, but will go some way towards healing. The connection the traditional owners have with the land has spanned generations and it is really wonderful to see the next generation — young adults I have known since they were small children — taking an active involvement, ensuring the stories of their ancestors will live on for generations to come.

I understand this is a beautiful place, a special place. I spent much of my primary school years living in Hawkesdale, just a few kilometres away from the park. Our family picnics and outings were often to what we knew as Mount Eccles. I have spent hours exploring the lake and the lava caves, and enjoying picnics in the picturesque grounds with my brothers and sister. It is a special place for many different people for many different reasons, particularly for the traditional owners. But I am really excited about the plans to better promote this special place; it is going to be of huge benefit to both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

There is so much potential for cultural tourism in the South-West Coast electorate. In Warrnambool, where the Hopkins River meets the sea, extensive research has uncovered artefacts that have been identified in some research as being at least 35 000 years old, and

there are indications it could point to civilisation some 80 000 years ago. Shells, rocks and charcoal found in the cliff faces at the headland, now known jointly by its European name Point Ritchie and its Indigenous name Moyjil, is probably the oldest human activity site in Victoria.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to tell the story of our first peoples. Imagine an Indigenous tourist trail linking the significant sites across the south-west region. When cruise ships visit Portland, the cultural experiences at Budj Bim and around Portland itself are favoured highly among tourists. The Glenelg Shire Council expects cruise ship visits in Portland and tourism in general to boom when Budj Bim becomes a World Heritage-listed site.

There is an extraordinary thirst for knowledge around Indigenous history and this is something we should be looking at developing. I know there has been a significant investment in Budj Bim, and that works on tourist infrastructure at the site are progressing well, but there is so much more that can be done. Roads and rail leading to these areas are of incredibly poor quality. What sort of impression does this leave when visitors are travelling on roads that are full of potholes, with warped and cracked surfaces? We need to look at the bigger picture and make comprehensive plans for tourism that also look at how people get to and from these places safely. This is a potential World Heritage site, and the 6000-year-old channels are in better condition than some of the roads built in the past decade; it is shameful.

While this bill is relatively procedural, it could bring massive benefits to my region, but we need long-term strategic thinking to make the most of this opportunity.

I congratulate the traditional owners of Budj Bim, who have worked so hard to protect and promote their sacred land. This name change is down to their efforts. I look forward to visiting and experiencing the landscape again very soon.

**Mr HOWARD** (Buninyong) — I wish to just add a few words with regard to this Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I note that it does have the approval and support of those opposite. It is interesting to hear people like the member for South-West Coast speak quite enthusiastically about the Mount Eccles National Park and the new name that it is now going to have — an Aboriginal name — following the passing of this bill. But in speaking to the bill, I cannot help but make the observation that it is Labor that has really been supportive of our national parks system, our regional parks system and our general parks

system across this state over a long period of time now in creating new national parks, in ensuring that we provide the appropriate protection for our parks system and then in working with Parks Victoria to ensure that people can appreciate those parks. Sadly, those on the other side of the house do not have that sort of history. We certainly know that when they came to office in their last term they were happy to put cattle in the Alpine National Park and carry out a number of acts which clearly caused deterioration in our parks and did not show the leadership that should have been shown.

Today I want to speak briefly on the one section of the bill that is important to me and the people of my electorate. Last year they were very excited when, as promised by the Andrews government when in opposition, we created the Canadian Regional Park in an area of my electorate where we have had state forest and an area of bushland for some years, but it did not have the protection of park status until last year. When some of the forested land was handed back to the government in recent years because the forestry companies leasing that land did not want to continue with forestry, there was the concern that the land would be lost as natural wooded country and might be settled for more residential purposes or something like that, but the Andrews government's announcement of the Canadian Regional Park and then the enactment of it in legislation last year was something greatly appreciated by so many people across my electorate, led by a community coalition, particularly the Friends of Canadian Corridor. It was very exciting for them to see that land protected and to know that funding had been attached to that so that Parks Victoria would be able to work with the community to further protect and enhance that land.

At the same time, however, we involved the Wathaurong people, people like Uncle Bryon Powell and others, in discussions about the land. They were terrific in sharing their knowledge of the land, and they wanted to continue their involvement in the process of the land. It was suggested that perhaps the Canadian Regional Park was not the best name and that perhaps an Aboriginal name appropriate to the Wathaurong people would be better, and after some thought they came up with the name Woowookarung. That proposed name was advertised amongst the people of Ballarat, and I am pleased that they said, 'Yes, we think Woowookarung is a good name'. As people may know, it is a Wadawarrung word that means 'place of plenty'.

It was great to see the minister come to the Canadian Regional Park to announce the name change to Woowookarung Regional Park just last month. This leads us along a path to see that this particular area of

land — extensive parkland around the eastern fringe of Ballarat — is now protected as the Woookarung Regional Park, and that the community can continue to be involved. They have been particularly excited by the work of Parks Victoria since the area became a regional park. Parks Victoria have been enthusiastic in their willingness to work with the community and involve the community in every step of the planning.

It is great that there have been a number of community days — one just recently was a tree-planting day held in the park — when the Friends of Canadian Corridor and Parks Victoria worked together to encourage members of the Ballarat community to come and have a closer look, to appreciate some of the specific species of flora and fauna in the park. There is a great range of plants and animals there that are of particular interest and character, and they have been enjoyed and appreciated by a number of people over many, many years.

Now more and more people from the Ballarat region and further afield will have the opportunity to enjoy walking and undertaking a range of community activities in the park in years to come. It was at one stage considered to be a state park, but given the range of community uses of this land, including mountain biking, orienteering and a range of other activities, it was felt by the community that a regional park was the appropriate status for this land so that they could have the full enjoyment of this land.

I really want to congratulate the Premier; the two environment ministers we have had over the period of this government, who have taken a particular interest in this; and the community, who have been so involved in this process — and that includes people like Bryon Powell of the Wathaurong community. I am really excited to see that we have moved to legislate the new name, the Woookarung Regional Park, and I trust that this is going to be another step along the way to people being able to appreciate this valuable piece of parkland.

**Mr CRISP (Mildura)** — I rise to make a contribution on the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The purpose of this bill is to rename a whole lot of various parks and to make some other arrangements around how employees can receive payments for their service in the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council and on the garden boards and to provide for a whole raft of measures.

I will raise a couple of concerns up-front. Firstly, I note that this bill does take some of the red tape out of this legislation, and that is indeed useful. However, there is a little bit of concern around the payment of government employees. Traditionally for government

employees who were involved in various boards it was considered part of their work and therefore they were paid for their work, and their service on these boards was considered part of that employment. I note that with this particular bill regardless of where a person is employed they will be paid to be a representative on a board. I think this will attract some attention over time.

What I want to focus on mostly really is trying to present a solution to a particular issue around national parks in my electorate. The issue I want to raise is where ducks can be hunted. I say right up-front that all I want to do is keep the peace around this issue.

Around Mildura there are only two locations where the Game Management Authority has allowed ducks to be hunted. This point will link in with what I have to say later about national parks. First let me talk about the two areas where duck hunting is allowed. One is Yelta, which is an area where there are a number of locations such as the Brickworks Billabong, which is at the base of the cliffs on the edge of the Murray River flood plain. There are houses around this area. In the last two duck hunting seasons there has been an issue with shot landing on the roofs of houses and in their gardens and backyards and that has led to the police being called. It was so bad at Yelta last year that when police officers were in attendance some buckshot landed on a police officer's hat. However, there were so many hunters in the area — because it was almost the only piece of water available — that it was impossible to work out who had fired the shot.

Lake Hawthorn has several housing subdivisions around it. In fact it is a built-up area; it is within sight of the middle of Mildura. It is listed by the Game Management Authority as an area in which people can hunt ducks. Again, all I want is peace. This is certainly not a suitable area for hunting ducks.

What we need to do is look at the options. There are a number of national parks around Mildura. The two that come to mind are the Murray-Sunset National Park and the river red gum national park. Areas west of Mildura are traditional areas. They are known in local language as Finnigans and the Wallpolla wetlands. The local people have come up with a solution to this. They merely want the same arrangements as exist for the Cape Conran Coastal Park, which is on Sydenham Inlet. Game duck may be hunted in the park during the open season and dogs are allowed for flushing or retrieving ducks. In certain sections of the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park game duck, stubble quail and hog deer may be hunted in season, and again dogs are allowed. Then at Lake Albacutya Park the hunting of pests and feral animals — rabbits, foxes and cats — is allowed and the hunting of

game duck is allowed during the open season. If such arrangements could be made in the Murray-Sunset National Park and the river red gum national park, I think this would be a fair settlement for all.

It appears from some bit of odd detail that in a spot down near Finnigans Bridge which we know as Lily Pond there is a line drawn through the middle of Lily Pond. At one point you can hunt ducks there, provided you are allowed to carry your firearms across the national park to get there. This has been largely abandoned by the local duck hunters. Certainly in this case the only solution in the Murray-Sunset National Park is to allow Deadmans Creek Track as access for duck hunters to Lily Pond and Horseshoe Lagoon that is nearby, in much the same way as the matter is dealt with in other national parks. Similarly, when we get into the river red gum area near Wallpolla Island there are certain places there that would lend themselves to the same arrangements as we have in the Cape Conran, Gippsland Lakes and Lake Albacutya parks.

This is becoming important. I have concerns about the next duck hunting season and how that will turn out if we continue to allow duck hunting in the only two locations within an allotted distance from Mildura — that is, only in built-up areas. This will end in disaster. I think we can all see this coming. It is going to make things extremely difficult for members of our local police force because they will be involved. It is way too far away for the Game Management Authority to be involved, but its officers may have to be.

It is a difficult situation. I think common sense needs to prevail and it needs to prevail before the next season. Duck hunting is legal but it is certainly not suitable for built-up areas. I think that all that everybody wants is for peace to prevail on this issue. This bill would have been an opportunity to add amendments for some common sense. They are not there but I am sure there will be an opportunity at some stage to do that. However we do this, we need a solution to this problem in Mildura before it gets completely out of hand. With those words, we are not opposing the bill, but I certainly urge those who are listening to and reading this to cast their minds to finding a solution that takes duck hunting out of the built-up area of Mildura.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing).**

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

## RACING AMENDMENT (MODERNISATION) BILL 2017

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 8 June; motion of Mr PAKULA (Minister for Racing).**

**Mr CRISP (Mildura)** — I rise to make a contribution to the Racing Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2017. The purpose of the bill is to provide for some changes to the racing industry. These changes have come about following the minister having conducted some inquiries over time. We will be amending the Racing Act 1958 to make further provision for Racing Victoria and to deal with minor matters that have arisen. This bill has come out of an inquiry that has been undertaken and that the Minister for Racing has led.

The bill makes necessary changes to the constitution of Racing Victoria. It clarifies that Racing Victoria is not a public entity for the purposes of the Public Administration Act 2004 or the Financial Management Act 1994, given that the board is appointed by the minister. It allows the minister to exercise powers conferred on the minister as adopted in the changes to the constitution in relation to the selection, appointment, resignation and removal of directors of Racing Victoria, including the chair and deputy chair, as agreed to.

There are a number of concerns around this bill. There are no concerns with the bill itself, but there is a leaked document that has been circulated, and it certainly raises some issues. The notes, leaked from a meeting between Minister Pakula's office and Racing Victoria Limited, show that it was previously the minister's intention to introduce reforms that would allow the minister to accept and consider minority recommendations from an advisory panel on which he has a government representative and allow the minister to make board appointments outside the recommendations of the advisory panel. It would give the minister power to remove a board member at any time and replace him with a ministerial appointment without forming an advisory panel.

The minister has backtracked on these proposals and the amendments stating, that he would not accept minority reports from the advisory panel and that he would have the power to make appointments outside the recommendations of the advisory panel. He can only remove a board member for bringing racing into disrepute, but a replacement must go through an advisory panel rather than the minister being able to make the appointment himself. The advisory panel

composition has also changed and consists initially of five representatives: one from the combined metropolitan clubs; two from Country Racing Victoria; a representative from other racing stakeholders, including owners, trainers, jockeys et cetera; a departmental representative; and a representative from the minister's office. The minister's representative will be replaced by the chair after the first year.

Racing is very, very important, particularly to our country towns. Thus I know the shadow minister has sought some feedback from Country Racing Victoria, the Melbourne Racing Club and various other members of the racing community. Even in Mildura our racing is important. We have a track at Sandilong Park in Mildura, and they have a number of race meetings that are the highlights of the social calendar. Everybody certainly loves to dress up and go to the races once or twice a year, and that is enough to establish an industry. Those days are important not only for the social calendar but for our employment calendar as well. These form part of our local economy, and the jobs that come from these occasions are very important to country towns.

As you move across my electorate, you move very much into our picnic race format, and for our small towns, from Manangatang to Wycheproof and others that conduct their once-a-year or twice-a-year race events, these are major events in their community that have a huge social and economic impact. These are great days out, bringing country people together to relax in each other's company, and by enjoying each other's company you are also supporting each other. Those friendships endure over time and give support, because things are not always well in the Mallee, but these events form part of supporting the mental health of the community.

Whenever there is any talk of change, there is nervousness within the communities about where it will end up and what it will mean. Will there be changes to how our country race meetings are run? Many people are very, very sensitive because of the changes that occurred around harness racing a very, very long time ago but that still remains in the psyche of local communities. Whenever racing does come up to be amended by a bill, there is a great deal of interest within the communities because they all know what they have and they all know what they want, but they also know that they wish to improve their country way of life.

When you leave the Mallee and look across country Victoria, it is repeated place after place. As I gather, there are 62 racing venues across Victoria, and all of them will be gearing up right now for the Spring

Racing Carnival. That spreads that economic impact from beyond my electorate to right across Victoria's economy, and the closer you get to the capital cities, the bigger these businesses become.

I spent many years in Ballarat, and during that time the importance of what was occurring just to the north of Ballarat in the racing industry was quite substantial. A young man, a Mallee trainer, Mr Weir, has had a great deal of success, and I cannot help but talk about a Darren Weir event in Berriwillock. Darren came from Berriwillock, and in the year that he won the Melbourne Cup, the Melbourne Cup visited Mildura. It was taken around various places — I caught up with it — and it was generally in the possession of a white-gloved and very large security guard. In my photo album I have a picture of the Melbourne Cup sitting on a fold-up deck chair outside the Berriwillock hotel but with no security guard attached. It had been passed around among school children and then put on a chair, and it was still there an hour later. I think that is something that is outstanding in the honesty of a small country community, and what Darren Weir did by coming back to his home town with that cup, again, made a huge difference to Berriwillock. They are still talking about it now, quite some time later.

The industry also goes beyond the racing and training area; it has a large breeding operation, and this is in electorates with a little more satisfactory climate than mine in the Mallee. The breeding operations, again, employ people, and you go back to the fact that this industry is extremely important to the Victorian economy, and with the spring carnival just around the corner, the industry is really gearing up for that. Springtime is when the activity occurs. It is very much centred on Melbourne, but it is also across country Victoria. The single race meetings at Manangatang and Wycheproof are all on during that October through November period.

What everybody wants out of the racing industry is stability. What we need to make sure is that whatever we do we support that stability concept and that we also assist in making sure that everybody feels confident about the future. All the clubs, owners, trainers and workers want stability, and we certainly hope that this bill will deliver that stability.

With that, in talking about our industry I say that The Nationals in coalition are not opposing this bill, but we certainly want to make sure that we have stability and confidence in our racing industry because it is vital for our country economy, it is vital for our metropolitan economy and it is therefore vital to Victoria's economy.

**Ms HALFPENNY** (Thomastown) — I rise to speak on the Racing Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2017, which seeks to amend the Racing Act 1958 to create a new independent board to oversee the management of racing in Victoria. As members know, there is quite a bit of background, and because of that background, because of the things that were going on in the industry and on the board that were not good, the government had to investigate, review and step in to ensure the integrity of racing in Victoria.

Horsereading is an important segment of the sports industry. It is worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and it plays a great role in employing Victorians. It is also an industry of entertainment and a great contributor to our economy. However, it is absolutely vital, particularly in these areas where gambling and winning and losing are involved, that it is an industry that is properly regulated, that it is a fair industry and that it is very transparent in the way that it is managed.

In the past, and this is also the case with greyhound racing, racing boards, whether it was the Racing Victoria board or the Greyhound Racing Victoria board, were made up of people that came from the actual industry and who had a direct interest in the industry. While on the face of it we could say, 'That's good; it's great that there are trainers and breeders and other people within the industry that are on these boards because they have a very good knowledge of the industry', this also created conflicts of interest between board members and in the decisions that needed to be made. Particularly in industries where animals are involved and where there are high stakes due to betting and gambling, we really need to make sure that these industries are regulated and managed beyond reproach.

Members in the house would recall that last year the industry went through quite a difficult period, with a lot of ups and downs and chaos. The chairperson of the Racing Victoria board had to step down. There is a whole lot of investigation and there are other matters happening at the moment around that. As I understand it, legal proceedings are afoot so I cannot really go into all the detail, but because of these actions and what was occurring on the board the Andrews Labor government had to step in and take charge of things to ensure that racing could continue in a proper and organised way.

The bill makes clear that Racing Victoria is not a public entity and that it will continue to operate under the Corporations Act 2001. It is not becoming a government body in any way; it still continues to be an independent board that is run in the interests of the industry, but there is now the ability for oversight so it is not just the industry that will run the board. There

were also problems with the governance structure, which this legislation will sort out so that we have proper governance on the board as well.

