

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

Wednesday, 8 February 2017

(Extract from book 1)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(from 10 November 2016)

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

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

Speaker:

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER

Deputy Speaker:

Mr D. A. NARDELLA

Acting Speakers:

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

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier:

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

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

The Hon. M. J. GUY

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

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Ms S. RYAN

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn ²	Polwarth	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphine, Dr Denis Vincent ³	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Ms Roma ¹	South-West Coast	LP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁴	Gippsland South	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Paynter, Mr Brian Francis	Bass	LP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Riordan, Mr Richard ⁵	Polwarth	LP
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Ringwood	LP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian ⁶	Gippsland South	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Fyffe, Mrs Christine Anne	Evelyn	LP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux	Brunswick	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Graley, Ms Judith Ann	Narre Warren South	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clarinda	ALP	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Owens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

¹ Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ Elected 14 March 2015

⁵ Elected 31 October 2015

⁶ Resigned 2 February 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

Legislative Assembly committees

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

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

Joint committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Wednesday, 8 February 2017

The SPEAKER (Hon. Telmo Languiller) took the chair at 9.34 a.m. and read the prayer.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL 2017

Introduction and first reading

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to revise the statute law of Victoria.

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

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I introduce this bill on behalf of the Premier. This is, as the member for Hawthorn and other members opposite would know, a bill that is introduced from time to time to update various provisions within the statute law of Victoria. Otherwise it is a fairly non-controversial and mechanical bill.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

**ELECTRICITY SAFETY AMENDMENT
(BUSHFIRE MITIGATION CIVIL
PENALTIES SCHEME) 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 amend the Electricity Safety Act 1998 and for other purposes.

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

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — The bill provides civil penalties as a measure of last resort to ensure that we give full effect to the recommendations of the royal commission into bushfire risk and other matters.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

**FAIR WORK (COMMONWEALTH
POWERS) AMENDMENT 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 amend the Fair Work (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2009 and for other purposes.

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

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Industrial Relations) — The amendments that are proposed to the Fair Work (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2009 are to provide for certain public sector employees to enter into enterprise bargaining agreements about a number of otherwise excluded matters.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of motion

The SPEAKER — Order! Notice of motion 1 will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their notice to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 2.00 p.m. today.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Upper Yarra Secondary College

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the urgent need for major redevelopment at Upper Yarra Secondary College.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urges the Andrews government to fund the major redevelopment of Upper Yarra Secondary College in the 2017–18 state budget.

By Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (211 signatures).

Safe Schools program

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 failing to give parents with children in state government schools a voice on whether their children participate in Daniel Andrews's controversial Safe Schools program.

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

**By Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) (54 signatures),
Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (126 signatures) and
Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (118 signatures).**

Orchard Grove Primary School

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the inadequate facilities which presently exist at Orchard Grove Primary School, situated at 101 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South, Victoria 3130 in the state electorate of Forest Hill.

Orchard Grove Primary School is proud of the quality education it provides to its students and this is reflected in the increasing number of enrolments the school receives each year.

Regrettably, the facilities for both staff and students are inadequate to meet the demands of this growing school. The administrative and staff facilities are overcrowded, the toilets used by the senior students often require maintenance and there is insufficient room for the first aid facilities.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria provide adequate funding to Orchard Grove Primary School to modernise the school, in particular, to upgrade the administrative and staff facilities, including the toilet and first aid facilities for both staff and students.

By Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (24 signatures).

Special religious instruction

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house that the government has scrapped voluntary special religious instruction (SRI) in Victorian government schools during school hours.

Prior to the last election, Daniel Andrews and Labor said they would not scrap SRI during school hours in Victorian government schools. Daniel Andrews and James Merlino have announced that as of next year they will break this promise.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria ensure that the Andrews government reverses its broken promise and allow students attending government schools to attend SRI during school hours, as has been the case in Victoria for decades.

By Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (156 signatures).

Vermont Primary School

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the inadequate facilities which presently exist at Vermont Primary School, situated at Nurlendi Road, Vermont, Victoria 3133 in the state electorate of Forest Hill.

Vermont Primary School is proud of the quality education it provides to its students and this is reflected in the increasing number of enrolments the school receives each year.

Regrettably, the facilities for both staff and students are inadequate to meet the demands of this popular and progressive school. The central administration and classroom wing of the school is in need of urgent and costly maintenance works, which often results in major disruption to both staff and students.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria provide adequate funding to Vermont Primary School to rebuild its central administration and classroom wing, so that the high-quality academic program can be matched with high-quality facilities.

By Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (12 signatures).

East Gippsland timber workers

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Eildon be considered next day on motion of Ms McLEISH (Eildon).

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Ferntree Gully be considered next day on motion of Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully).

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

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JOBS, TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES

High-capacity metro trains project

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport), by leave, presented project summary, February 2017.

Laid on table.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Alert Digest No. 1

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 1 of 2017* on:

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

**Building Amendment (Enforcement and Other
Measures) Bill 2016**

**Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable
Conduct) Bill 2016**

**Children, Youth and Families Amendment
(Youth Offenders) Bill 2016**

Corrections Amendment (Parole) Bill 2016

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

**Justice Legislation Amendment (Parole Reform
and Other Matters) Bill 2016**

Small Business Commission Bill 2016

**Summary Offences Amendment (Begging or
Gathering Alms) Bill 2016**

**Urban Renewal Authority Victoria Amendment
(Development Victoria) Bill 2016**

Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016

**Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child
Abuse) Bill 2016**

together with appendices.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

Auditor-General:

Managing Community Correction Orders — Ordered to be published

Regulating Gambling and Liquor — Ordered to be published

Climate Change Act 2010 — Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017–20

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 — Order under s 17B granting a licence over Trentham Public Park and Recreation Reserve

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 — Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2016 under s 303

Financial Management Act 1994 — Budget Update 2016–17

Gambling Regulation Act 2003 — Amendment to Category 1 Public Lottery Licence under s 5.3.19

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission:

Operation Dunham: An investigation into the conduct of officers of the Department of Education and Training, including Darrel Fraser, in connection with the Ultranet project and related matters — Ordered to be published

Special report concerning illicit drug use by Victoria Police Officers: Operations Apsley, Hotham and Yarrowitch — Ordered to be published

Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 — Notice under s 32(3)(a)(iii) in relation to Statutory Rule 147/2016 (*Gazette G51, 22 December 2016*)

Ombudsman:

Investigation into the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages' handling of a complaint — Ordered to be published

Investigation into the transparency of local government decision making — Ordered to be published

Report on youth justice facilities at the Grevillea unit of Barwon Prison, Malmsbury and Parkville — Ordered to be published

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

Alpine — C51

Ballarat — C193, C194, C205

Baw Baw — C89 Part 1

Boroondara — C257	Environment Protection Act 1970 — SR 152/2016
Brimbank — C126 Part 1, C173 Part 2, C191, GC51	Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 — SR 146/2016
Cardinia — C217	Livestock Disease Control Act 1994 — SR 145/2016
Casey — C190	Marine Safety Act 2010 — SR 143/2016
Greater Geelong — C328 Part 1, C335, C345, C346, C347, C348	Planning and Environment Act 1987 — SR 148/2016
Hepburn — C54	Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 — SR 151/2016
Hobsons Bay — GC51	Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 — SR 154/2016
Horsham — C74	Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — SR 142/2016
Hume — C216	Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 — SRs 149, 155/2016
Knox — C152	Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007 — SR 147/2016
Latrobe — C87 Part 2	
Macedon Ranges — C109, GC58	<i>Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:</i>
Mansfield — C37	Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155/2016
Maribyrnong — GC45	
Melbourne — C277, GC45	Documents under s 16B in relation to:
Mitchell — C111	<i>City of Greater Geelong Act 1993</i> — Greater Geelong City Council — Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Allowances — Alteration
Moonee Valley — C162, C168	<i>City of Melbourne Act 2001</i> — Melbourne City Council — Lord Mayoral, Deputy Lord Mayoral and Councillor Allowances — Alteration
Mornington Peninsula — C203, GC51	
Moyne — C61	<i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006:</i>
Murrindindi — C58	Ministerial Order No 956 — Exemption from attendance and enrolment at school
Northern Grampians — GC51	Ministerial Order No 957 — Order amending order No 615 — Amendment to Order Fixing of Fees Administered by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
Port Phillip — GC45, GC58	<i>Gambling Regulation Act 2003:</i>
Pyrenees — C41, C42	Amendment to Victorian Pre-commitment Player Account Equipment Technical Requirements under s 10.1.5A
Stonnington — C246, GC45	Notice under s 3.6.5A, fixing the value of the supervision charge
Swan Hill — C58	
Whitehorse — C185, C188	<i>Livestock Disease Control Act 1994</i> — Exemption order under s 6(3A)
Whittlesea — C90, C199, C202	<i>National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005</i> — F-Factor Scheme Order 2016
Wodonga — C123	<i>Road Safety Act 1986</i> — Specification of electric personal transporter use area — Geelong foreshore
Wyndham — C211	<i>Water Act 1989</i> — Abolition of Bungaree Groundwater Supply Protection Area, Wandin Yallock Groundwater Supply Protection Area and Barwon Water Supply Protection Area Order 2016.
<i>Project Development and Construction Management Act 1994</i> — Nomination order under s 6, application order under s 8 and a statement under s 9 of reasons for making a nomination order (three documents)	
Statutory Rules under the following Acts:	
Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008 — SR 153/2016	
County Court Act 1958 — SR 144/2016	
EastLink Project Act 2004 — SR 150/2016	

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

Alpine Resorts Legislation Amendment Act 2016 — Whole Act — 1 January 2017 (*Gazette S381, 13 December 2016*)

Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Oversight and Enforcement of Child Safe Standards) Act 2016 — Whole Act — 1 January 2017 (*Gazette S381, 13 December 2016*)

Crimes Amendment (Carjacking and Home Invasion) Act 2016 — Whole Act — 7 December 2016 (*Gazette S375, 6 December 2016*)

Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor Act 2016 — Whole Act — 1 January 2017 (*Gazette S389, 20 December 2016*)

Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Act 2016 — Whole Act — 21 December 2016 (*Gazette S389, 20 December 2016*)

Melbourne and Olympic Parks Amendment Act 2016 — Whole Act — 12 December 2016 (*Gazette S375, 6 December 2016*)

Melbourne College of Divinity Amendment Act 2016 — Whole Act — 1 January 2017 (*Gazette S381, 13 December 2016*)

Road Legislation Further Amendment Act 2016 — Part 2, divisions 3 and 5 of Part 3, remaining provisions of Part 4 and Part 5 — 1 January 2017 (*Gazette S389, 20 December 2016*)

Sentencing (Community Correction Order) and Other Acts Amendment Act 2016 — Whole Act (other than Part 5) — 20 March 2017 (*Gazette S17, 31 January 2017*)

Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Amendment (Abolition of the Penalty Fares Scheme) Act 2016 — Whole Act — 1 January 2017 (*Gazette S389, 20 December 2016*).

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent on 13 December 2016 to:

Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill 2016
Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor Bill 2016
Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016
Justice Legislation Amendment (Parole Reform and Other Matters) Bill 2016.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

Messages read recommending appropriations for:

Building Amendment (Enforcement and Other Measures) Bill 2016
Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Bill 2016
Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Reporting date

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

That the resolution of the house of 14 April 2016 be amended to extend the reporting date for the Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee's inquiry into the control of invasive animals on Crown land to no later than 22 June 2017.

Motion agreed to.

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 pm on Thursday, 9 February 2017:

Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Bill 2016

Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016.

We welcome the Parliament back for the start of 2017. There is a lot to do over the course of this year. I will just outline — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — I know that those opposite laugh; they spent four years doing so little, treating the Parliament as a bit of a joke, thinking government was just hicks and giggles — and I did say 'hicks'. I know that those opposite think this place is a bit of a joke, but we are fair dinkum about it, and we are ready to get into it again for 2017.

Let me explain the outline for this week. Of course yesterday our house condoled, I thought, quite appropriately, remembering the victims — those families affected — and indeed many members of the Victorian community who were affected by the Bourke Street tragedy. I would suggest that the vast majority of the contributions were respectful and dignified around those matters. Appropriately, as has been done on previous occasions, the house adjourned for the balance of the day. I note that some observations were made by those opposite and I really think their lack of dignity

would be shown if I were to repeat them in this place. It is an absolute mark of respect that the house adjourned, and the comments made by those opposite reflect the leadership — and the lack of leadership — that is shown on the opposition benches.

Given that a large part of our morning is needed to address the procedural and process matters that would normally be dealt with on a Tuesday, the government felt it was appropriate to put two significant bills on the agenda. We feel that the bill banning fracking in this state is a significant bill that is worthy of a significant amount of time. We know that those opposite have been at sixes and sevens — they have not known whether they were Arthur or Martha on this bill. They have been all over the place, and we see — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hawthorn will come to order and so will the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing.