The bill also provides the Minister for Racing with the power to appoint and remove the chairperson, the deputy chairperson or the directors of Racing Victoria. The decisions made around this legislation were not made lightly. They were made because of the very great difficulties and real problems that occurred in the industry. If these things are happening and they are very real, then we have to take steps to ensure that they do not happen again; we have to take steps to make sure that the industry is beyond reproach and that there can be no accusations made, because there are a lot of people relying on this industry for their jobs, for their wages, for their living. As well as that, racing is a great contributor to the economy. It is something that has many other effects — on tourism, international guest numbers and so on.

Last year the government made a commitment to amend the Racing Act 1958 to ensure that there was fair and appropriate management of Racing Victoria. After consultation with Racing Victoria shareholders, this bill now seeks to amend Racing Victoria's constitution so that a better system is in place for appointing board members. We will have a system that allows for the removal of particular members of the board if they are not behaving in a proper way or in accordance with the constitution and good governance. The constitution will also outline who can or cannot be a member of the board of Racing Victoria.

As I have said, because of the ongoing problems of last year independent governance was needed. Fair and competent management needed to be put in place to allow the industry to go forward and to ensure that there were no questions asked. When you are talking about things such as gambling, where there are high stakes and a lot of money is involved, it is absolutely vital that an industry is overseen in such a way that nobody can point any fingers at it or bring into question any members on the board or any of the decisions made. In order to provide for good governance and an industry that we hope will continue to grow and flourish, board members will require certain skills. They will also have to demonstrate that they do not have any conflict of interest in terms of their involvement in or profiteering from the industry. This will impact on whether or not they can be on the board.

This will be a diverse board. It will be one where people have some knowledge of the industry but also one that covers things like governance, financial regularity and a proper way of administering things, in

a professional way. While the Racing Victoria board will remain an entity under the Corporations Act, it will also be responsible to the public. This will ensure that the public has confidence in the board to manage Racing Victoria so that it continues to thrive and contribute to the Victorian economy in a way that we all expect it should. As racing is part of the sports betting industry area, it needs a higher degree of probity and it needs to maintain a higher standard. The government is confident that this legislation will remedy a lot of the problems that have occurred within the racing industry. We believe that we will be able to put all those problems of poor governance and other issues behind us and go forward in ensuring we have a great, thriving industry that all of us can be proud of.

**Mr T. BULL** (Gippsland East) — It is a pleasure to rise and make a contribution on the Racing Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2017. As we heard in the second-reading speech, the purpose of the bill is to amend the Racing Act 1958 to support recent changes to the constitution of Racing Victoria (RV). This ability is very important in the industry, and we look forward hopefully to a period of stability, but I want to make some points about how we arrived here in the first place. There was a process and some, let us say, toing and froing to arrive at this point in time, and I want to make some comments on that.

I want to go back to the start of where this eventuated, and to do that I need to refer to the contents of a document that was made available earlier in the year. They were notes from a memo relating to the minister's office that said the minister's original intention here was to allow him to accept and to consider minority recommendations from this new advisory panel, to allow the minister to make board appointments outside the advisory panel, and to give the minister the power to remove a board member at any time and replace them with a ministerial appointment without forming an advisory panel. In the toing and froing that has gone on since then, it is pleasing that all of the items that were listed in that memo have been backtracked on by the minister, and we now have, I guess, what the industry sees as a slightly more workable document. What remains is some concern within the industry. They have indicated a clear want to move on and get some clean air to provide that stability that the industry needs.

What I would like to do for a few short moments is reflect on some of the commentary around at the time and the reasons behind what I think was the minister's initial reasoning to change the board appointment structure. It goes back to when an integrity probe was announced into former Racing Victoria chair Mr David Moodie. Before I go any further it is appropriate to put

on the record that Mr Moodie was completely cleared of all issues that were raised as a result of that probe, and in my discussions and engagement with him David has proved to be nothing more than a great racing man and a strong advocate for the sector.

At around about this time we had some headlines in the papers, including 'Furious minister "planning racing overhaul" after David Moodie steps down amid integrity probe'. We then had a further article on 20 December in which the minister was quoted as saying:

It is no longer appropriate for the board of Racing Victoria to be chosen by the people and organisations that it regulates.

Given this comment, let us have a bit of a look at where we have ended up. What we now have is another layer in the board selection process with an appointment advisory panel, and we need to look at who is on the panel, given that the minister has to accept the recommendations from that panel in making these appointments. We have got a representative from the combined metropolitan clubs, a representative from Country Racing Victoria, a representative from the other racing stakeholders — owners, trainers and jockeys — a departmental representative and a representative from the minister's office. The minister's representative will be replaced by the RV chair after the initial appointments, but let us go over this for a moment. The minister said at the time:

It is no longer appropriate for the board ... to be chosen by the people and organisations that it regulates.

We have then got an advisory panel that is mostly made up of the organisations that the board will regulate. He set up a structure that is very similar in some ways to what he said was not acceptable in December.

I want to put on the record that we on this side are happy to see how this structure plays out. We want to make the point that still having representations from organisations that the board will regulate on is not necessarily a bad thing. All we have now though is the minister signing off on which members he chooses from those advisory panel recommendations that are of course made by the people who are regulating the industry.

Some commentary at the time said we needed a structure that was similar to the AFL Commission. That was some of the media commentary around at the time, and we need that level of independence. The AFL Commission is elected by the 18 AFL clubs. They are each entitled to make nominations and, should an election be necessary, then the membership is decided by a vote of the AFL clubs. We have got a clear example there of those that are being governed by that

commission having a say in who represents them on the commission. To me it makes perfect sense for industry and organisation stakeholders to be involved in the process of who does in fact represent them.

There is another element that I want to talk through for a moment. We have had a situation in the past, and I have discussed this with the minister in person, where we have had some appointments to boards in relatively recent times where people have had strong connections with the Labor Party — the Latrobe Valley Authority, the Victorian Fisheries Authority and several others. What we obviously do not want to see here is political appointments to the process. I have got every confidence that the minister, who is now at the table, will ensure that that is not the case, but nevertheless it is something worth putting on the record because we need people on the board who are not political appointments and who have the best interests of the racing industry at heart, if you like.

Winding up, we have got a scenario here where we are not opposing this bill. We do genuinely believe that those that are involved in the racing industry — the metropolitan clubs, Country Racing Victoria and other stakeholders where we are talking about owners, jockeys and trainers — should have a say in who is governing that organisation. Absolutely they should have a say in it.

The irony is that we have had some commentary going back to last year and earlier this year saying that we need to remove all that and have a level of independence within that process, but we have now actually set up a process where those people — those stakeholders who apparently were on the nose that had any involvement in the selection process 12 months ago — are now heavily involved in the selection process by having that representation on the advisory panel.

We do know that the racing industry in this state has been through a level of uncertainty. We have had a new CEO appointed recently in Giles Thompson, whom I look forward to catching up with in the coming weeks, and we will no doubt catch up over the spring carnival. The racing industry Victoria is massive, and I often state that I believe it is under-recognised in many areas due to the economic benefits that it brings to Victoria. I am not talking about our major carnivals, the spring carnival and the like, or even the Warrnambool, Swan Hill or Mildura carnivals. The country race meetings that we have on the 62 tracks across the length and breadth of Victoria are absolutely critical to local economies and to the social fabric of the towns where those clubs generate so much economic input. In fact many small businesses in a number of our towns will

often comment that they go through the year, but the time of their local racing carnival is when they have that mini boom, if you like, that makes their small business profitable.

I noticed that in a recent presentation I received from Racing Victoria they spoke about the importance of the social fabric of racing in Victoria. What we have seen, though, over recent years is a shift in meetings from what I would call our traditional and true country and rural clubs to what I call provincial clubs. We have got clubs like Stony Creek, Avoca and Traralgon having less meetings, while more meetings are being held at Cranbourne, Mornington, Ballarat, Bendigo and the like. Whilst I understand the reasons for that — because turnover is greater at those majority venues — we also need to make sure that the social aspect of racing and the economic impact of racing on our smaller clubs in those rural areas are also recognised.

In winding up, we do hope that the changes here, as proposed by the minister in this bill and I guess as adopted by Racing Victoria in their constitutional change, do provide the stability that they are seeking. We do believe it is correct that those entities involved in the advisory panel process have a strong say in the board who will represent them, but we also make the point that we have not moved a long way from what we originally had. Yes, we have an advisory panel in place. Yes, we do have some political input on that advisory board. But we still predominantly have those organisations and entities within the racing industry making the recommendations from which the minister chooses his board members. That is not a massive shift away from the process that we had in place previously. I wind up by saying that this is a critical industry to our state, and I wish it every strength into the future.

**Mr PEARSON** (Essendon) — I am delighted to join the debate on the Racing Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2017. As others who have gone before me have indicated, this bill is about modernising the governance arrangements for what is a really important industry. At the outset I would say that I am an unabashed and unashamed supporter of the racing industry. Racing is something that really forms part of our state and our culture. I am reminded of a story that was told to me many years ago about Sir Henry Bolte. As many would know, Sir Henry liked to go to the races. One Saturday, I think it was, he was off to the track and picked up one of his advisers or maybe a public servant. The public servant was a young gentleman. He jumped in the car with Sir Henry and said, 'Well, Premier, shall we go through the briefing papers now?'. Sir Henry said, 'That is an excellent idea, and we will read the form guide on the way home'. I am not quite sure how productive

Sir Henry was in the afternoon after a day at the track and on the juice, but nonetheless that was the way in which the state was governed.

Racing has such a vitally important role in our state. As the member for Gippsland East pointed out in his contribution, it is a key regional economic driver. There are an enormous amount of jobs that are created in regional and rural Victoria as a consequence of racing. Indeed if I look in my electorate, I have got the Moonee Valley Racing Club within the boundaries of the district of Essendon. The Victoria Racing Club is just outside in the state district of Melbourne. Both race tracks, which are obviously major metropolitan tracks, employ many local people in my community. It is really important that we come out and make sure the governance arrangements are appropriate, modern and up-to-date and reflect contemporary practice so that punters have got a degree of confidence in terms of knowing that the industry is properly and appropriately regulated.

There is no doubt that in recent times the industry has had its challenges, and this legislation seeks to address that. But I go back over decades, whether it was watching the trots on *Penthouse Club* in 1978, betting on the cup every year or going to the races in a past life, I think it is fair to say that nothing is more Melbourne than the Spring Racing Carnival, I would hazard a guess. Particularly when the weather is fine, spending a day on the punt and enjoying yourself is a great pastime.

I appreciate the fact that it is not for everyone. I understand there are some in the community who are prohibitionists, people who do not like having fun, having a drink and having a punt. I respect that. I respect the fact that that is how they choose to spend their money. Indeed I am reminded that it has been said that gambling is a tax on the innumerate. It is a saying that has stuck with me, but I am still attracted and drawn to the punt on a semiregular basis.

It is important that we get the appropriate governance arrangements in place, because if you do not have proper arrangements in place, then there is the risk that untoward practices or corruption can ensue. I note that when Robert Askin was the Premier of New South Wales, there were all sorts of allegations about his conduct and behaviour in high office. He was a very wealthy man, and he said it was due to the fact he was a canny punter. That was one explanation. Apparently when he died in 1981 his estate was valued at around about \$2 million. The average inflation rate from 1981 to 2017 was 3.77 per cent, so if you compound that, his estate would have been worth about \$7.57 million today. I think if a Premier of the day passed away and his estate

at probate was \$7.57 million, that is a significant amount of money. Maybe he was a canny punter. Maybe it was the fact that in New South Wales they did not have appropriate governance arrangements in place which enabled Mr Askin to be such a canny punter.

Ensuring that we have got an appropriate integrity regime in place for the sector is really important. The codes are all very different, and they have their different challenges and different strengths. Obviously the concerning actions of some within the greyhound industry has caused enormous concern in the community. That has resulted in strident action being taken by the minister, and it has been dealt with by the Perna review.

I think harness racing at times has had its challenges. One of harness racing's problems has been the fact that it has tended to move around metro Melbourne a fair bit. I remember it used to be out at the showgrounds, and in the 90s when I used to go to Moonee Valley a bit on a Saturday night it used to be there. I spent many a fine Saturday night at Moonee Valley on the punt watching the chariots go around like in *Ben Hur*, and now it is obviously at a more dedicated facility out at Melton, but harness racing has got its own challenges as a consequence of that. It is a bit of a challenge with harness racing because it probably does not have the allure and glamour in the same way that thoroughbred racing has. It does not capture the public's imagination, but it has a really important role, and I think if we were to wander over the road to the Cricketers Bar now, I am sure we would be seeing a variety of pacers racing around regional and rural tracks in country Victoria and also throughout regional Australia.

Where you have got instances of market failure and where you see instances where there is regulatory failure, there is a need to step in and address that. I think that while it was noble and while it made sense to have a board that was comprised of representative members of the sector, of the industry, sitting in that governance role, in light of recent events it is clear that that is probably not the best model. Therefore there is an opportunity to try to make sure that you have a board that reflects the needs and requirements of the organisation, recognising that there are specific skills that will need to be brought to bear. I would imagine that those people who would put themselves forward to go on the board of Racing Victoria, even if they do not have that industry background or are not of the industry, would have a degree of interest in the thoroughbred industry. You would not put yourself forward if you were a prohibitionist. You would not put yourself up to be a non-executive director of Racing Victoria if you dislike

going to the races, dislike being on the punt or dislike imbibing at the Spring Racing Carnival.

So this is about making sure you have got the right skills that are brought to bear. I have chaired a board in a past life, and it is about making sure you have got someone with a good legal background and understanding, someone who understands corporate governance and appropriate behaviour for an independent statutory authority at a board level, someone who is good on strategy, someone who is good on finance. Making sure that we have got the right regulatory framework in place is really important. The bill seeks to address that and to make sure we have got the best practice that represents the needs and aspirations of punters and consumers. People need to have confidence that if they are having a punt, it is an even bet, it is a fair bet and they have got a reasonable chance of getting their money back as the case may be. If we want to make sure that the industry can continue to survive and prosper, that we can continue to employ thousands of people in regional and rural Victoria, thousands of people across metropolitan Melbourne, many of whom would live in my electorate and the member for Niddrie's electorate, then we need to make sure that we have got those appropriate governance arrangements in place.

Racing is a fantastic industry. It is in our lifeblood. It is part of the very fabric of our society and our community. It plays such a vital role in our culture and in our social identity, and it is to be celebrated. If you celebrate racing, if you support racing, if you recognise the fact that it has got a really vitally important role to play in our culture, then we need to make sure we have got appropriate governance arrangements in place to protect that, to preserve that and to ensure the integrity is in place now and into the future. For those reasons I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms BRITNELL** (South-West Coast) — It gives me great pleasure to speak on this bill, but I am only going to make a short contribution, mainly to put on the record the incredible impact the racing industry has on my electorate. The bill goes about amending the Racing Act 1958 to support changes to the constitution of Racing Victoria (RV), which in part will give powers to the Minister for Racing to appoint the chair, deputy chair and directors of Racing Victoria, rather than them being appointed by the industry itself.

As the member for Gippsland East said, it seems the minister has significantly changed his position since these reforms were first proposed. From the information the member has presented, the minister wanted to go a lot harder on this but has backed away

from that stance, which is pleasing. This bill is about ensuring there is a level of independence and aims to minimise conflicts of interest, and I hope that the minister's differing position ensures that that remains the case and is the case. I note in the coalition's consultation on this matter the RV board and stakeholders wanted to get on with the job of running Racing Victoria and did not want to see it hindered by a parliamentary process, obviously. They want to see a stable structure in place to ensure there is certainty and confidence in the racing industry. This is incredibly important for the future of Racing Victoria, especially in the country.

Racing has a huge economic impact on the whole state and particularly in my electorate, so any lack of confidence has potential to do a huge amount of harm to the local economy. As my colleague the member for Gippsland East pointed out as well, racing is an enormous benefit to the region's economy, and many members in this place are regular attendees at the famous Warrnambool May Racing Carnival. The Minister for Racing was there last year and is a regular attendee, as am I, and I have been for most of my life since probably three years of age. It is a fantastic three days of racing that is enjoyed by thousands of people.

The Warrnambool Racing Club recently released findings about the economic impact that this event has on our community just from last year's carnival, and the figures are mind-boggling. The carnival generated a total expenditure impact of \$13 million; \$10.6 million of this was spent in Warrnambool, with \$7.3 million representing new money generated for Warrnambool. The three-day carnival had a total attendance of 30 514, with more than 68 per cent of these attendees coming from outside the Warrnambool region.

**Mr Pakula** — A record.

**Ms BRITNELL** — You are quite right. It was a record, and beautiful weather helped that enormously this year as well.

**Mr Pakula** — More than they did at Randwick.

**Ms BRITNELL** — Warrnambool did do a Randwick, and it will continue to do a Randwick.

That means the carnival brought 8500 individuals into the region that otherwise would not have visited and generated 26 190 bed nights for Warrnambool and 10 616 bed nights for other parts of our region. But the impact of the industry in South-West Coast extends well beyond the three days in May, providing employment across the region all year round. Between August 2014 and November last year there were

582 individual horses stabled in the area, and my colleague the member for Mildura pointed out that Darren Weir has quite a large horse contingent down in that area. He is from Berriwillock, I think, and is very successful in our region, along with other trainers, both local and from afar, because of the conditions and opportunities we have down our way for this industry. Over the past three years the average horse numbers using facilities at the Warrnambool racecourse has grown from 2600 to 3391.

Warrnambool City Council values the racing industry in the Western District in excess of \$100 million. The council estimates one in every 14 adults are directly employed or involved with the racing industry in the south-west, making the region the most active in Victoria in terms of participation in the industry. This growth is not just good for those directly involved in the racing industry; it also provides a welcome boost for those indirect industries that service the industry, like the veterinarians, feed companies, farriers, transport companies and many more. The industry also makes a significant contribution to other industries, including tourism, retail and hospitality.

Let us remember that in the countryside a lot of our hard work to keep this club going so well is certainly from the governance structures in place and certainly by having good boards, but a lot of those people do it voluntarily, and the board members themselves do an enormous amount of work outside of the work that is just directly involved in the board itself. I see them around the town, and the work they do for the community of the Warrnambool Racing Club and the Bushfield racing club, which put on a day a year, is an enormous amount of work for volunteers.

A report commissioned earlier this year found the industry generated \$8 million in direct expenditure for the south-west coast in the 2015–16 financial year. It also found that more than 800 people were directly involved in the sport while it sustained 61 full-time equivalent jobs on the south-west coast. So it seems absurd that the government is seeming to support the thoroughbred racing industry while sending draft codes of conduct to the greyhound industry which place unrealistic demands on greyhound breeders and trainers in an attempt to gain brownie points from activists who are aiming to shut the industry down by stealth.

The draft code of practice is overreaching and aims to increase costs, making people jump through ridiculous regulatory hoops. Yes, we want to make sure that animal welfare is a priority, but these proposals go well beyond good practice. They talk about preventing puppies from being bullied by their brothers and sisters

and feature a huge amount of red tape and regulation that simply will not work and is unnecessary. It shows that whoever is drafting this has absolutely zero knowledge of animal management, and I would encourage anyone with an ounce of knowledge to get involved and have their say.

We must have common sense prevail. I get quite frustrated, as someone who has worked very, very closely with animals for 20 years or more — a lot more actually, but professionally for 20 years — and I find it quite offensive that those who actually do not work in the field and who are not experts are suggesting that we do not care about our animals. I can tell you many a story, particularly in August — this time of year — where I would go out, my husband would go out or my children would go out, depending on who was able to at the time, at 10 o'clock at night, at midnight or at 2.00 a.m. to check cows, to make sure that if any were down with calving paralysis, they were given anti-inflammatories immediately so they had the best chance of getting up. I have covered cows with space blankets. That is what we use for hypothermia in the human world, and I use the same techniques in the animal world. You would be amazed at the science and the understanding we have of animals.

I look at the vets who work with the horses in the racing industry. They are doing acupuncture on their horses, which respond quite well, I might add, to acupuncture. I do not think these are people who do not really care, or that I am a person who does not care. I do get a little bit frustrated when I hear about puppies being bullied by other puppies and managing animals in a ridiculous way. Of course animals are our priority. They have to be.

I think it is really good that we see good governance. I am always for good governance, and whilst this is a bill that is procedural in nature it does set about ensuring a strong and modern framework for governance and transparency of the Victorian thoroughbred racing industry. That is vital for the confidence in the industry for all the reasons I have spoken about and for helping both the volunteers and the board members to continue so we can get the best result we possibly can get for the economy in my electorate using a respectful approach to animal management, with everybody enjoying the sport as we know it and the sport continuously improving.

**Ms GREEN (Yan Yean)** — I too take pleasure in joining the debate on the Racing Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2017. Like the speaker before me, the member for South-West Coast, my love of racing began with going to meetings at Warrnambool. I was probably about the same age as the member for

South-West Coast, and I used to go primarily with my grandmother. It has been a great tradition of my extended family to go in great groups to the races in Warrnambool, whether it is to the three-day carnival in May, which includes the Grand Annual and the Warrnambool Cup, or to picnic race meetings like Wangoom and Bushfield, as the member for South-West Coast mentioned. I used to go with my grandmother, Eileen Plozza, nee Brady — note the Irish name. The Irish are always in there having a punt. I lived with her in 1983, and I punted with her throughout the Melbourne spring carnival. We had win after win, including the ultimate for me, a Melbourne Cup trifecta win of \$1650. I bought a bed, a fridge and a washing machine, which were great when I moved out of home.

The start of this year was also great for our household because my husband has a small ownership in a little sprinter called Knowable. He probably owns a nostril or part of its mane as his share in Knowable. He is indicative of so many other racehorse owners in this state. Victoria has more members of racing syndicates than anywhere else in the country. It is a great tradition. I had the pleasure of being at Flemington when Knowable won a group 3 race. I do not think that the members of Flemington had ever seen so many owners crowd into the winners circle, because there were just so many individual owners involved in this little horse. I think that is why it is incumbent, because there are so many people that depend on this industry and have an interest in this industry, upon the government to ensure that it has good governance. I am pleased that the Minister for Racing has brought forward some changes to modernise the Racing Act 1958 and to change the constitution of Racing Victoria to ensure the board is independent and that conflicts of management are minimised and appropriately managed.

I think there are so many people reliant on the industry for their livelihood or their recreation and fun that it is really important that credibility is seen to be there. As others have stated, the thoroughbred racing industry in Victoria generates nearly \$2.1 billion in value annually to the Victorian economy. It sustains more than 19 600 full-time equivalent jobs. Almost 72 000 people are engaged in the industry as an employee, volunteer or participant, with around two-thirds of those residing in regional Victoria. In my own electorate there is a great interest in racing. We also punch above our weight because we have Melbourne Polytechnic campuses at Yan Yean and Epping that do more training in the horse industry than anywhere else. Whether it is training farriers — it is everything you could think of — from one end of the racing industry to the other they do it at Melbourne Polytechnic. The great Roy Higgins in fact

taught at the Northern Lodge campus of what was then NMIT and is now Melbourne Polytechnic.

Many of the schools in my electorate have equine studies for the Victorian certificate of applied learning at years 11 and 12, and there is enormous interest. I know in dealing with the tourism industry, which I do as the Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism and Major Events, that there is a great interest in linking those two areas for visitation and for the history of our industry. In the northern suburbs we have got the Living Legends museum, not far from Tullamarine Airport, which has the old champions and the old Melbourne Cup winners living there, and that is open to the public.

The stories in racing are really what make it. It is a vital industry. That is why it is really important that the minister has been able to secure the support of the industry. Significant consultation for these changes was undertaken with Racing Victoria and its member shareholders: the Victoria Racing Club, the Melbourne Racing Club, the Moonee Valley Racing Club, Country Racing Victoria and industry body members, including the jockey and trainer organisations.

Racing Victoria shareholders resolved at a special general meeting earlier this year to adopt amendments to the Racing Victoria constitution relating to the appointment processes for the Racing Victoria board. Under the Racing Victoria constitution the new arrangements provide the minister, who is at the table, with the power to appoint the chair, deputy chair and directors of racing. This is in contrast to earlier arrangements where directors were appointed by Racing Victoria shareholders, which effectively meant that directors were appointed by the people and organisations that they were charged with regulating. This was a situation that obviously could not go on. The appointment process for new board members is underway, with an advisory panel convened under the Racing Victoria constitution to advise the minister on the suitability of candidates.

As a government, I think we have had some runs on the board since we have been in, in just over two and a half years. In 2016 we announced a \$10 million funding boost for the new world-class grandstand that is under construction at the moment at Flemington Racecourse. It is quite a different landscape that you go to now. I have attended several race meetings since then and I feel a bit sad. I am a bit of a traditionalist; I love those lawns, but I am sure there will still be lawns. I have loved the Art Deco features of that gorgeous old building. It is such a well-known course, and interest and patronage is growing all the time.

The Flemington Racecourse's \$135 million project is a significant investment for this key piece of the Victorian major events calendar, and 350 further jobs are being created by the project, including 50 building apprenticeship opportunities. The Andrews Labor government has also contributed \$11 million from the Victorian Racing Industry Fund (VRIF) to race-day attraction programs at racing clubs across the state since we were elected in November 2014: over \$23 million in VRIF grants has been allocated for infrastructure related to racecourses, clubs and programs. There has been \$200 000 in seed money to kickstart the Australian Trainers Trust, which provides financial assistance to trainers and their families in times of need, and \$160 000 has been provided to the National Jockeys Trust to help the families of jockeys who have lost their lives or been seriously injured at work. As Labor people, something we are always committed to is safety and protecting those in whatever work they are involved in.

The bill is a change that is necessary. It is important. It is welcomed by punters and the industry alike, and I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr HIBBINS (Prahran)** — I rise to speak briefly on the Racing Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2017, which makes changes to the government's arrangements for Racing Victoria. It essentially gives the Minister for Racing the power to appoint directors of Racing Victoria following consideration of an advisory panel report. The advisory panel will include the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Regulation; a nominee by the minister; a nominee by Victoria Racing Club, Melbourne Racing Club and the Moonee Valley Racing Club; a nominee by Country Racing Victoria; and a nominee appointed jointly by industry body members which, I understand, are essentially the same groups that were directly appointing the directors in the first place. However, this bill gives the minister direct control to action further powers in regard to the board.

In the Greens view it would be really good to have a nominee from the wider community or from an animal welfare background. Certainly we will be reserving our right to pursue amendments in the other place, because there still are concerns about animal welfare within the racing industry and, most of all, within jumps racing, and that is where I will be directing most of my remarks.

It really is time for the Victorian government to follow its counterparts interstate and put an end to jumps racing, which is responsible for the death and injury of many horses. I think it is only South Australia that still allows jumps racing in Australia. Some of the stats in regards to

jumps racing really demonstrate that horses and jockeys face far greater and far more unacceptable risks in jumps racing than they would in other forms of racing. Their horses are 18 times more likely to suffer a catastrophic limb injury and 121 times more likely to endure other injuries to their head, their back or their neck. Jumps racing horses are 19 times more likely to die than if they were flat racers. Jockeys have a 41 per cent higher likelihood of suffering a fracture. We have had 41 jumps horses die in Victoria over the last five years.

These are really unacceptable numbers. Of course injuries to horses and jockeys occur in other horse races on the flats, but when you look at these numbers from a jumps racing perspective, they are at unacceptable levels, and it is time that the government got with the program and banned jumps racing. We know that very recently a number of jumps horses have died. Wee Frankie broke his neck falling over a jump in Casterton. Bring Back fractured his shoulder and had to be euthanased after a fall in Warrnambool.

Jumps racing horses are often older than flat racers. They may have existing weaknesses in their joints. They are generally approaching the ends of their careers. They are running at high speed over long distances, jumping many jumps during the race. They are not necessarily bred for jumps. They fall towards the end of their races. They are exhausted, and they are just having too much asked of them.

This ban really should have been put in place in 1991, when a Senate select committee actually recommended that jumps racing be phased out by state governments over three years. That did not happen. In 2009 Racing Victoria suspended jumps racing due to the continuing high incidence of injuries. This would have been a great opportunity for the government to step in and finally put an end to jumps racing.

But it is not too late. The government can step up to the plate, and certainly the Greens have been encouraging them to do so. There might be efforts to suggest that you can make this sport safer by modifying the jumps, but it really has been proved that that cannot be the case. Just like greyhound racing, no matter how you change it, this type of racing presents an unacceptable risk to the welfare of animals and its jockeys too.

We need to be realistic that there is also a conflict of interest within the racing industry, with both the need to regulate and protect animal welfare as well as promote the industry. So really it is up to the government to step in and legislate to put an end to jumps racing. I think even in the racing industry itself we have a waning enthusiasm for jumps racing.

Animal welfare groups have been campaigning tirelessly to protect jumps horses. Along with these organisations the Greens and of course the majority of our community have been calling for a ban on jumps racing. I think it does have wide community support. I certainly implore the government to put an end to jumps racing and prioritise animal welfare. We will be supporting this bill as it does make those governance arrangements, but I certainly call on the minister to act on jumps racing.

**Ms McLEISH (Eildon)** — It is with pleasure that I rise to speak on the Racing Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2017. I am a passionate racegoer, and have been for a very long time, and a big supporter of the industry.

The purpose of the bill today is to amend the Racing Act 1958, which is quite an old act, to support recent changes to the constitution of Racing Victoria, as were resolved at a special meeting of shareholders on 18 April this year. It is a very short bill, and I know it is a bill that the industry is keen to see move quite quickly.

Racing is certainly a big business. Racing Victoria is a public company limited by guarantee, and it is also bound by a constitution. The bill before us supports changes to ensure the board is independent, conflicts of interest are minimised and conflicts of interest, where they occur, are appropriately managed. Racing Victoria sits under the Corporations Act 2001, and that act outlines all obligations and requirements — the powers, the functions, duties of directors and the financial reporting and auditing. This bill will ensure that Racing Victoria will not become a statutory authority or a statutory body.

On 18 April this year amendments to the company's constitution were adopted to amend the appointment process. What that actually means is that the minister now has the power to appoint the chair, the deputy chair and the directors. The minister could also remove a director, certainly when somebody is seen to bring the sport of racing or the board into disrepute. I know that often there is contention around matters of disrepute and what is disrepute, but I imagine it means if somebody is making inappropriate remarks or acting in particular ways. Perhaps they are dishonest, corrupt, fraudulent or their behaviour is particularly dishonourable. Sometimes, as I said, these matters can be contentious, so I hope that all caution is exercised in those circumstances. In essence the minister has the power to determine the composition of the board.

That is where it stands today with this bill, but it could have been quite different. The minister's original intent

has been revealed through notes, and I am glad that he has backtracked somewhat because it gives us an insight into his thinking and perhaps into the government's desire for complete control and into the power of the state. If we have a look at what the minister was keen to do, the minister was keen that this legislation would allow him to accept and consider minority recommendations from the advisory panel on which he has a government representative. I cannot think of any reasons why the minister would want to accept and consider the minority recommendations.

The minister was also keen to make board appointments outside the recommendations of the advisory panel. Again this leads me to think that the reasons behind that were to have ultimate control, not only with appointments but also over what they say, what they do and their recommendations going forward, resulting in him being able to choose what he wants to choose. The minister might like something but the majority of board members might think otherwise, so he was keen to have the power to consider minority reports. He also wanted to have the power to remove a board member at any time and replace them with a ministerial appointment without the advice of the advisory panel. Now I understand the situation of removing somebody who brings racing into disrepute, but perhaps there might be times when the minister would rather put one of their own people on, and they needed to make way for that. Regardless of the performance of that person, regardless of whether they had brought the industry into disrepute, he wanted to have that power to put his own person in. I am glad the bill did not end up going down that path.

As we know, and as other contributors to the debate have mentioned, racing is very important as part of Victorian sport. It makes a wonderful economic contribution — some \$2.1 billion annually with some 19 600 jobs, and a lot of those are in the country. There are 50 000 owners connected with thoroughbred racing, and almost 10 000 horses are being trained by approximately 1000 trainers. There are the trainers that we know very well, and there are a lot of small trainers who race their horses at picnic races.

When we look at the large picture of racing in Victoria it really is quite an impressive story. Most people here would have been to a big event in the city and seen the number of people that attend and the money that is spent oncourse and offcourse. With the horses, a lot of money is spent on farriers, vets and feed. There is a huge amount spent on the paid staff of trainers and the breeders in the industry. There is also a spin-off into local towns from regional races or picnic races. I have quite a number of race tracks in my electorate and

certainly a lot of race meetings, and I know firsthand the spin-off into the towns. You have got to put the event on, and just to get the event going there are lots of purchases, particularly of food and drink. On the day there are often local groups involved with fundraising, whether that involves schools or Rotary Club Australia or Lions Club, and the money that they raise — through car parking, and they might have a sausage sizzle or a barbecue — will go back to the communities. I know that quite a number of years ago Yarra Ranges shire put an economic value on the contribution of the Healesville picnic races — this was many years ago — and I think it was about \$300 000. Many people are drawn to the town, and often they will stay overnight.

When you look at the number of country clubs that are involved in picnic racing, you see that it is extremely important. I want to just mention briefly a number of the picnic clubs in my electorate. I have got Alexandra, for example; they have three meetings a year. They have very big day on Cox Plate Day to lead off the picnic season, and they have Chris Walsh there taking the reins as president. Yea actually has two clubs; we have Yea Racing Club with Denis Smith as president and we have St Pat's Racing Club with Richard Ford as president. Yea Racing Club has three events — they have a big Christmas event — and St Pat's has one event. The people of the St Pat's club have a big day out on the balcony up there and have a wonderful lunch. It is a really great atmosphere with wonderful shade at Yea.

There is equally wonderful shade at Healesville. They have six meetings a year from November, starting with the Derby Day event, through to April. They do not have the Golden Slipper, but they do have the Golden Thong, and that is a fairly big event. David Purcell, formerly of Yea, is the president of the Healesville racing club. Mansfield only have a couple of events, but they do a lot of other work outside racing to raise money and to generate interest and activity around that club. They have a Melbourne Cup Day event and Mansfield Cup Day. Merton have their big single meet of the year, the New Year's Day meeting. Murray Hill has taken over as president there. I forgot to mention that Nigel Fish is the president at Mansfield.

Picnic races are so important because you see the number of people who come from out of town and spend money in those towns. They are bussed in. There are sponsors. There are people from outside the towns who take marquees for the day, have a real work day out and it is a great day out. I know the minister at the table, the Minister for Racing, has been to a number of picnic races. The former minister, Dr Napthine, had also been to many, many picnic races and was a huge supporter.

Also in my electorate is Yarra Valley Racing at Yarra Glen, and that is a little bit different. That is a larger venue with nine meetings, and it has very regular harness meetings as well. They have had a lot of ups and downs in the last 10 years, but they have come through quite well. I want to recognise the paid staff there. We have Brett Shambrook in the lead and Megan Morris, Jason Taylor and Kelly Aldred inside. When we get outside we have Mark Glenn, the track manager; Shaun Jacobs; Shaun Dean; and Jay Vowles. On top of that, the venue is suitable for many purposes. I have been to many other events there, and I know a lot of the casual staff, such as Janice Cuthbert, a fellow hockey player — I wish her the best in the masters, as she is playing for Victoria later this year; Emma Moore; and John Stasytis, who does so much around the club.