Ms ALLAN — We saw yesterday that there have been reports that they may have finally resolved their position, but we will see in the running of the debate who were the winners and who were the losers in that coalition party room, whether it was the junior partners or the senior partners between the Liberals and The Nationals. We look forward to the debate on that this afternoon.

We also have another piece of legislation, the Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Bill 2016, that is worthy of significant debate. We have also flagged that if time permits and if the house is efficient and is desirous of this, we will commence debate on and put through the Victorian Planning Authority Bill 2016. That is appropriate.

I would also like to flag to those in this chamber that the government intends to debate the motion standing in my name, notice of which was given earlier this morning, as the first item of business tomorrow morning. So we have a busy program over the course of today and tomorrow — important legislation, significant issues that affect the Victorian community and also important matters that affect the Parliament. This is another strong, solid program that we are putting forward to the Parliament. It is an appropriate program. I keep hearing from those opposite that they want to have more time to debate bills and get stuck into matters, and we are giving them that this week. We are giving them that opportunity this week, and I just hope they take up that opportunity.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — It has now become clear exactly what the government's priorities are and what matters are important to them when the Parliament resumes. It is clear that at the front of their minds is covering up their red shirts scandal. It is now clear that the main item of business that they want to get through the Parliament this week is a motion that they think is going to help them continue with their efforts to conceal from Victorians exactly what they did in rorting the parliamentary system by diverting public funds to their re-election campaign.

It was surprising to us that the government was proposing a fairly modest legislative program. We took it that they wanted to devote yesterday to the condolence motion and that they had long lists of speakers on their other bills. Although it was a bit surprising that that was the case, it is their call in terms of the number of speakers that they want to devote to different bills. But now we find out what the real reason is, and that is that they are desperate to stop the truth coming out about how they rorted public funds with their red shirt devices, diverting public funds to pay for people who were actually campaign organisers for the Labor Party.

They are so frightened of what the Ombudsman might report when she conducts her investigation that they are prepared to put aside large parts of the time of this Assembly for a motion which for some reason they think might assist them in that cover-up attempt, and that is what they intend to spend a large part of tomorrow debating. It is particularly galling, and I think quite offensive to the Victorian community, for the Leader of the House in that context to make disparaging remarks about some of the contributions that were made yesterday to the condolence debate. Our view, as the Leader of the Opposition made very clear yesterday, was that it would have been far better for this Parliament to have gone on with other business after a respectful adjournment in memory of what had happened.

In particular it would have been good if the Parliament had legislation that had been brought to this house to tackle the urgent, pressing problems with bail laws that need to be tackled in light of the Bourke Street tragedy or, if that were not the case, at least if it had started having a proper debate on those issues. As members from this side of the house made clear in their contributions yesterday, the very strong feedback that we — and we assume all members of Parliament — are receiving from the community, with full justification, is that enough is enough. They want us to get on with the job of fixing the problems that are now manifest and get on with keeping this community safe.

We did not oppose the procedures for the condolence motion yesterday, because we did not want to do anything that would be seen to detract from the focus that should rightly be given to the condolence for what had happened and for the various sentiments that were fittingly expressed in the motion that was agreed to unanimously yesterday. But, nonetheless, that was our view, and the speakers from this side of the house who made that point during the debate were echoing what their constituents are telling them loud and clear and what each of our constituents, I believe, are telling us loud and clear, which is that they want all of us to get on with the job and tackle these problems. So I think for the Leader of the House to reflect adversely on members who made that point is very unfortunate and very unjustified.

We are now confronted at very short notice with a government that wants to radically depart from what had previously been proposed in terms of the government business program. It does not help good relationships and good decision-making in terms of the government business program and the structure of the business of this house for matters to be sprung on the opposition at short notice, but the clear point is that it is desperation about the covering up of the red shirts rot that has led to this conduct.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to make my first contribution on the first government business program debate of 2017. It is a very appropriate government business program that is before the house today. I think it was entirely appropriate that the house condoled yesterday to pay our respects as a Parliament to those who lost their lives at Bourke Street, and as a consequence of that when you do adjourn the house for the day, as the ultimate mark of respect for those who have lost their lives, it does curtail the size of the government business program, and that is why we have got the two bills that are listed on the notice paper.