When Yarra Valley was not able to race it had such an impact on the town, with people's casual jobs not being available and with the loss of all of the food and beverage sponsorship, and also the purchases were not there. It is great now that things have settled down a bit and they are back on the right path with David Long at the helm there and a great committee. I have been to many events there, so I congratulate Yarra Valley Racing on what they have done. But I also wish Racing Victoria the best as they adopt these changes and move forward, particularly with the retirement of the great racing advocate, Bernard Saundry, who you would see at picnic events as well as regional events and certainly at the city events. His role has been taken over now by the new CEO, Giles Thompson. I really wish him the best in his role as well.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh).**

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

## BUDGET PAPERS 2017–18

**Debate resumed from 10 August; motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport):**

That this house takes note of the 2017–18 budget papers.

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) — This is part two of my contribution on the budget. We will finally get to the end of it. Last time I was in this house I was talking about the terrific budget that the Andrews Labor government brought down earlier this year, and I was talking about the enormous \$1.9 billion investment in family violence and of course our incredible investment in programs and facilities in the education budget area.

I was reminded recently of the words of the Premier on election night in 2014, when he said:

The people of Victoria have today given to us the greatest of gifts, entrusted to us the greatest of responsibilities and bestowed upon us the greatest of honours and, ladies and gentlemen, we will not let them down.

At the election the now Premier said that we were going to build the Education State, and that is what we certainly have gone about doing. I have another quote, that:

Education is our greatest opportunity to give an irrevocable gift to the next generation.

So we have a Premier committed to working hard to deliver on giving every child in this state the greatest gift, which is education opportunity. In every budget that we have delivered as a government we have gone about investing in world-class education. Brick by brick in every classroom we have averaged over \$800 million over the three budget cycles in capital works. Compare this with the previous conservative government, with only \$263 million on average. No wonder classrooms were looking pretty shabby when we came back into government. We have had to make a considerable investment, and I can tell you that when I visit schools in my electorate and elsewhere around Victoria they are saying thank you.

In terms of the investment of the Bracks-Brumby governments and now that of the Andrews Labor government in my electorate, I have seen nine new schools built, and in this budget we have seen the incredible investment in the Casey Tech School. One of the pleasures in talking about the budget long after it was handed down is that we were at Chisholm only last week, turning the sod. It is going to be an amazing building with fantastic programs in it, and I can tell members that all the schools in my electorate are very, very keen on this project. Indeed the Casey Tech School will cater for 21 000 students. It is an amazing project. I must say that it is in complete contrast to when those opposite were in power, where not a cent was spent in my electorate on capital works programs. There was not one new school opened, despite it being a growth area.

Since 2014 Hampton Park Primary School has been getting new science, technology, engineering and mathematics facilities. Those facilities are being put in place, and they are such great, innovative classrooms. For an area that sometimes struggles and does it hard, there are going to be life-changing opportunities in these new modern classrooms. Also, at Kambrya College finally they are going to get the new buildings that they have asked for for so long, and these multipurpose rooms will be able to be used by the community as well.

Last time I was here I talked about dancing with the Treasurer when he came out to Narre Warren South P-12. We were able to announce \$5 million for a new performing arts centre for that school. It is really incredible to see the programs going on there, to see the kids engaged in their learning and to see that they are staying at school longer because of the programs being offered.

I do not often do this, but I noticed something that Jeff Kennett said earlier in the year. He said:

Seeing so many young people demonstrating their skills as members of teams, being inspired by their teachers and idols, was a delight.

This is from an article he wrote headed 'Mix youth and music and you get brilliance'. That is what we are going to get at Narre Warren South P-12. We are going to get more brilliance. He goes on to say in this article:

I have to ask myself why so much of the media reports acts of violence but shows no interest in such a wonderful, happy and healthy event ...

such as a music program in a school. This is where we are putting our investment, and it is going to change people's lives.

I want to spend some time now talking about the other really important investment in the education area, and that is in education in the early years. This is a particular interest of mine, because I think it is very, very important that when children come to school, they are best prepared for taking up the new learning experiences that will happen in their prep year, and they are not being held back because they have missed out on kinder or their parents have not been able to take them to a maternal child health service to have early identification of some of the learning problems or developmental delays that children often experience. Then of course there are families who come from refugee communities who often do not understand the importance of kindergarten and their children miss out.

In the *Age* in December last year there was a fantastic article written by Jacqueline Maley, which was headed 'A budget fix so simple it's child's play'. In that article she quotes Frank Oberklaid, the fantastic, well-regarded, highly esteemed professor from the Centre for Community Child Health at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. He said:

Prevention is a very hard sell ... There are no photo ops, no plaques on buildings. It takes a particularly visionary and educated politician to fund it.

And Ms Maley asked:

Know any of those?

I actually do. They are the Premier, the Minister for Education and the Minister for Families and Children. We are actually providing funding in an incredible way — an \$81.1 million investment in the package of maternal child health services. Recognising that many families need support beyond their child's first birthday, the Victorian government is committing \$37.7 million to expand the enhanced maternal and child service to support 15 per cent of Victorian families with children from birth to three years of age. The Victorian government is delivering \$11 million in funding to provide an additional outreach visit where there are concerns that family violence may be occurring. This will allow an additional visit to around 12 000 families each year. And the Victorian government in this amazing budget is delivering \$22.3 million in funding to expand supported playgroups.

I have to say supported playgroups are one of the best ways that children can get engaged in their educational growth, but they are also an amazing way, especially in suburban communities, for mums to meet other mums and talk about some of the concerns that may be worrying them about their children and things happening in their families or out there in the community.

**Ms Thomas** interjected.

**Ms GRALEY** — My experience of going to playgroups with my children was that, as the member for Macedon just indicated, I made friendships that I still have. In new communities where we are trying to grow a sense of esprit de corps and community spirit they are very, very important. This investment in the early years — the biggest investment ever — is one of the most forward-looking, profound investments in education, and it will make a difference. I will not be around to talk about budgets in years to come when hopefully government members will be able to say, 'We invested there and we are seeing the benefit of this now'. This is why people are critical of politicians often: we do not invest for the long road, we do not invest in visionary projects that could turn things around. This is going to take a couple of terms of government. I hope that the Andrews government will be re-elected so we can continue this focus on early childhood. It is a very, very important project, and we have ministers that have been willing to invest in this very important area.

There are lots of other things in this budget. I have mentioned the \$1.9 billion investment for the prevention of family violence, the record funding for community safety — more police on our streets — and

the assistance for first home buyers with stamp duty savings, and I can tell you that that is a big winner in the outer suburbs and of course in rural areas as well. These are really monumental investments that build a safer, more cohesive and more prosperous Victoria. It is a great budget. I must commend the Treasurer's staff, because they have done an amazing job in putting this budget together and, as I said, making sure that the money is being spent as quickly as possible to ensure that these great projects are rolled out and the community gets to enjoy them.

Just the other day I was down at Thompsons Road. The diggers are in there digging a big hole to make sure that the overpass can go in there and the train lines can go out. I put up a Facebook post about Thompsons Road. Apart from my announcement that I am not going around again, which was a very popular Facebook post, the post about the investment in this major piece of road infrastructure at Thompsons Road was the most popular. People have actually been very understanding about the disruption that is happening there at the moment because they know that this project, which was talked about by the previous government, would never have been carried out if it had not been for the Andrews Labor government, which made road congestion the number one priority in this budget. I commend the budget to the house and I look —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson)** — The member for Bass.

**Mr PAYNTER (Bass)** — It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak on the 2017–18 budget if only for the fact that it is another budget delivered by this government of broken promises. In my time as the member for Bass we have seen three successive budgets full of rhetoric, broken promises and other promises that will remain unfunded. I would be able to make this point across all electorates, including Narre Warren South and right through the southern growth area and particularly through Pakenham, which once again has been completely ignored by this government, in particular by the Treasurer and the Premier, who only steps out there to make announcements about measures that further exacerbate the problems we have in Pakenham in terms of public transport, but I will get to those issues a little bit later.

We would rather see positive announcements instead of the rubbish that is thrown out by this government, which has proven to be the heaviest taxing government in Victoria's history, and why not? They are led by a hypocrite in the current Premier. Look no further than his pre-election announcement that there would be no new taxes. That was probably the beginning of the end,

because his reign as Premier has been a litany of broken promises, whether they be financial promises or other promises he has made to the state of Victoria. You can ask the 60 000 Country Fire Authority volunteers, and they will clearly demonstrate, illustrate, talk to you and communicate with you about the broken promises that have been made by this Premier and the disrespect shown throughout Victoria. Hopefully this will be shown at the next election when we get new members for Macedon, Narre Warren South, Frankston — who else is in the chamber? — Essendon and Cranbourne. They will all be replaced, because they will be shown —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr PAYNTER** — Hang on. We have got the member for Melton. Would you believe that the member for Melton still thinks he has got a place in this chamber? It is unbelievable to think that the biggest rorter in Victorian history —

**Ms Thomas** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, this is a motion to take note of the budget papers, and I would ask that you ask the member for Bass to return to speaking about the budget.

**Mr PAYNTER** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, this is a budget reply which goes to the heart of the financial affairs of both this state and this house. I think talking about financial prudence is absolutely talking about the budget and is an appropriate reply. The member for Macedon probably does not want to hear what is going to be said in the next 11½ minutes, so she is attempting to take up time and delay the process. I ask you to allow me to return to my budget speech.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson)** — There is no point of order, but I would remind the member to make sure that his language or his terminology complies with standing orders.

**Mr PAYNTER** — Absolutely, Acting Speaker. The Premier has lied to the Victorian public and he has —

**Ms Ward** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I would ask that you direct the member to be careful with his language when he is referring to lies and people who have lied. I also would ask him to be careful because I am sure that we do not want to spend the next 10 minutes talking about lobsters and mobsters.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson)** — The member to continue. I did not hear what the member was saying, because I was momentarily distracted by the member for Brighton, who is not in her place. I just

urge all members to make sure that their language is consistent with standing orders.

**Mr PAYNTER** — I would have expected the member for Eltham to be a little bit beyond the sort of rubbish that has been spoken about by that side, but it is up to the member for Eltham how she chooses to conduct herself in the chamber.

**Ms Graley** interjected.

**Mr PAYNTER** — There is the member for mystery travel, is it? The member for mystery travel —

**Ms Graley** interjected.

**Mr PAYNTER** — I have heard of mystery flights, but I think taking mystery trips is a bit of a new adventure.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr PAYNTER** — Yes, these unknown destinations.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson)** — Order! The member to continue, without assistance.

**Mr PAYNTER** — I would like to return to the budget reply, without inappropriate, unwarranted and unwelcome interjections, if you do not mind, Acting Speaker. Could you control the house on that side, if you would not mind. I have an important reply on behalf of the people of Bass, because they are particularly disappointed with this budget.

As I mentioned, the government is one of the highest taxing governments in the history of Victoria, with a new tax on absentee landowners and an energy tax on brown coal, forcing the closure of Hazelwood. Only the people of Victoria will see the true impact of those new taxes on brown coal and the closing of Hazelwood. It has shown absolutely no understanding of the energy market and no understanding of the cost of living for us Victorians. Certainly the people in Bass are starting to feel the pinch with their energy prices.

But it is not only the residents that feel the impact on the energy prices as a result of this overtaxing government; it is also businesses that are struggling — businesses that we have put out of business because their energy prices are unable to be locked in. If they are not able to be locked in, they cannot enter contracts for supply, which of course puts a business in jeopardy. They cannot invest in new equipment, in new buildings or in new infrastructure while their energy prices are

uncertain. They certainly cannot put on new people in employment situations, because of the uncertainty of the energy prices as a result of the decisions that are made by this government and will continue to be made by this reckless government as we see them trying to increase taxes and as a result increase the cost of living for all Victorians.

There is stamp duty on property transfers between spouses. I am not quite sure who is coming up with these ideas, but there are legitimate commercial reasons why there would be transfers between husband and wife, as I well know, as an accountant of course in my past. It is very important that these commercial transactions are able to be undertaken for legal reasons. Putting a tax on such transfers is completely unwarranted.

**Mr Edbrooke** interjected.

**Mr PAYNTER** — I am not quite sure whether his own party knew that that was going to be in the budget and exactly why it was in the budget, as the member for Frankston continues to behave in this chamber as the member is well known for.

There is increased stamp duty on new cars, which is completely unexpected and makes it very difficult for young people in particular to buy new cars. I am not quite sure what the Treasurer has got against young people and why he is trying to put young people out of the market for new cars. Putting stamp duty on new cars is completely unnecessary, and it is a further impost on young people. The list goes on and on. As I said, this is the highest taxing government in Victoria's history.

In terms of business the government is completely ignoring the needs and demands of the business industry and the business economy and the value that it adds to the Victorian economy. There is the increase in the energy prices, and of course we have seen the additional two public holidays. It is completely beyond explanation why these two public holidays were imposed on business owners, thereby forcing them to close their doors on this absolute nonsense of a grand final eve public holiday and also Easter Sunday.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr PAYNTER** — There are people like the member for Macedon who simply do not understand what it is like to be in small business and to have a public holiday on grand final eve. I am surprised that there is not even a Mad Monday public holiday. Why not do the double and make it a Friday and a Monday so people can really enjoy the weekend? We will see further businesses close their doors as a result of these decisions being made by your leader, Acting Speaker,

the Premier of Victoria. Now they are attacking Australia Day. I am not quite sure they actually know where they are headed with all of this.

What they are actually doing with the decisions that they are making is impacting on Victorians. I am talking about all Victorians — mums and dads, our younger people, our businesspeople; it is right across the board. One thing they are consistent on is the damage that they are doing to all Victorians. They will continue to damage all Victorians whilst they are in power and whilst they are being led by a man that we cannot trust. It has been proven time and time again that he is beyond any respect and any trust that the good people of Victoria should be putting in him.

In particular, while this is the highest taxing government in Victoria's history and while this is a government that sold off our port of Melbourne for record prices, it has continued to completely ignore the electorate of Bass. We look no further than Wonthaggi, where the Wonthaggi Secondary College was not funded again by this government, much to the disgust of the people in Bass Coast and in particular in Wonthaggi. They were formerly promised a school. Once the government was elected, the school was not funded. It is consistent behaviour by this government, of promising one thing but delivering something completely different.

Its candidate at the last election stood up at a public forum and said to the people of Wonthaggi that this school would be funded. That is the commitment that he made on behalf of this government. He was endorsed at that campaign for the election in 2014. He stood up at a public forum and announced that the Wonthaggi Secondary College would be funded. Here we are nearly three years later and it continues to be overlooked by this government, by this Premier and by these representatives who have completely ignored the people of Wonthaggi. They not only were expecting the school but actually had the Minister for Education come down to Wonthaggi and show some interest in the school. They had an upper house member also come down to the school and make suggestions that it would be funded.

So the people of Wonthaggi were standing around on the morning of the budget expecting the announcement to be made, and they were completely ignored by this government once again. It was another broken promise by this Premier, who has a history of breaking promises, and by a Minister for Education who simply could not lie straight in bed at night. He is the Minister for Education who prior to the last election made the announcement that all schools would be free of asbestos by 2020. It is in a media release. I have

downloaded it a number of times; I have printed it out. He made the claim that all asbestos would be removed from schools by 2020. Well, I have not seen one piece of asbestos removed from Wonthaggi, Koo Wee Rup, Pakenham or Bayles. The schools go on and on, because it is a claim — a promise — that they simply cannot uphold.

They make these claims as token announcements and grandstanding prior to elections, but they are completely lacking in any substance. They are prepared to stand up, stand in front of the cameras, and make completely false claims and false promises that they know they are not going to uphold. They know they are not going to see them through. The Victorian public know that now, because all of them are led by the hypocrite Premier. They will see him for what he is now, so he will get turfed out at the next election, and rightly so. You cannot pretend to be the person standing up for the people of Victoria when you keep saying things but not living up to them. You cannot keep standing up as the Premier, pretending to represent Victoria, when you are disrespecting 60 000 Country Fire Authority volunteers. They can see through all his rubbish, they can see through all his untruths. All his lies, they can see through them, and he will be held to account at the next state election, which cannot come quickly enough, because the people of Bass are sick of them and the people of Victoria are sick of them.

As I walk around the good town of Pakenham we are certainly sick of them, because we do not like dishonest people, we do not like hypocrites and we do not like people rotting the system — and there are two he keeps supporting. One of them even crossed to the other side of the house trying to hide — the next place he needs to go is out the door because he has got no place in this chamber representing his seat, in which he chooses not to live. He is making up some nonsense about living in a caravan down at Ocean Grove, but no-one has ever seen him. The member for Tarneit — who knows where he lives? They all head down to the coast. They actually move out of their electorates. What we need to see is this whole government move out of office and let the Liberal-Nationals coalition take it over. Let us get this state moving again.

**Ms THOMAS** (Macedon) — It really is a pleasure to speak to this house this afternoon on the fantastic Andrews Labor government budget of 2017–18. Thank goodness that litany of complaints is over from the member for Bass. I will say this to you, Acting Speaker: what we have just heard from the member for Bass says so much about the quality of the member for Bass and his lack of efficacy when it comes to representing the interests of his constituents in this

chamber. If everything that he says is true — and I doubt it — it points only to his inability to represent the constituents in his electorate. I can tell you this, Acting Speaker: if the polls are right when it comes to that member over there, we will not be seeing him in this chamber post-2018, and that will be no loss for the people of Bass, who I am sure will look forward to welcoming a member of this side representing them.

As we know, last year, following the release of Australia's first-ever family violence royal commission report, the Victorian government in its budget of 2016–17 allocated just over half a billion dollars towards the implementation of the royal commission recommendations. In the end the Royal Commission into Family Violence produced 227 recommendations, and this Andrews Labor government is implementing every single one of them. At the time — and that was quite some time ago now, back in 2016–17 — tireless campaigner and 2016 Australian of the Year Rosie Batty said:

I'm overwhelmed, genuinely moved.

I think this is really pivotal and I know the [family violence] sector has gone from hope to confidence, and I think that's a really unusual place for us to be.

The money that was allocated at that time was allocated as follows: \$152.5 million for crisis housing, \$122 million to support children affected by family violence, \$103.9 million for specialist family violence services and \$61.6 million to promote respect for women in the community and schools. As the Premier has repeatedly said:

The same policies will only produce the same tragedies.

That's why I promised to change it all.

Not only has the Premier made good on his promise, but the budget of 2017–18 has amplified this commitment. I am so proud to stand here in this place as a member of the Labor Party, knowing that this Andrews Labor government has committed an unprecedented \$1.91 billion investment to end family violence in this state. We are doing this, as I said, through the implementation of each and every one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

I am very pleased that Family Safety Victoria was established from 1 July of this year, and delighted also that the executive officer appointed to Family Safety Victoria is Sue Clifford. Sue Clifford has had a long and distinguished career, first at Victoria Police and then at the AFL, and she is a very well-qualified person to lead this brand-new agency.

We are establishing 17 support and safety hubs across the state. These will be places where victims can go to protect their family and start their recovery. We are extending after-hours crisis support, counselling and therapy for tens of thousands of women and their children. We are building more crisis housing. We are overhauling the courts and the justice system to make sure perpetrators get punished and victims get protected. We are recruiting hundreds of child protection officers who can take action straightaway. We are helping police, courts, corrections and social workers share vital information so they can track perpetrators, and to stop family violence before it starts we are establishing one of the world's first family violence prevention agencies.

These are vast and lasting changes. These are changes that will make a difference for generations to come. These are changes that are saving lives in our community. We know that we need to keep victims safe, we need to keep perpetrators accountable and we need to keep confronting the problems that cause family violence.

I know how moved both the Treasurer and the Premier were by the response to this extraordinary commitment, summed up in the reporting after the budget by the ABC. These were some of the words used to describe the 2017–18 Andrews Labor budget:

Life-changing. Extraordinary. A budget with heart.

...

The CEO of the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS), Emma King, called it a 'phenomenal' amount of money to address family violence.

'The government should be commended for genuinely acting on the recommendations of the family violence royal commission,' Ms King said.

'These measures will save lives.'

...

Renee Carr, the executive director of advocacy organisation Fair Agenda, called for bipartisan support for the funding.

'We can't let this be treated as a political football,' she said.

That is why Renee Carr is:

calling on the opposition to commit their bipartisan support, so more women in danger will be able to get the help they need regardless of who wins the next election.

I have to say that is a commitment that we are still waiting for. I support that call, and I call on the opposition to get 100 per cent behind the family violence royal commission recommendations.

Churlishly, in his reply to the budget, the member for Malvern queried how much of this money is being spent on service delivery. As the initiatives I have just outlined make very clear, this money is going to the heart of the problem. We are making sure that women and children are getting the support they need, be it counselling, housing, justice reform or after-hours support.

I might also point out that the member for Ferntree Gully is on the record for attacking the respectful relationships program, which is a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. He has also attacked the doctors in schools program, a program that is delivering vital healthcare to children across our state, including those who are child victims of family violence. Just to reflect again on the member for Bass, certainly it was my pleasure to attend Pakenham Secondary College in the time I was in his electorate to announce the rollout of the doctors in schools program, a fantastic program which those on that side of the house are yet to get behind and support.

What I ask and what I seek, and what the people of Victoria want to see from those on the other side of the house, is the acknowledgement that family violence stems from gender inequality. It is only when you can accept the structural impediments to a world free from family violence that we can truly work together effectively to eliminate violence in this state.

In my electorate I have led a grassroots campaign called Macedon Ranges Says No to Family Violence. I did that in the Macedon Ranges shire. I have engaged more than 35 community organisations. I am now rolling out the campaign in the Hepburn shire to ensure family violence stays on the top of our community safety agenda, where it belongs. Today I am very pleased to say that Riding for the Disabled, Hepburn Health, Daylesford Girl Guides, the neighbourhood houses, Trentham Country Women's Association, Daylesford Secondary College and Daylesford police are all on board with this program.

I would like to congratulate Macedon Ranges Shire Council. They have been at the forefront of addressing family violence in my community. Achievements to date have included a successful campaign for a safety upgrade to the Kyneton courthouse, which was of course funded in last year's budget, and I am very much looking forward to turning the sod on that much-needed upgrade in a matter of weeks.

I also wanted to commend the shire for the way they have worked and taken up a fabulous project called the Rural Challenge. It is an innovative program that supports gender equality. I was delighted to present

awards a few week ago to members of the Macedon Country Fire Authority, Riddells Creek Country Fire Authority, Malmsbury Country Fire Authority, Taradale Country Fire Authority, Kyneton Football Netball Club and Lancefield Football Netball Club, who all participated in this program, which is about supporting gender equality in regional Victoria. I was able at that presentation to announce \$140 000 of funding to support the continuation of that program.

I have spoken a lot about family violence because it is the number one law and order issue that our communities face. I am very passionate about seeing the eradication of that scourge on our community and keeping women and children safe, but it would be remiss of me not to talk about the extraordinary commitment to education, a real hallmark of this budget and indeed of this Labor government and of Labor governments always.

It is what we do — we make sure that we invest in education so that every child in this state has every opportunity to develop to their full potential and to realise their dreams and aspirations. As Labor members and as a Labor government we will leave no stone unturned when it comes to ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, regardless of their parents' income, regardless of their parents' education levels, have access to the highest quality education. It is so important in regional Victoria. As the Minister for Education says, 'You can't get a first-class education in second-class classrooms', and this government has not wasted a moment in tackling the unmet demand for school rebuilds, maintenance and upgrades that we were left with following the four wasted years of the failed Baillieu-Napthine Liberal coalition government. Students across the Macedon electorate will benefit from the more than \$2.7 billion that has been committed to new upgrades across the state.

In my electorate I was delighted to see that Mount Macedon Primary School received \$472 000 for an upgrade; Bolinda Primary School, \$90 000; Darraweit Guim Primary School, \$64 000; and Taradale Primary School, \$281 000. I need to point out that the previous Baillieu-Napthine government tried to close Taradale Primary School. That is what they did. They let it run into the ground. It now has more than 50 students. It is going great guns and I was delighted to go up there with the principal and announce that \$281 000.

Gisborne Primary School has received \$1.6 million. Gisborne, as people will know, is the largest township in my electorate. It is a growing community. We have fantastic public schools. We also have a couple of great Catholic primary schools there as well, but we need to

continue to invest in Gisborne primary schools, and that is what this government is doing. Then there is Elphinstone Primary School, which received \$221 000. I am thrilled to see that the small country schools in my electorate are getting these much-needed upgrades.

This brings to a total of \$43 million invested in schools across my electorate. That is 15 schools and two kinder projects in the almost three years that I have been the member. There is a lesson there also for the member for Bass, might I suggest. It perhaps reflects again on his lack of capacity, efficacy and ability to represent his constituents. I am delighted to be able to stand here and am very proud of the investment that I have been able to fight for and get for the schools in my electorate.

The budget announced funding for much-needed intersection upgrades on Station and Saunders roads and Pierce and Gisborne-Kilmore roads in Gisborne, as well as — and I note the member for Sunbury is in the house — an impressive \$20 million for safety upgrades on the Melbourne-Lancefield Road. This announcement will benefit communities in Lancefield, Romsey and of course in Sunbury as well, something that the member for Sunbury and I fought for for some time. Again, might I point to the failure of the previous government to really deliver on those roads.

The investments that I have outlined today in my electorate and across regional Victoria are fantastic. They are about the much-needed infrastructure in our communities, but might I also say this: when you make this kind of investment in our regional communities, the flow-on is in jobs, and there is nothing that makes me happier than travelling through my communities and seeing a lot of young tradies in their high-vis vests and their hard hats, because they are getting the job done, they are building the schools, they are building the roads and we are delivering for our community.

Finally, I want to commend the Minister for Public Transport. In the time that I have been a member of this house we have delivered 38 additional rail services on the Bendigo line. Do you know how many were delivered under the four failed years of the Baillieu-Napthine governments? I can tell you: five. That is all — only five, yet we have delivered 38 in just under three years. This is a great budget, I commend the Treasurer.

**Ms ASHER (Brighton)** — I am delighted to follow the member for Macedon, and I did note that she upped her performance in front of the biggest audience she has had in her parliamentary career so far. I, however, want to make a couple of comments about Labor's budget, and I also want to make a couple of comments about

the electorate of Brighton, which will be contested so admirably by Mr James Newbury at the next election.

I want to in the first instance make a comment about the provision of this time by the Leader of the House to speak on the budget. I, being very old-fashioned, have the view that every member who wishes to speak on the budget should have the opportunity to speak on the budget. I think that is because it is the government's most important bill. I am grateful, albeit at a very late stage in the debate, for the opportunity to say a few words about this budget.

I note in passing that the Labor members nearly always say, to a person, 'This is a Labor budget', and indeed it is a Labor budget. It is Labor budget because it represents a number of broken promises. It is a Labor budget because the public sector wage costs have been blown out of all proportion, and it is a Labor budget because we have seen significant increases in a number of taxes. The surplus in this particular budget at the moment is less than the Labor Party inherited when they won office, which is also potentially a cause for great concern.

The budget represents, as I said, a number of broken promises in relation to tax. We all remember that interview with the man who is now the Premier when, immediately prior to the last election, he promised to the television camera that there would be no new taxes or no new tax increases, and of course this budget represents a spectacular denial of that so-called promise.

Public sector wages are also a cause for concern. Public sector wages have increased by 24.4 per cent, or \$4.5 billion, since Labor's election to government. Labor has now introduced 11 new taxes after saying there would be no new taxes. They have introduced an energy tax on coal royalties. They have introduced a taxi and Uber tax. They have instituted a land tax surcharge for absentee owners, which was introduced and then increased notwithstanding the promise about no new tax increases. They have introduced a stamp duty surcharge for foreign buyers, which was introduced and then increased. They have hiked up the fire services property levy. They have increased stamp duty on new cars. They have introduced a series of new stamp duties on off-the-plan purchases. They have introduced new stamp duties on property transfers between spouses. And they tried to introduce annual property valuations to increase land tax, although that was stopped in the upper house. With this particular budget Labor will increase taxation revenue by \$174.8 million in 2017–18 and \$1.4 billion over the four years of the forward estimates.

I want to make a couple of comments about the elements of the budget that are not desirable at all. The first element I wish to refer to is the vacant residential land tax, which is due to raise \$80 million from the financial year 2017–18 to the financial year 2020–21. This will only apply to certain areas of Melbourne and it will be based on 1 per cent of a property's capital improved value. Property owners will be levied if properties are unoccupied for six months or more, with some exceptions such as those properties that are holiday houses, but even then the government requires that they be used for four weeks per annum.

What we are seeing in this budget is a massive departure from the understanding of private property in our society. Basically if the government does not like the way individual property owners use their private properties, it will tax them. This is a significant departure from our understanding on this side of the house of the rights of people to own private property and to do with it what they wish. The government is even telling you in the case of holiday homes that you must occupy that holiday home for four weeks a year, otherwise you will be taxed. Again in the circumstances of the farming community, which has been touched on by many speakers, the government is requiring that letting arrangements be applied to natural persons only, so not a company, and there are circumstances where that is not convenient at all.

The second element of this budget in terms of taxes that concerns me is the abolition of the off-the-plan stamp duty concessions for everybody except owner-occupiers. The effect of this, in my opinion, is that new developers will have a lesser investor pool, and the shadow Treasurer has outlined very significant objections to that. This of course has been opposed by the Property Council of Australia. The government is estimating that it will raise over \$841 million from this tax between 2017–18 and 2020–21.

The government also in this budget introduced an increase in stamp duty for new cars and near-new cars. That is expected to raise more than \$391 million over the forward estimates. Again that is opposed by the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce. I would have thought the government would rather see people use newer, safer vehicles, but it has gone for the tax solution rather than the safety solution.

The government in this budget has also abolished stamp duty concessions for spouses transferring property between each other, other than for a principal place of residence concession. The government estimates that this will raise \$80 million over the forward estimates. It is usually commonplace for governments to stay out of

how spouses conduct their financial affairs, but this government has now decided, in addition to telling people how they should use their private properties, that they are going to tell spouses where they may or may not have stamp duty concessions on the transfer of property between spouses. As I say, I think it is extraordinary that the government is seeking to regulate the financial affairs of married couples. There are many, many examples of course where there are legitimate transfers of property ownership — in the case of small businesses, in the case of co-directors and personal preference in an ownership structure — and now the government will seek to stop this. Again, this is not something that I greet with enthusiasm.

I turn now to a couple of local issues. I note that in budget paper 4, on pages 42 and 43, there are two secondary college projects in the electorate of Brighton that have received ongoing funding as part of this budget. Brighton Secondary College and Elwood College have both received funding, and that is outlined on pages 42 and 43, although both projects have been put back in terms of their estimated completion dates. In terms of Brighton Secondary College, which is a project that was announced and funded by the previous coalition government, that project has been put back one quarter. In terms of the Elwood College redevelopment, warmly welcomed by me as the member for Brighton and indeed promised by the coalition government prior to the last election, the finishing date for that project, which was previously quarter 4 in 2016–17, has now been put back to quarter 3 in 2017–18. Yet again we are seeing one of the characteristics of the operation of Labor governments, and that is that these projects, which in one instance was started by the previous coalition government and in the instance of Elwood College was supported by the previous coalition government, are blowing out in terms of completion dates.

I turn to funding for Brighton Life Saving Club, which is outlined in budget paper 3, page 96. The government allocated the amount of \$6 million overall for lifesaving clubs in Brighton, Jan Juc and Point Lonsdale. I sought further clarification from the minister. I asked a constituent question and an adjournment issue throughout many years in relation to this particular local project. I am advised by the minister that the total amount for the Brighton project is \$1 million. Given that I do not think that will cover the initial ask of what the state government has been asked for — and of course council have already indicated they will put in the vicinity of \$3 million, and the lifesaving club will put in money as well —

**Mr Donnellan** interjected.

**Ms ASHER** — I would advise the Minister for Roads and Road Safety at the table not to interject. We are putting in our contribution, all right. That contribution is noted, and I am sure there will be further discussion on the nature of that contribution.

I also want to refer to budget paper 4, page 25, where the government has allocated an amount of money for more train, tram and bus services designated as ‘metropolitan various’. I would remind the government that on many instances I have drawn the government’s attention to the lack of parking at railway stations along the Sandringham line. If the government wishes to look at much-needed parking at North Brighton, Brighton Beach, Gardenvale, Middle Brighton and Hampton, there are some opportunities to have increased car parking there. I welcome the announcement of more bus services. Again I raised this issue in the house on previous occasions, but I do note that the government is making a number of changes to bus services in the Brighton electorate. It is making changes on bus services 216, 219, 220 and 823.

Much to my alarm, I note that the so-called consultation sessions for bus route changes on routes 216, 219 and 220 were held at Sunshine and South Melbourne, scarcely convenient for residents who live in Brighton. I also note there has been no consultation at all on the 823 service. I have a number of constituents who are concerned about the changes to the 823 service, including where the location of bus stops has been changed unilaterally. My constituents have raised concerns relating to safety, congestion, traffic noise, loss of parking and the fact that Marriage Road, if you are familiar with that road, is congested at the moment and the removal of three places in the alignment of the bus stops is likely to increase congestion in that area.

For those of us who know this government well, it will be no surprise that this sham ‘consultation process’, in inverted commas, over the changes to bus routes, even though the government is telling us in this budget that there are going to be increased services, unfortunately is part and parcel of this government’s modus operandi. Many people would be aware that there is a project at 226–228 South Road, Brighton East, that the government is promoting as part of what is called its Towards Home project, which involves building some accommodation for homeless people. The type of homelessness that is going to be accommodated in this project is such that 24-hour, seven-day-a-week support and a person employed will be needed to deal with those particular people on that site.

Along the theme of sham consultation, I note that the government is now going to have a consultation session

on this on Monday, 28 August. In the information in relation to the so-called consultation session, residents have been advised that construction is going to start in early September anyway. So here we have it. This is consultation à la the modern Labor Party. We are going to foist something on you, we are going to ask your opinion on 28 August and then we are going to start construction in early September. That is much along the lines of the ‘consultations’, in inverted commas, that have occurred over the changes to bus routes in Brighton. Again, as I said, consultation is held miles from Brighton, and in one instance there is no consultation at all over the movement of bus stops in Marriage Road. So I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this budget. It is a Labor budget. It is a budget that —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Ms ASHER** — And the parrots say, ‘Hear, hear’. It is high taxing. There is a high public sector wages bill. There are broken promises in relation to taxation. I for one am very, very glad that this will be the second-last budget that I will have the misfortune to speak on.

**Mr DONNELLAN** (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — The member for Brighton is a bit miserable, I would suggest, after suggesting that there were some upgrades in services around. They were delivered by Labor, but she had been hankering for them. I guess the moral of the story is that sometimes you get what you deserve and sometimes you do not. But the moral of the story is that it always takes a Labor government to deliver it. It is a bit like the Warrandyte Bridge or the Chandler Highway bridge to the member for Kew and things like that. It always takes a Labor government to deliver what others do not.