I note that in the brief time I have been a member of this house it has been extraordinary the number of times when those opposite have talked about the importance of having the opportunity to scrutinise legislation and to have the time to look in great detail at a particular bill. I would have thought the bills on the notice paper would be welcomed by those opposite to allow them to make their contributions — to outline and to explore in some detail some issues or concerns that they might have in relation to the bills before the house. As the Leader of the House indicated, there are two bills on the notice paper. I think if we are particularly efficient in the way in which those bills are handled, we will be able to have

a third bill, and I think in light of the fact that we condoled yesterday it is an entirely appropriate balance.

It is great to be back in this place. It is wonderful to be afforded the opportunity to be on the Treasury benches and to continue to provide good government for the state. I note the manager of opposition business in his contribution talked about urgently bringing legislation to the house. I suppose what I would say to the manager of opposition business is that, if you are going to make legislative changes and if you are going to look at making changes to things like bail, you should do it once and you should do it properly, and that takes time.

Mr Pesutto interjected.

Mr PEARSON — The member for Hawthorn said, ‘You should have done it two years ago’. Well, you had four years, son, and you did nothing. You did absolutely nothing. The reality is that this terrible event has occurred, and we need to make sure we get this right. If we take our time, we will get it right. We will not have a situation where we rush legislation through and it gets thrown out by the courts, which occurred under the former regime.

This is a very good government business program. It was entirely appropriate that we condoled yesterday and that we adjourned earlier as a mark of respect. I look forward to hearing the contributions of those opposite on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016, and I think they will have an interest in exploring that a bit further. I commend the government business program.

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) — I rise to speak on the government business program on behalf of the Greens. We will not be opposing the government business program in this instance. It is clear that the government had four priorities coming into this first week of Parliament. The first was to appropriately mark this place’s condolences for the victims of the Bourke Street tragedy. As many members pointed out in their contributions, it was appropriate that this place had a response to that tragedy. As I noted in my speech, that response needs to be evidence based and well thought out. The gravity of that situation demands no less.

The second priority was the Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Bill 2016, which implements a recommendation of the *Betrayal of Trust* report. The third was the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016, which will be very much welcomed by those out in the Victorian community and is very much supported by the Greens. The fourth priority was to move a motion to

get out of this Ombudsman's inquiry into the misuse of taxpayer funds.

Pick the odd one out of the four priorities of this government. Three of them one would consider very appropriate for coming back in the first week of Parliament. With the other one it looks like they are covering their tracks. Given all the statements made by government members in regard to this — that they did nothing wrong — you would have thought the government would have welcomed an inquiry. Let us clear the air, let us get this out of the way, let us move on, let us understand what actually happened. If the government were so convinced they did nothing wrong, they would be welcoming an inquiry and welcoming a chance to clear the air. Instead they have fought this inquiry every step of the way.

It seems ironic that in this place we are going to be debating a motion to limit the inquiry while it seems that in the other place they wanted to expand the inquiry to include all other members. Which way is this government going? Well, there seems to be only one way, and that is to try to stop this inquiry into the misuse of taxpayer funds every step of the way. This inquiry needs to happen. We need to uncover what happened. If government members are right in their statements that they did nothing wrong, that will come out. These actions of the government in trying to block this inquiry every step of the way tell a different story. We will not be opposing the government business program in this instance.

Mr McGuire (Broadmeadows) — Maturity and judgement are defined by the way we make our contributions in this place, and getting the balance right between being a member of Parliament and endless pointscoring in a political fashion is a critical proposition. Timing is important. Yesterday we had a condolence motion moved by the Premier to address the Bourke Street tragedy, a shocking event in this city and this state's history. The government's position was to adjourn the house, which is the custom and practice of this place, as a sign of respect. We had some elegant contributions made, but my point is when we are actually looking at how to judge maturity and what the big-picture leadership role we should be playing in this place is, we need to consider that that was not a time for pointscoring.

The next point is that the family and children's bill is important legislation. There could be no more timely an event given what we have seen coming out of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse this week. Does anyone need any further evidence of the necessity to get this bill through? This

will protect children from abuse. It will introduce a scheme to improve the oversight of and organisational responses to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct. This is an issue where bipartisanship worked, when two parliaments in Victoria — the 57th Parliament and the 58th Parliament — were able to have these heinous crimes revealed to get scrutiny and accountability. Through this piece of legislation hopefully we will get greater compliance. This is how the Parliament can work.