I think you only have to look at the budget to know that debt levels are incredibly low. There are surpluses as far as the eye can see. You have got an average of about \$10 billion over the next four years in terms of spending on infrastructure which will keep driving that growth. We know that there is no other state in the country that has been able to deliver the growth that this government has done since coming to power, whether it be the 247 000 jobs — I have been corrected a couple of times when I have said a quarter of a million, but that is not far off a quarter of a million jobs! — which is a pretty good effort and I would have thought something very much to celebrate, or the 3.3 per cent gross state product growth and gross state final demand, which is the highest in the country. You cannot actually get better than the highest in the country. As John Brumby would say, you cannot get better than best, and that is very much what we have delivered. It is a budget that

has been very much welcomed by the financial sector and positively reviewed in places such as the *Australian Financial Review* and the like, which have very much said three ticks and a gold star for that one.

But what I wanted to use my particular speech for was to address what I am seeing as the habit of the National Party — or the International Party as I call it now because so many of their leaders federally obviously have multiple citizenship that it is probably no longer the National Party. That being said and done, I continue to see this utter rubbish in letters to the editor about less money going to regional and rural roads. So just for clarity we might want to look at the road maintenance and road surface funding. I will look at the last year that the previous government was in. The total expenditure in regional Victoria in that year was \$222.5 million on both the resurfacing and rebuilding of country roads. This budget delivers \$418.9 million, so it is very clear that either the budget papers are lying or the myth that the Leader of The Nationals and his team is putting out there is utter and thorough rubbish, absolutely dishonest and very much continues this trend of ‘If only we had the country roads and bridges program, where we got \$40 million to pork-barrel regional councils each year, this would somehow or other be the nirvana of country and regional road funding’. You have only got to look at the amount of money we are putting into country and regional roads; we are putting in hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars extra every year, and that is way in excess of the drivel that they go on about with the country roads and bridges program, considering that program actually did not have proper guidelines to ensure that that money was actually spent on country roads and bridges.

I will just put aside for the moment the particular focus on road maintenance and surface replacement for country and regional roads and look at further funding that is being provided by the state government for regional roads. I specifically ought to make mention of the regional overtaking lane funding, which is being put forward at \$51.6 million over the next three years — that is, about \$17 million each year on average. What we will be doing is providing overtaking lanes for Princes Highway east between Orbost and the New South Wales border; for the Midland Highway between Bannockburn and Meredith; for the Midland Highway at Nillahcootie; for Alpine roads — the Great Alpine Road, Bright-Tawonga Road, Mount Buffalo Road and Bogong High Plains Road; and for the Murray Valley Highway between Cobram and Yarrawonga. That is very much something that I know the community expects, and it provides a much safer environment for people to overtake vehicles ahead of them. Again it is

very much something that was not previously available under the prior government.

You have only got to look at the money that the state government has put into the Great Ocean Road to ensure that its structure and capacity to deal with further rains and the like is bolstered. We know that VicRoads has been doing an excellent job down there to stop the mudslides coming down around parts of the Great Ocean Road. In 2013 there was obviously funding from the prior government and the commonwealth government of \$50 million. If you look at what has happened since then, in December 2016 the government made a further commitment in its own right of \$53 million to deliver geotechnical hazard mitigation works — in other words, work to stop the mud literally running down onto the Great Ocean Road — to ensure that we can continue to keep the Great Ocean Road open for the community but obviously also to ensure that the tourism sector is well supported. In January 2017 — and I went down there with the Premier at the time — a further \$25 million was added towards funding for the Great Ocean Road program. This will be matched by another \$25 million from the commonwealth government, so that is a substantial commitment to ensuring that we provide capital funding to upgrade regional and country roads.

There is just one other program I want to refer to and that is very much focused on south-western Victoria, where there was an enormous amount of rain, with flooding and the like. Obviously the greatest enemy of roads is rain more than anything else. So we made a further commitment of \$40 million to upgrade narrow roads on the south-west coast. This is an unprecedented investment to ensure the roads are wide enough to accommodate high-productivity freight vehicles when they are delivering and picking up milk and the like. Obviously it would also provide capacity for logging trucks and so forth. Priority roads to be upgraded specifically there include the Timboon-Nullawarre Road, Foxhow Road, Myamyn-Macarthur Road, Ayresford Road, Skipton Road, Inverleigh-Winchelsea Road, Coleraine-Edenhope Road, Casterton-Apsley Road, Inverleigh-Shelford Road and Warrnambool-Caramut Road. That is a pretty substantial commitment from this state government to ensure that we are keeping our roads up to scratch in regional and rural Victoria and to ensure that in many ways tourism is generated and products are produced and can get to the port in a more efficient way.

So there was a lot of good news for regional and rural roads in this particular budget, including the beginning of the Shepparton bypass. I have just noticed the member for Shepparton up there and that sort of guilty

me into remembering that that is something it has taken me a while to get to. But I am very happy that that process has finally been started because that is very much an area which I think in many ways has missed out for many years and needs that investment. There is no doubt about that. That area is an agricultural powerhouse in Victoria, and we have got to be able to get goods more quickly and more efficiently to port from Shepparton so that — let us be very blunt — we do not lose business potentially to New South Wales as well. That is the last thing we would want to do. We want to keep them coming into our port and ensure that they do.

Obviously the state government has also been doing work in relation to repurposing the east-west road funding, which we have done with the commonwealth. There will be further announcements on that at a later date. That has been a very positive endeavour by this government. Some of those announcements were made in this budget but there are further announcements to go.

Locally I think what excited me most about the budget was very much the focus on education and the beginning of full funding for the new Casey technical school at Chisholm. I have got a real passion for applied learning. It might be 20 to 25 per cent of students in my electorate that go to university. The other 75 per cent need to have a quality applied learning environment they can go into. Many of the schools are well focused on that, but I get very concerned about what it is like for students once they leave school and the pathways they have open to them. Having a technical school on the railway line at Chisholm I think will be incredibly popular and will be taken up by the local community. I very much want to see more of those people who are working in the technical area being able to pick up those skills and have a very strong jobs future. So that was very welcome and I thank the Minister for Education for that.

Separately there was also funding to complete the Gleneagles Secondary College joint-use soccer facility, which is again a very welcome local piece of infrastructure. We know that in the City of Casey there are serious shortages in relation to the provision of soccer facilities and that obviously reflects that it is a fast-growing area. It is very much the state government putting its hand into its pocket to assist the council there to meet those needs and ensure that if we have got spare land — and Gleneagles Secondary College is a substantial school — these sites can actually accommodate these particular facilities. I think it will be welcomed by so many of the local soccer clubs, and I do not have any doubt it will be intensively used. So I think locally it was a very positive budget.

Generally for roads in this space there was over \$100 million allocated to the north-east link. I know the Speaker and many others will very much welcome that endeavour, because it has been that sort of missing link for who knows how long — 20 years, 30 years or whatever? It is a link that very much finishes the ring around Melbourne. It provides high-order arterials for our freight industry to bypass the city and move around the city. It links the south-east all the way to the west. Instead of going along the Monash Freeway-Princes Highway corridor, there is now the capacity to bypass that and move around it. I think in many ways that is very much one of those missing links that is well supported in the community.

I can say that the consultations that have been undertaken to date have been incredibly positive from one end of that link to the other. Whether it be down the Ringwood end right through to the top end around Greensborough, there have been incredibly positive consultations undertaken by Duncan Elliott and the North East Link Authority. It is something that has been very well supported. I note it has been supported by the opposition. That has been much welcomed. Now the issue is to work through the fine details, the proposed route and the like. But it is another major project that this government is not going to waste time to get on with. It is very much committed to getting on with the job.

I also note that there was another commitment to finish the last three parts of the M80. Obviously if we are going to be doing the next missing link of the north-east link, it would make sense to at the same time upgrade the Western Ring Road or the outer Metropolitan Ring Road — whatever name you would like to give it — to ensure that we upgrade those pinch points along the M80 so that there is consistency in the number of lanes and that we are not having people cross over from one lane to another, which reduces the capacity of any freeway by up to 20 or 30 per cent.

Locally, not so much directly in my electorate but in the south-east, there was the commitment to the Mordialloc bypass. That is another one of these missing links. I think the road reservation has been there for maybe 30 or 40 years, so I very much thank VicRoads and the former Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for allocating that land so we could undertake the Mordialloc bypass. I think again it is another one of those important links both for the logistics industry to link the employment hubs around the area and to allow goods to pass from, say, Dandenong to Mordialloc or Braeside to Monash and the like, which have all got strong employment and technical industries and strong manufacturing sectors. We know that with those types

of sectors you have goods and parts moving around from one factory and one processing plant to another, so that is very much welcomed.

Overall it is a great budget for roads. I guess I am very much focused on roads, apart from my own electorate, where I have talked about education. I do not think I could grizzle as a roads minister in relation to what was provided through the budget by the Treasurer. I think it has very much met the needs of regional and rural Victoria and has also met the needs of Melbourne and the like. With those few words, I thank you for the opportunity to say a few words.

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) — I am very pleased to join the take-note motion on the Victorian budget. Prior to the last state election there were a number of repeated promises made by the Labor Party in relation to there being no new or higher taxes. I think it is important to place those statements on the record. On 28 November 2014 newsreader Peter Mitchell posed the question, and I quote:

Daniel Andrews, all the polls say you will be Victoria's next Premier. If you are do you promise Victorians here tonight that you will not increase taxes or introduce any new taxes?

The now Premier is quoted as saying:

I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian.

Earlier in the campaign, on 19 November 2014, David Speers asked the question:

So, any higher taxes, levies?

The now Premier responded:

Absolutely not ...

That was from the Sky News election forum of 19 November 2014.

On 5 November 2014 on ABC News, under the heading 'Victoria election 2014: Labor to build new schools, change state's numberplate slogan', the comment was also made:

Mr Andrews ruled out increasing state taxes or household fees and charges to fund Labor's promises.

Those comments are very concerning in the context of what has later happened and the range of taxes and charges which have been increased in the state of Victoria. Among the increases in taxes in this year's budget are the energy tax on coal royalties; the taxi and Uber tax; the land tax surcharge for absentee owners, introduced at 0.5 per cent and then increased to 1.5 per cent; the stamp duty surcharge for foreign buyers, introduced at 3 per cent and then increased to 7 per

cent; the increase in the fire services property levy; and the increase in stamp duty on new cars. In that particular context there was a proposal by a former Labor leader of a 'cash for clunkers' policy, but that never eventuated. The point made at the time was that there needed to be a renewal of the motor vehicle stock in the nation that improved safety outcomes and reduced environmental harms. The increase in stamp duty on new cars will likely have a deleterious impact on the change in stock.

There are new stamp duties on off-the-plan purchases, which will make it more difficult for the development of housing stock in this state to be properly outworked. The cost of housing is a major issue for household budgets today and adds significantly to cost-of-living pressures. A diminution in the market supply of housing stock will in turn lead to increased prices, owing to increased pressures for fewer properties, and it will make it more difficult for presales of properties with the incentive of off-the-plan purchases.

There is the appearance of an armchair view of how many taxes can be raised and the burdens that can be placed on communities without a true appreciation and without a true understanding of the massive cost-of-living pressures being faced by Victorians across the state and within the Sandringham electorate. I will come back to that point.

Among the increased new taxes are also the new stamp duties on property transfers between spouses intruding upon regulatory arrangements between family members, and new annual property values that are proposed to increase land tax.

I have had a number of people in my electorate write to me raising concerns regarding the cost-of-living pressures being placed upon self-funded retirees who, for example, might own a high-street shop and are renting it out in their retirement. The rental from a high-street suburban shopping centre does not factor in the increased land tax valuations. A number of people were extraordinarily anxious when they approached me as they sought to raise their concerns regarding the increase in land tax, which is a result of bracket creep due to the non-changing of the 2009 land tax scales. There was one petition prepared that noted:

The petition of the residents of Victoria note with concern the massive hike in the land tax burden being borne by self-funded retirees, small business proprietors, struggling retailers and other property owners. The increase in land tax will force many retirees to restructure their investments to eliminate the effect of bracket creep or leave the domestic rental market while retailers are forced out of business as a result of not being able to meet the increase in land tax.

A number of years ago there was an example of a drycleaner in Camberwell, where the valuation of the premises was disproportionate to the income received in running the business and they were placed under massive pressure. There was another example of a hotel in Gippsland at a good location. The seasonal returns from that investment were not strong, and yet the land tax on the highest and best use of the property meant that the business was in many ways not viable.

These are understandings that the government need to take into account in order to ensure that there is the opportunity to be autonomous and as self-employed as possible and able to contribute to the wider community as employers, rather than creating a gulf between those who are well-off and those who are struggling within a community.

In that petition it also noted:

The petitioners respectfully requested the Legislative Assembly of Victoria calls upon the Victorian government to adjust the land tax scale in Victoria to avert the massive hike in the land tax burden which has increased disproportionately to rental returns.

Another aggrieved constituent called into my office on 12 May this year. He was in great distress in relation to his personal circumstances and what it meant as a result of the increase in land tax on properties in middle Melbourne, in both Mordialloc and Sandringham.

There are other concerns in relation to the Victorian budget and the pressures being faced by householders. There is a massive hike in electricity charges being borne by middle Victoria that is eroding the spending power and the purchasing power of the family budget. The hike in power prices following the closure of Hazelwood is a burden that many are struggling to endure. There is the \$1.6 million a day for the next 25-plus years in meeting the cost of the desalination plant, and that cost is in turn being borne by Victorian working families.

There are the other cost increases imposed by business. I visited a once-great business in Moorabbin earlier this year and the proprietors were beside themselves. They are a heavy engineering business, and they have high power needs to complete their heavy engineering operations. The choice was that their technical skills, developed over a couple of generations, would no longer be able to be utilised out of Melbourne, depriving people of employment and sending those specialised heavy engineering-mining engineering tasks offshore. The shadow minister for energy and resources was likewise personally perturbed and troubled by the circumstances confronted by these people. It is a real

circumstance, a real situation and a real tragedy for working Victorians and people who are trying to make a living.

In relation to some local issues more immediately impacting upon the Sandringham electorate, we see the impact of increased population growth without the forward planning to accommodate that growth. I have placed on record here before the lack of planning and time for the grade separations taking place in Cheltenham and Mentone to properly accommodate for population growth. The original commitment given by the Level Crossing Removal Authority was just to replace the car parks that were lost, but if Melbourne's population is to double by 2050 and we are not creating one extra car park, then that decision lacks foresight and good forward planning.

There are issues in relation to the government's investment, through VicRoads, in road management in the Sandringham electorate. Serious concerns have been raised by multiple people, multiple constituent organisations and multiple groups in relation to the proposed narrowing of Beach Road. The road is promoted by many people as one of the great cycling boulevards at a time when in terms of cycling safety there are other campaigns like A Metre Matters.

Kingston City Council is proposing to narrow Beach Road, varying an earlier agreed-upon plan by the council to build a bike path off-road, or broadly so. The newly elected council is moving that bike path and its parameters closer to the road so that some of the distances will be abridged, and that is of concern to the Amy Gillett Foundation organisers. It is of concern to some leading Australian cyclists, who are concerned about the safety of cyclists on Beach Road, which can see thousands of cyclists every weekend dicing with death close to heavy vehicles and close to buses. The impacts of those works will also take out some car parks along the side of Beach Road, thereby depriving Melburnians from further inland the opportunity to have a cheap day out at the beach, where they can get a car park at 9 o'clock in the morning.

Other matters of concern relate to school funding. There were strong indications given by the Labor Party that Sandringham East Primary School would receive funding in this budget to further develop the work of its master plan. Over 500 school community parents and family members were dismayed when no funding was allocated in the May budget at a time when strong indications had been given that Sandringham East Primary School, after over a decade of strong work by the school community, the school council and the

school principal, might be the beneficiaries of funding, as they had been led to believe.

At the last election the coalition committed further funding for Sandringham College to enable it to continue its upgrade plans and processes. The Labor Party committed some \$4 million to the Beaumaris campus of Sandringham College and the coalition committed \$7 million for its redevelopment at the last state election. We have seen the \$4 million increase. But one of the major reasons for that money increasing is as a result of the coalition's announcement of co-investment with the Melbourne Cricket Club at the Beaumaris campus site, which would see a complete school rebuild, containing world-class sporting facilities, as well as increased playing surfaces and areas available for use by local community members. As well, at the time the coalition announced it, there was the opportunity for those facilities to be used across the then three campuses of Sandringham College.

Work is well advanced now in the development of the new Beaumaris Secondary College. The coalition welcomes reinvestment in the school but is concerned to ensure that students in the district have the benefit of those new facilities, which are a result of visionary lateral thinking on the part of the coalition.

Before the last state election it was suggested that the cancellation of the east–west link could be undertaken and would not cost \$1. We find that the cost to the community in political terms, in broad terms, has been stated as being about \$1.3 billion not to build a road. That level of waste is of major concern to working Victorians in the Sandringham electorate.

There is a further concern in relation to the failure to complete the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre's 13th floor, which would have had 42 beds and been able to utilise four operating theatres to enable the best outcomes to be achieved in the care of cancer patients by drawing down on the expertise of doctors in the private sector working in situ with the public system. That is a major grievance and a major concern. When families confront cancer, to note that there are 42 less beds in Melbourne at the moment to undertake that important work — Victorians grieve at that outcome.

In summary, the Sandringham electorate constituency is concerned about the increase in the tax burden, which takes away the spending capacity of middle Melbourne and makes the management of household budgets worse. It is also concerned with the lack of investment in aggregate infrastructure in the Sandringham electorate, where more certainly needs to be done.

**Mr HOWARD** (Buninyong) — I am certainly pleased to speak on this Andrews government budget that came down a few months ago. It is always interesting, is it not, when you speak on a budget like this that somehow or other those on the other side of the house seem to have looked at the wrong budget papers? It is always dark and gloomy from them. They manage to find ways of criticising the budget or only begrudgingly acknowledging that we have delivered something in each of their electorates, but they continue to play the political games by not acknowledging that this in fact is a great budget for all of Victoria.

As the member for Buninyong there is no doubt this has been a fantastic budget for the Buninyong electorate. It is a great Labor budget because it invests in important things that are vital for the health of our community: local schools, community safety, local roads and infrastructure, and emergency services. Importantly, the budget is about delivering jobs for each area of the state, but significantly, from my point of view, in the Ballarat region.

Following the budget I was pleased to join the Premier, the Minister for Regional Development and the member for Wendouree to announce \$47.8 million towards the GovHub project. This is a project that is going to see 600 government jobs moved to or established in Ballarat. GovHub will include an existing 400 government jobs in Ballarat and it will bring together these 1000 staff at the one location at the Civic Hall site in the centre of Ballarat. Employees will come from the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Justice and Regulation, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, Consumer Affairs Victoria, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, the State Revenue Office, VicRoads and Service Victoria, which is a growing area of government.

As I said, it is going to be located on the Civic Hall site, which is one that has been a concern to the citizens of Ballarat for some time because the Civic Hall was closed many years ago by the City of Ballarat and they have been uncertain what to do with the site since. There have been a number of plans for redevelopment of the site, but the City of Ballarat has not been able to bring them to fruition. With the state government's support in bringing these 1000 jobs onto that site we will see a significant new building constructed, alongside the existing Civic Hall, and this will see some revitalisation for this particular section of Ballarat.

In recognising that, the state government has also contributed out of this budget \$2 million towards the

City of Ballarat's parking action plan, because if you are going to bring a number of extra people in to work in Ballarat, which is great to see some revitalisation of the Ballarat city centre, you need to make sure that parking is addressed. This is an issue of concern to the residents of Ballarat in that they welcome being able to access a whole range of businesses in the civic centre but they need to have parking. The city's plan will create 1000 nearby car parks, and the \$2 million from the state government will assist in that being achieved. We expect that the GovHub will be commenced next year and completed by 2020. The construction of such a significant development will provide 500 jobs through the construction phase, so that is great news for building firms in the Ballarat area.

We know that in fact on this score Labor has had a strong plan over a long period time in ensuring that it supports job creation in Ballarat and in the region, not just by supporting private enterprise but by recognising that government needs to play a significant role. The initial move back in 2002 of bringing a significant component of the State Revenue Office to Ballarat was a great start to that process. I was pleased to be with the Treasurer to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the opening of the State Revenue Office in March of this year. This enabled me to reflect back on our first term in government as the Bracks government, when then Treasurer John Brumby joined many Ballarat people to open that State Revenue Office building at the technology park in Mount Helen. We see that 244 people are now employed at that site, and 40 per cent are living and located in the Ballarat area. This has been a great boon for employment in our region. The GovHub will clearly take this a step further as more of the government agencies are moving out of the central Melbourne area and building in Ballarat to create significant benefits for the people of Ballarat.

As a former teacher I am always passionate about education issues and about ensuring that young people across Victoria are educated in good, modern facilities. I was pleased to see a further \$9 million in this budget allocated to Ballarat Secondary College, of which \$3 million will go to the Woodmans Hill campus and \$6 million to the Mount Rowan campus. This will see those two sites upgraded significantly.

Ballarat Secondary College has changed the names of the former Ballarat East campus and Wendouree campus, the site that I taught at for many years, to become the Mount Rowan campus and the Woodmans Hill campus. They then moved away from the former Barkly campus, so both campuses will have students from years 7 to 12. In doing so they have needed to both refurbish and rebuild sections of the school, so a

total of \$18 million will be delivered by the Andrews government to enable that to happen. The students, staff and the whole communities of the college's campuses at Mount Rowan and Woodmans Hill are very excited by that announcement. I see works underway on the Woodmans Hill site, funded as part of the earlier budgeted amounts, that will see some of the year 11 and year 12 facilities upgraded and improved on that site.

I have also been very excited to be part of the new tech school concept, which will see the state build 10 tech schools at different sites across the state, one of which is in Ballarat. I have been pleased to chair the steering committee for that project, and it has been great to see that works are underway at the Federation University's SMB campus on Albert Street, Ballarat, where the member for Wendouree and I knocked a hole through the wall to denote the commencement of work some months ago. Those works are progressing very well. Students from 15 secondary schools across the region will be able to go to this state-of-the-art tech school for sessions of half days or whole days. There will be other sessions where senior students will be able to link in with students from other secondary schools to do special hands-on projects.

Not surprisingly, as a former science teacher I am very excited about the opportunities to enthuse students in regard to science, technology and engineering subjects and to show students — I am pleased that this links with local industry — that in our local industries across the Ballarat region technology can be very exciting. There are great opportunities for those who want to pursue a science career and there is every reason we need young people to pursue science careers to further enhance the opportunities in so many industries across Ballarat that rely upon state-of-the-art science and technology knowledge to advance their production. I am really pleased about that.

I was pleased to visit Sebastopol secondary school, which has benefited so much from the Andrews government's funding to enable further stages of development there. In driving past the school last week it was great to see the new module for grades 5 and 6 students being constructed on the site and to know that there is more work to be done in rebuilding other sections of the school. The school has changed over the last five years. It is no longer a school of a 1980s construct but a modern school that will ensure that all students going to that school and the whole school community can feel enthusiastic about the quality of education being provided at what is now Phoenix P-12, and this is great to see.

In other areas we know that the Ballarat railway station precinct is progressing. There has been concern amongst some members of the community that in the planning we had not allowed for enough parking or enough space and they were wanting to know what was happening with the bus interchange. But this budget brings another \$5 million to provide for the bus interchange on that site and also for the proposed two-level car park to be increased to a three-level car park so that it will have 555 car parks in that space. These additions will work in very well with the proposals for the convention centre using the former bluestone freight shed and allow for a Quest Apartments facility to be constructed on the site. In future we will have both an attractive site and one that balances well the needs of commuters — people travelling back and forth by train or by bus to and from the station precinct — while allowing for other developments on that site. This is going to prove itself to be a great development and one that is going to be of benefit to the people of Ballarat.

In terms of public transport, we see that there is an additional \$39 million for an upgrade of the Ballarat rail line, particularly associated with stabling works in Ararat and other areas. We are pleased that we have been able to attract some federal funding towards these projects, and this is on top of the great works that we did with the funding associated with the upgrade of the line between Southern Cross station and Ballarat, the planning for which is well and truly underway, with nearly \$500 000 worth of work completed. These projects are going to be great for the people of Ballarat.

While those on the other side of the house periodically whinge about some aspects of public transport and what we have done to our rail services, we know what happened under them. There was no Ararat line, because it was closed in the days of the Kennett government, as was the line to Maryborough. But we have reopened those lines. We have rebuilt the track. We continue to order new rolling stock, and in this budget we have ordered another 39 VLocity carriages for the Ballarat line. The challenge now is that the rail line has become so popular. It is modern, smooth and convenient, thus enabling people to travel from Ararat, from Maryborough, from Ballan and from the Ballarat region and back the other way, as they did last weekend to a football match where for the first time the Western Bulldogs played an AFL game in Ballarat against Port Adelaide. It is Labor that has committed to our train services and our bus services, and this is quite fantastic.

In terms of roads, we have done so much on upgrading roads. I was pleased to see we have announced funding for plans for an upgrade of Albert Street in particular in

Sebastopol. At Hertford Street there are issues with traffic flow and pedestrians being able to cross and at the Docwra Street end work is needed for parents from Magpie Primary School to safely get in and out of Docwra Street and onto the Midland Highway. I will be pleased to see the results of that planning work so that those works can be funded in next year's budget, along with works at Bacchus Marsh which will make a significant difference to the people there.

There are so many great works in this budget and many more that I would have liked to have spoken about, but time does not allow me to. Again this is a great Andrews government budget which benefits the people of my region.

**Mr CLARK (Box Hill)** — This is a typical Labor budget — high taxing, high spending, high borrowing and low results. It is a budget of a government that has money flooding into its coffers but is still managing to spend far more than it can sustain, and it is achieving poor and wasteful outcomes for its taxing, borrowing and spending.

The money is flooding into the coffers from surging GST share windfalls as well as from calculated decisions to constantly ramp up the tax take from Victorian families and businesses through bracket creep and through new and increased taxes. The GST share surge that has been coming into Victoria's coffers over recent times is not something for which the government can claim credit. It is a result of the ebbs and flows of the GST allocation formula, the waxing and waning of the mining boom.

During the time of the previous coalition government GST shares seemed to be constantly falling. Now, for Victoria's good fortune, but unfortunately with the profligacy of the current government in more recent times GST shares have been running in Victoria's favour and that has put billions of dollars more into the state government's coffers. But at the same time its calculated decisions to increase tax takes are putting a huge burden on Victorian families and businesses. We now see the stamp duty rates on modest two-bedroom units at a level that two decades ago would have been the rates that applied to a large family home costing well above an average price. If you look at land tax, it is now at a point where those who put their life savings into modest property investments to pay for their retirement, if they go beyond a single shop or dwelling, are finding that land tax is taking a huge slice of their rental return. That is not only a tax on thrift and prudence but a deterrent to investment in rental housing, which limits rental housing stock and drives up rents.

We have comprehensively seen broken the then opposition leader's promise of no new or increased taxes. In this budget the government sought to introduce five new stamp duty or property taxes. Fortunately the coalition was successful in forcing the government to abandon its attempt to introduce more frequent revaluations for land tax and council rates — at least for the time being — but regrettably the Greens party, the Sex Party and the Vote 1 Local Jobs party supported the government's imposition of higher stamp duty on new cars, introduction of a new tax on vacant rental properties, imposition of stamp duty on off-the-plan property purchases and imposition of stamp duty on property transfers between spouses, all of course in clear breach of the pre-election promise. Yet despite all the extra revenue, the government is increasing its current spending at an unsustainable rate and is increasing its capital commitments to unsustainable levels. In short it is making promises that it does not have the money to deliver.

If you look at recurrent spending and undertake an analysis of the two years of change in public sector numbers from June 2014 to June 2016, based on the official *State of the Public Sector in Victoria* report that is published by the Victorian Public Sector Commission, you can see a striking confirmation of the massive growth in bureaucracy that has occurred under the Andrews government alongside some significant cuts and shortfalls in key frontline service delivery areas.

If you look at changes to full-time equivalent employment from 2014 to 2016, you see that total Victorian public sector numbers are up by 5.1 per cent, itself a number that is ahead of Victorian population growth, but if you look at the increase in the total public service — that is, the core employment in departments and central agencies — that is up by 10.2 per cent. Total Victorian public service executives are up 6.9 per cent. If you look at the total Victorian public service grade classifications — in other words, general public servants — that number is up by 11.3 per cent. If you look at total employment in administrative offices, that is up by 47.9 per cent, due mainly to the creation of the Level Crossing Removal Authority and the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority.

On the other hand, if you look at the numbers for TAFE staff, they are down by 8.3 per cent since the Andrews government came to office. Despite all of their promises and pledges that they were going to save TAFE, they have in fact gutted TAFE. Student enrolments have been falling and staff numbers have been falling under the Andrews government. The total

TAFE and other education teaching staff numbers are down by 11.8 per cent under this government.

If you look at the health sector, public health care administration and clerical staff are up by 8.4 per cent, whereas overall public health care staff are up by only 4.2 per cent, which is barely keeping pace with population growth. If you look at Victoria Police, public servants under the Chief Commissioner of Police are up 16.5 per cent and other Victoria Police staff are overall up by 3.4 per cent, but if you look at actual police numbers in the police occupational groups, their number is only up by 1.7 per cent, well below population growth and bearing out the huge cuts to frontline police numbers that have occurred under the Andrews government. It is no wonder that crime is now going through the roof.

Finally, let us look at ambulance officers and paramedics, about whom the Labor Party had a lot to say when they were in opposition. Those numbers are up by 4 per cent, which is probably below population growth, while if you look at total Ambulance Victoria staff, the number is up by 7 per cent.

So wherever you look, you see frontline service delivery either being cut or being increased at below the rate of population growth, whereas bureaucracy, administrative staff and back-office functions are growing far more than frontline service staff. That of course is a reflection of the anecdotal evidence that is becoming clear — all the stories that we are hearing and seeing of well-paid office jobs, white-collar jobs, being created for Labor mates and former union officials, while at the same time, as I said, these areas of frontline jobs have either been cut or not kept up with population growth.

If we look at capital projects, the stand-out area of waste of course was the \$1.2 billion thrown away to not build the east–west link. Bear in mind that if that contract had not been scrapped, the construction of the east–west link would by now be well on its way to providing that vital missing connection between CityLink and the end of the Eastern Freeway. Then look at the West Gate tunnel project. It is a hugely inferior substitute for the western section of the east–west link. It is likely to provide an increased capacity that will meet needs for only a few years, and of course it will be paid for by tolls for many years to come on CityLink motorists who do not even use it. I have to say Transurban saw a sucker coming when it realised that the Labor government was desperate for a project that it could proffer to voters as it tore up the east–west link. Day by day we are now seeing the true facts coming to light as to how inferior this West Gate tunnel project is.

We are seeing the government pouring billions of dollars into its inferior metro rail project after having scrapped the coalition's Melbourne rail project, a project that would have provided a station at South Yarra, a station at Fishermans Bend and a rail line to the airport, none of which are being provided under the Andrews government. Who can forget sky rail? It is a quick and rushed solution that voters were given no warning of prior to the election and that is going to be a blight across our suburbs for decades to come.

Not only has Labor inflicted monstrosities like sky rail; it has even managed to bungle coalition-funded projects such as the Blackburn level crossing removal. Of course the government is struggling to fund even the West Gate tunnel, the Metro Tunnel and its level crossing projects, and yet it has got the nerve to announce as if fully funded the fact that it is embarking on a north-east link project, which comes at a further great cost and for which it has provided no indication of where the money is going to come from.

What Victoria needs, of course, is a proper population policy that will take unsustainable infrastructure and planning pressures off Melbourne while supporting population growth in those areas of Victoria that are looking for population increases. If you have got a proper population policy, you can have proper forward planning for future infrastructure needs to ensure that projects are affordable and achieve maximum benefits, rather than the rushed, costly and poorly considered projects on which the Labor government is spending billions of dollars of public funds.

Let me turn to my own electorate of Box Hill, where unfortunately many of these government failures are manifest and are causing great damage to the local community. For a start we have seen the recent gutting by the government of the residential planning zone protections that were put in place by the former planning minister, the Leader of the Opposition, which is now opening up for trashing the amenity of our residential streets and neighbourhoods and is likely to produce even greater population increases than are already occurring.

Yet the government is making no provision for the extra population that its policies are channelling into Box Hill and surrounding suburbs. It has got no plans for the future capital needs of schools like Koonung Secondary College and Box Hill High School. Indeed, it abandoned the capital commitments made to those schools by the former coalition government. It has got no provision whatsoever for the additional capacity in primary schools that are going to have to cope with the many children that are likely in a few short years to be seeking to go there from the new towers soaring up

within central Box Hill. To add insult to injury, the government has in fact instructed Box Hill High School that it is obliged to cut its enrolments from 1350 students to 1200 students, gutting its gifted student program and threatening to have to say to families even within its school zone that there is no place at the school for them.

Of course the government has made a monumental hash of its promises regarding the Box Hill transport interchange, where it promised before the election it would set up a ministerial advisory group that would set a new direction for the interchange. In just the last few weeks we have had the government announce another inquiry to look into the work that was done by its first inquiry. The government quite frankly just does not have a clue about what is needed to meet the needs of Box Hill, notwithstanding that its policies are pushing more and more people into Box Hill and surrounding suburbs.

The problem is that central Box Hill has become unattractive and uninviting for many local residents, and the current surge of high-rise proposals risks making it little more than a mess of towers and wind tunnels. There is a need and an opportunity to look at the big picture of how to make central Box Hill more welcoming and attractive for everyone. We urgently need a new master plan for central Box Hill, because every new tower reduces our capacity and our options for the future. If we can get it right, we can have a people-friendly and attractive layout for central Box Hill that is going to last for generations. So we need to look at options, such as converting the car park area at the corner of Whitehorse Road and Nelson Road into a city square, and look at options to put decking over areas of the railway line, to move the bus terminus from the roof of Box Hill Central to one of those decking areas and to pedestrianise large parts of central Box Hill while providing good public transport and car parking access at the edges of the pedestrianised area.

There are a lot of opportunities. What the state government ought to be doing is supporting Whitehorse council to create a plan like this for a people-friendly future Box Hill and be willing to make the planning scheme and other changes to implement it. And of course it needs to stop forcing excessive development into residential streets in Box Hill and nearby suburbs and to provide the schools, the aged care, the allied health, the public transport and the other infrastructure that is needed to keep up with the growing population.

The electorate of Box Hill and surrounding suburbs encapsulates many of the failures of the Andrews government. What we need, as I have referred to earlier, is for Victoria to have a proper statewide population policy that will take pressure off Box Hill

and other suburbs and will support greater growth in regional Victoria, where it is needed and welcome. Unfortunately I very much expect that this is not something that we are going to see under the current government. We have seen no evidence that the Minister for Public Transport, the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Minister for Education or indeed any other ministers grasp what needs to be done and have any willingness or capacity to respond to what needs to be done. In short, we are going to need a Guy Liberal-Nationals government to turn the many opportunities that exist for the Box Hill electorate, and indeed for Victoria as a whole, into a reality.