I just want to put it on the record that it is an important time for the public to have trust in institutions, and to be able to say that we take these issues seriously. We do not have to score a point on every issue, every time. That is it. People are tired. They are fed up. They are sick of politics sounding and looking like two dogs barking. These are the issues on which we have to rise above this low-level partisanship, actually stand up in the public interest and do it in a dignified way. That is what the government did yesterday.

On the other bill, the fracking ban bill, this will be subject to heated debate, and that is fine; that is part of the way that the contest of ideas should evolve. That bill is in a different category, and that is fine for that part of the debate. But I do want to place on the record that it is increasingly important for institutions to maintain public trust. Yes, the debate will be rigorous, but there are times when there is a need for the public to see that we can come together and rise above.

If you have a look at the way the government has been rolling out its agenda, one of the points that was raised was that we need to get on with things. Well, we know what happened; we do not have amnesia. It was a one-term government from the coalition that was voted out. Josh Gordon said in his column in the *Age* just last week that this was the strategy: those opposite had a go-slow strategy. They were trying to game the system; they were trying to back-end the term. This was actually a proposition that they had. Their strategy blew up. So we had two years of do-little government and then two years of division and chaos. That is actually what occurred.

The opposition have come in here today and said, 'We want to have more action', and all the rest of it. I put that in the context of the last term of coalition government in Victoria. That was the strategy. They got it wrong, and now they are in opposition. They have to look at themselves to judge whether that was a good strategy or not, because the people of Victoria have voted on that; they have made their decision. Let us see how the votes go on this government business program. I commend it to the house.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — It is great to be back. However, I have to say right up-front that I think it is outrageous that the highest priority for this government in the first week of Parliament this year is keeping itself safe, instead of keeping Victorians safe. This motion is based on protecting the red-shirt brigade and the red-shirt rorts. I think it is outrageous that that is what this government thinks is most important to Victorians. What is important to Victorians is feeling safe at home at night, in their car at the lights or on our freeways and roads. As such we should be talking about bail reform laws, not saving-your-skin laws. For that very reason the coalition should oppose and will oppose this government business program. The only surprise is that there should have been an urgent bill around reforming our bail laws, not, as I said, saving government members' own skins.

With that said, there is a bill today on fracking. Again, I think, as we have heard, energy is of interest to me. I have been fascinated by energy for a long time and along the way to this place. I have a qualification as an electrical engineer. However, what does annoy me is rewriting history, and that is something that tends to come from this government. So much of what they have to talk about is trying to rewrite history in this place, something that I think they should be ashamed of. Facts are facts. I am sure they would have loved the new term that has come from the United States, 'alternative facts', which has been running around this place for the last couple of years. The energy bill, I think, is important on fracking, and I am sure there will be a comprehensive debate on that. I hope it is an honest and frank debate and not one rewriting history.

The children's bill, which is on reportable conduct reforms, is important; however, I think there are a number of issues around child protection too that will see this house become more busy in the future.

Again, this week should be remembered for Bourke Street. It should be remembered for energy. But what it is going to be remembered for is the red-shirt cover-up that is going to occur in this house tomorrow. With that said, we will be vigorously opposing the government's business program.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 46

Allan, Ms	Lim, Mr
Andrews, Mr	McGuire, Mr
Blandthorn, Ms	Merlino, Mr
Brooks, Mr	Nardella, Mr
Bull, Mr J.	Neville, Ms
Carbines, Mr	Noonan, Mr
Couzens, Ms	Pakula, Mr

D'Ambrosio, Ms
Dimopoulos, Mr
Donnellan, Mr
Edbrooke, Mr
Edwards, Ms
Foley, Mr
Graley, Ms
Green, Ms
Halfpenny, Ms
Hennessy, Ms
Hibbins, Mr
Howard, Mr
Hutchins, Ms
Kairouz, Ms
Kilkenny, Ms
Knight, Ms

Pallas, Mr
Pearson, Mr
Perera, Mr
Richardson, Mr
Richardson, Ms
Sandell, Ms
Scott, Mr
Sheed, Ms
Spence, Ms
Staikos, Mr
Suleyman, Ms
Thomas, Ms
Thomson, Ms
Ward, Ms
Williams, Ms
Wynne, Mr

Noes, 35

Angus, Mr
Asher, Ms
Battin, Mr
Blackwood, Mr
Britnell, Ms
Bull, Mr T.
Burgess, Mr
Clark, Mr
Crisp, Mr
Dixon, Mr
Fyffe, Mrs
Guy, Mr
Hodgett, Mr
Katos, Mr
Kealy, Ms
McCurdy, Mr
McLeish, Ms
Morris, Mr