**Mr SCOTT** (Minister for Finance) — Very briefly before the adjournment debate, it gives me great pleasure to rise and speak on the take-note motion on the 2017–18 Victorian budget. I will start with my portfolio responsibilities in relation to multicultural affairs. I would have to say that there is a great tradition of support for multicultural affairs across this house. Victoria has been experiencing a significant increase in overseas-born people, and commensurately we have more than doubled the budget allocation for multicultural affairs. The previous government in 2014–15 invested \$24.5 million in multicultural affairs, whereas we have increased that allocation to \$51.1 million for the 2017–18 year.

This is a very important area of public policy. Those investments have included over a four-year period in this current budget an investment of \$51.8 million to build on one of our greatest strengths: cultural diversity. I acknowledge that members across the chamber have shown strong support for multicultural affairs, and I hope this characterises our political discourse into the future. That investment includes \$21.8 million for interpreting services. I think it is very important to note that for Victorians, particularly newly arrived Victorians or Victorians who have come from other countries and who are more elderly and who often revert to their mother tongue, the provision of effective interpreting and translation services is a very important part of our society and allows access to government services.

There is also \$2 million for a new migrant worker centre, which is critical to ensuring —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines)** — Order! The time appointed by sessional orders for me to interrupt business has now arrived. The minister may continue his speech when the matter is next before the house.

**Business interrupted under sessional orders.**

## ADJOURNMENT

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines)** — The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

### Bus route 925

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — (12 972) My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is for her to, with her department, make adjustments to bus route 925, which is a bus service that goes from Pakenham through to Dandenong and Fountain Gate. We have been approached by Goldcare Lifestyle Village Pakenham management and Outlook Community Centre in relation to issues with this particular bus service that travels close by.

Outlook Community Centre — just for a bit of background — is a community facility. It is also a facility that cares for people with disabilities and ensures that they have opportunities out in the community, so this bus stop is very important for them. From Outlook up to the highway, where the bus stop currently is, there is a corrugated road. There are a few issues which make it very, very difficult to get there. Goldcare is an aged-care and retirement facility. They need access to the bus stop, so the same issues are there for them in terms of getting from Goldcare to the bus stop safely, as it is a fairly dangerous road. There is a lot of traffic, and it is a very dangerous intersection on the corner of Toomuc Valley Road, so they would like the bus to come down Toomuc Valley Road.

We have written to the minister in the past, and she acknowledged the request for the extension. The group would appreciate it if she could come and meet with both organisations at once. I would be more than happy to facilitate that meeting with Goldcare management and Outlook Community Centre. I am calling on the minister to come down and visit the services to talk about this bus service and ensure that these people can have genuine access to good public transport.

### Central Bayside Community Health Services

**Mr RICHARDSON** (Mordialloc) — (12 973) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Health, and the action I seek is that the minister join me at Central Bayside Community Health Services in Parkdale to get an update on the community service's priorities and future needs.

Central Bayside Community Health Services has operated in our community for a number of decades. Of

course their primary site in Parkdale was the former Mordialloc hospital — a site put forward for closure by the former Kennett government, but a group of very determined local residents came together to save this community resource. With the determination of former members Geoff Leigh and Peter Spyker we saw the community health service start out of Peter Spyker's very own electorate office, something that was quite remarkable for that time.

The community health service started out of the back of his office — he rented out that space for absolutely nothing and ensured that this community health service continued into the future. It was then put forward at Mordialloc hospital — that site was saved after it was going to be closed — and today it is a fantastic functioning community health service providing disability care, GP services and dental care. They are supported by many, many volunteers and wonderful staff onsite there.

Turning our attention to the future and to the City of Kingston's needs and the fact that we are growing by 10 per cent in the coming years, we need to determine what those needs are going forward. I invite the Minister for Health to come out and join me and the Honourable Peter Spyker to get an update on this wonderful community health service and its future priorities going forward.

### Australian Sustainable Hardwoods

**Mr T. BULL** (Gippsland East) — (12 974) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Agriculture in the other place. The action I seek is that she visit Heyfield and explain to the community in detail what is going on in relation to employment numbers at Australian Sustainable Hardwoods. The minister said as recently as last sitting week that there will be no jobs lost in the transition period of mill ownership, yet last week we had a letter from mill management stating one shift is going from the green mill. I would like to make that letter available to the house if I may.

On the Thursday of the last sitting week the minister said there were no job losses, and on the Monday staff got a letter saying a shift was going in two days time. It is a case of wondering if the left hand knows what the right hand is doing. To add to this the minister was quoted in today's *Gippsland Times* as saying that the allegation of 20 lost jobs was 'speculation' and 'unhelpful'. Minister, your so-called speculation is in fact a letter from the mill management to the mill employees, and it refers to the fact that as of 16 August the green mill will have only one shift, down from two. I am told by employees that this is 20 jobs. I ask the

minister: does she still think that this is speculation? Here is the letter from mill management.

I am aware the staff in question either have fortunately found other employment, some in different positions with ASH, or are taking some time off before accepting voluntary redundancies, but the reality is the shift is not coming back. That is 20 fewer jobs ongoing and 20 fewer pay packets going into the town, which will impact on local businesses, community groups and even things like school enrolments. So with the company confirming this in the letter I have, I am not sure how the minister can label it as speculation and unhelpful. These comments are in direct opposition to those of mill management.

I urge the minister to please come to Heyfield, meet with these workers, their families and businesses and explain to them why mill management says there is a shift gone as of last Wednesday while she says job losses are speculation and why she continues to say there will be no jobs lost in the transition period when already 20 positions have been lost.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines)** — Order! The member can provide the correspondence to the Acting Clerk.

### Family violence

**Ms THOMAS (Macedon)** — (12 975) The matter I wish to raise in the adjournment debate is for the Minister for Equality and concerns support for members of the LGBTI community who are victims of family violence. The action I seek is that the minister visit my electorate to meet with my constituents and share with them the local impact of the recent announcement that the Andrews Labor government is investing \$3 million over the next four years to develop comprehensive specialist services for LGBTI Victorians who experience or are at risk of experiencing family violence.

We know that Victorians from LGBTI communities face significant barriers to accessing the support they need to deal with family violence, so we are providing tailored services for the community. As the minister knows, my electorate, and Daylesford in particular, has a long and proud history of celebrating diversity and inclusion. Each year in Daylesford we host the ChillOut Festival, Australia's largest regional celebration of LGBTI pride. Would it not be fantastic if next year we could also celebrate marriage equality at ChillOut?

I want to take this opportunity to make it clear in this place that I stand in solidarity with LGBTI members of

my community in their quest for marriage equality. The Turnbull government has shown it lacks the courage to do the right thing and legislate for equality, so now we must make sure there is a strong yes vote in the ill-thought-out and harmful survey. I know the minister also shares my views on this, and I look forward to having him visit my electorate.

### Donald stadium

**Ms STALEY (Ripon)** — (12 976) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Regional Development in the other place. The action I seek is that she matches my commitment to redevelop the Donald stadium. Last week the Leader of the Opposition was in Ripon and we were in Donald. Amongst other things, we of course met with one of the owners of Kooka's Country Cookies, but beyond that we met with some other people through the Donald community. One of the things that the Donald community have been advocating for for a long time is the redevelopment of their stadium and their sporting precinct, which has termite damage and leaks. It needs a new gym, the flooring is poor and there particularly needs to be new access for disabled people, both athletes and visitors. We also need to establish a new art space and function space. The government has not delivered on this, so we announced last week that, were we to come to government, we would fund this project with a \$1.2 million commitment to fund the Donald stadium.

My adjournment matter calls on the government to get their act together. This project is with Regional Development Victoria. It is a well-developed project; the plans are in hand. There is no reason that this government cannot come in and match my commitment and get on with this for the Donald community, and I would ask them to do so. This upgrade is long overdue. It is the single most used facility in Donald, and it is such a shame that the people of Donald have not yet got the government over the line on this. That is why when the Leader of the Opposition and I were in Donald last week we said that, should we come to government, we will fund this project. Tonight I give the government the opportunity to match my commitment and deliver this project for the people of Donald.

### Oakleigh electorate schools

**Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh)** — (12 977) I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Education. The action that I seek is for the minister to visit Huntingdale Primary School and Glen Huntly Primary School to see firsthand the needs of the schools for the future.

Firstly, I would like to make mention of the excellent work that the minister and this government have been doing in education. There is a reason why we call Victoria the Education State. The minister's care, diligence and knowledge of his portfolio are extraordinary. In my community alone we are upgrading Amsleigh Park Primary School, Carnegie Primary School, Glen Eira Secondary College, Hughesdale Primary School and Bentleigh Secondary College. In just those five schools there is \$38.2 million of major upgrades. Not one school received funding for major upgrades under the previous government. There have also been capital injections to other schools, like Murrumbeena Primary School, Glen Huntly Primary School, Clayton North Primary School and Oakleigh Primary School, as well as major planning work for Oakleigh Primary School.

I would like to invite the minister to see two great schools in my community that are in need of assistance in the not-too-distant future. Glen Huntly Primary School is a school that we provided \$290 000 for in the 2016–17 budget. It is a growing school with an amazing ethos; you would be hard-pressed to find happier kids than there. The other is Huntingdale Primary School, which is just across the border of my electorate in the seat of Clarinda. The minister has previously been to Huntingdale. The school is in need of assistance to bring it to a modern standard. It is a growing school and one of the few schools in Victoria that offers a bilingual program, and it has an extraordinary reputation in our community and across Melbourne. Again I thank the minister and would appreciate his visit to both these schools to meet with the school leadership and students and tour the facilities.

### Melton electorate roads

**Mr NARDELLA** (Melton) — (12 978) My adjournment tonight is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is that when he is next around the Melton district he come with me and inspect the Halletts Way works for the on and off ramps to the Western Highway and have a look at Melton-Gisborne Road at Kurunjang with the Carberry Drive and Kirkton Drive intersections that need to be looked at.

Two weekends ago we had the official opening of the southern bridge of the Halletts Way road and the new roadworks. It was a great community event. The honourable member for Buninyong was there, along with Catherine King, the federal member for Ballarat. Lots of people from the community, as well as lots of puppy dogs, made that walk. It is a terrific construction. The state government contributed over \$2 million to that particular project. It would be great for the Minister

for Roads and Road Safety and I to look at how the Halletts Way on and off ramps are progressing because the minister did a lot of work to get that money after it was taken away by the previous Baillieu government. Those ramps are now proceeding really well.

During his visit the minister can also have a look at the Melton-Gisborne Road. I wrote to the minister, and the minister very graciously got VicRoads to talk to me about my and the community's concerns about the safety of both the Carberry Drive and Kirkton Drive intersections. Because of the increased amount of traffic on that particular part of the road it is very dangerous for the motorists and families using it. As it is a VicRoads road there needs to be some consideration given to some of the treatments there. I would more than welcome the minister coming along and having a look at these roads, and I appreciate the great work that he has been doing in my electorate.

### Family violence

**Ms KNIGHT** (Wendouree) — (12 979) My adjournment is for the Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. The action that I seek is for the minister to meet with local women's organisations that have expertise in preventing violence and in particular to discuss access to graphic and violent online pornography.

Last Monday I looked at porn — a whole lot of porn. I did not do this as a way of avoiding watching *Q&A*; I wanted to see for myself how easily it can be accessed, and it was so easy. I found wall-to-wall videos of every kind of act you could imagine, and a few that even I would not have thought of. Now I do not actually consider myself to be a prude; I believe that what consenting adults do and see is their business. However, consenting adults are not the only ones who access this material — children also do. I saw images of gang rape and violence that I can never unsee. Can you imagine what that does to a child's brain? Having a young woman speak into the camera before and after imagery of her gang rape does not make it better and is a subtlety that I would argue is beyond a child's capacity to reason.

According to the Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA), the prevalence of rape porn is taking its toll on boys and young men, and of course girls and young women. They have examples of boys as young as 9 or 10 acting out what they have seen online on their younger sisters. There are young men who have no idea what loving and respectful sex is and who have to be taught. There are also boys and young men who are learning that women have no value. There is also a

serious impact when it comes to trauma. It is not uncommon for anyone who has experienced ongoing trauma in their lives to turn to gambling, drugs, alcohol and pornography. If you are a 7, 8, 9 or 10-year-old boy who lives with trauma, then there is probably only one of those things that you can readily access. Ballarat CASA recently received additional funding for the work they do with young people who require sexually abusive behaviour treatment services. I am told that their services are increasingly being provided to boys who have accessed rape pornography online.

I know that the Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence also holds grave concerns about this issue. In fact I think this is exactly the issue that she had in mind in establishing her vision, based on recommendation 188 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence's report, to establish a statutory agency like the Transport Accident Commission, WorkSafe Victoria or VicHealth which would work towards a world that is violence free for women and girls.

### **Drug rehabilitation services**

**Ms BRITNELL** (South-West Coast) — (12 980) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Mental Health, and the action I seek is the funding of a residential rehabilitation program in my electorate. During my campaign I was regularly told that drugs, particularly ice, were a major problem facing my community. True to form, the community has come together in an effort to drive change, and an incredible amount of work has been done to look at the problem, what is driving it and what can be done to solve it.

I have proudly watched on and contributed where I could to this process, and now we are at the stage where a locally based residential rehabilitation facility has been identified as a need to fill in service gaps in the western region. Minister, as you would be aware, waiting lists are in excess of six months, and as a state Victoria is short of residential beds. In south-west Victoria, there is not one residential rehab bed, meaning those needing to access this treatment are required to be some distance from their home and support networks — often the biggest single factor in people declining treatment. Such a facility is the number one priority of the Western Victoria Primary Health Network, and at the recent Great South Coast regional assembly it was again highlighted that the lack of local residential rehab beds is a hole in the system.

The Western Regional Alcohol and Drug Centre, or WRAD as we know it, has done a power of work in this space and is now at the stage where it is asking for

support for a 20-bed facility. They have identified a facility and are confident the community will pull together to fund the capital works. All that is needed is \$1.1 million in annual recurrent funding from this government to enable the programs to be delivered. I have no doubt the community will be able to raise the capital for this project. We have proven this time and time again — if we want to get something done, we will get it done, no matter how many times we are told no.

I have spoken with the WRAD director, Geoff Soma, about the issue, and he believes it will be a huge step towards local people breaking their addiction cycle. This is a well-supported model in my community, with letters of support received from a number of organisations, including Victoria Police, mental health professionals and education providers.

I have also been speaking with Dr Rodger Brough, an acclaimed expert in this field, who is the addiction medicine physician at the Warrnambool Base Hospital — and I worked with him for many years — a role he has held for the past 22 years. Such a centre would support his work, allowing people to withdraw while under medical supervision before moving into a residential facility.

Minister, this is a high priority for my electorate, and I ask that you make it a priority of your government and fund the recurrent \$1.1 million per annum to make sure this occurs. I worked in this area for many years. I referred many a young person to these programs, and they were always out of the electorate and had long waiting lists. That was one of the main reasons we did not see as much success as I would have liked to have seen. Having something in our electorate would be very beneficial to the whole state.

### **McKinnon Secondary College**

**Mr STAIKOS** (Bentleigh) — (12 981) My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Premier, and the action I seek is that the Premier agree to play a role in the upcoming 2017 year 12 video at McKinnon Secondary College. It was last year that I was asked by McKinnon Secondary College to play a role in their annual end of year 12 video. When I got to the school I was asked to perform a dance move called the dab. I am told the video went viral, and later that year the Premier paid a visit to McKinnon Secondary College. He addressed the then year 11s — this year's year 12s — and made the promise that he would offer the resources of the Victorian government to make the 2017 year 12 video at McKinnon Secondary College the best yet. I am asking the Premier to come good on that commitment

and actually play a role in that video. I commend that request to the Premier, and I hope that he says yes.

### Responses

**Mr FOLEY** (Minister for Mental Health) — The honourable member for Macedon is a great champion of diversity and inclusion in Victoria, and particularly in her community, and I look forward to the opportunity of joining her and her rainbow community, particularly at Daylesford. I would be greatly honoured to visit her and to discuss particularly how the diverse LGBTI community in Daylesford endures and responds to family violence in an appropriate way.

I would also take the opportunity of responding to the honourable member for South-West Coast. Let us be clear about the issue around alcohol and drug rehabilitation beds in particular. After enduring right across Victoria savage cuts under the previous government — and I concede the honourable member was not in the Parliament at that time — we saw the botched recommissioning of alcohol and drug services cause massive difficulty as a result of that work, which saw demand skyrocket and service delivery collapse right across the state, particularly in the regions. That is why this government has invested record amounts in residential rehabilitation, community rehabilitation and a whole range of other alcohol and drug support services in this budget and its first two budgets.

I just point out that that has seen investment in Ballarat in the west. I concede it is not in the honourable member's electorate, but for the first time there is dedicated alcohol and drug investment for residential rehabilitation servicing the west of the state. We look forward to the continued operation with the public health networks (PHNs) and other organisations to build on that investment. Rather than making the kind of inference that the honourable member made in her contribution and rather than our colleagues federally investing in punitive enforcement and measures and taking services off people through their approach to welfare support, her time might well be better spent advocating for a greater partnership, as we have seen through the PHNs in this space and other spaces, particularly in an issue where residential rehabilitation is an important aspect disproportionately in the regions. As the honourable member would know, our regional communities suffer even greater than those in the city areas. Instead of these gratuitous positions that sometimes we see in this place, we look forward to a degree of bipartisanship and unity on this issue.

I will leave the rest to my good friend the Minister for Police.

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Police) — There were a range of issues raised by a number of members for different ministers, and I will pass those issues on to the ministers.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines)** — The house stands adjourned until tomorrow.

**House adjourned 7.24 p.m.**