Northe, Mr
O'Brien, Mr M.
Paynter, Mr
Pesutto, Mr
Riordan, Mr
Ryall, Ms
Ryan, Ms
Smith, Mr R.
Smith, Mr T.
Southwick, Mr
Staley, Ms
Thompson, Mr
Tilley, Mr
Victoria, Ms
Walsh, Mr
Watt, Mr
Wells, Mr

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Ikea

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) — I wish to raise an incident that occurred in February 2016, at which time a constituent of mine, Ms Arlene Green, brought a matter of concern to me regarding her mother, Mrs De Burgh. Mrs De Burgh sustained injuries at the Ikea store in Springvale when the elevator doors closed on her. Mrs De Burgh and her daughter attempted to seek some satisfaction from Ikea management, seeking understanding and an explanation for the incident, which has left the elderly mother with considerable and unnecessary stress and with the matter still not fully resolved 12 months on.

I have personally written to the Ikea Springvale store manager, Mr Julian Pertile; the Ikea country manager, David Hood; and Mr Peter Agnefjall, the CEO of Ikea. However, the response from the management of this international company has been less than satisfactory. None have addressed the issues raised with

management, basically stating that they 'do not intend to discuss this matter any further'. The attitude of Ikea's management is unacceptable and has had a significant and detrimental effect on Mrs De Burgh.

Ikea is a longstanding and well-supported part of the retail sector in Victoria. It is not unreasonable to expect that its processes to deal with such complaints should be compassionate and more understanding. I implore Ikea management to meet with Mrs De Burgh and her family and to take the necessary steps that will allow them to finally — after a year — put this issue to rest.

Bendigo Hospital

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — Tuesday, 24 January 2017, was a day for Bendigo's history books, with the opening of our big, beautiful, brand-new hospital. The transfer of patients from the soon-to-be old hospital to the new was seamless — a great credit to the Bendigo Health staff who meticulously planned the day — and went without a hitch. I would like to thank the staff for their amazing efforts. They had planned and prepared for this day for weeks, from the doctors and nurses to the allied health and ancillary staff, who all played an important role. I also thank the many, many volunteers who provided great support — vital support. I would also like to acknowledge the paramedics who were involved, as Ambulance Victoria devoted significant additional resources to assist with the safe transfer of patients. It was a proud and emotional day.

In November 2006 I stood with the then member for Bendigo West, Bob Cameron, and we committed to the planning to set this project on its pathway. Over the following decade I devoted every effort to get a hospital for Bendigo that our city and our region deserved. On 24 January we visited the special care nursery. This really brought home the critical importance of why we have this beautiful, brand-new hospital in Bendigo. It means that mothers and babies and their families can have support closer to home. It means that whether you are in Swan Hill or Kerang or Bendigo you can get that special treatment in Bendigo, which is important for the patients and important for the families as well. So it is a great credit to our region that this has been achieved and will last for many decades to come.

Hazelwood power station

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — In 51 days the Hazelwood power station will close its doors, and the impact on many workers, contractors and local families will be simply devastating. The reality has really set in for those who have already lost their jobs

and those who are about to lose their jobs. Many casual staff and contractors who provided their services to Hazelwood have not had work for weeks, and this will be compounded further when they are joined by hundreds of other permanent casual workers who will not have a job on 1 April. There is a real sense of anger and frustration within the Latrobe Valley community right now.

To close this station within five months is a bitter pill to swallow for so many who will be left with substantial financial commitments and no job. The fact the state government just last year imposed an additional \$252 million of taxes on Latrobe Valley generators just defies logic and belief. The same government then paint themselves as the saviours by providing a rescue package of nearly the same amount of money. Talk about take it in the one hand and give it from the other!

We know the Labor Party wanted to close Hazelwood, and they promised it would be a gradual closure, but we are not even getting that. Workers, contractors and local businesses believe that there are two key initiatives that must be adopted: to close Hazelwood gradually and to implement a pooled redundancy scheme for workers. Anything less will lead to the loss of thousands of jobs, the energy security of Victoria being threatened and the cost of electricity going through the roof for home owners and businesses. That is bad news for all Victorians, including all within the Latrobe Valley.

Anne Horrigan-Dixon and Dorothy Reading

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I was delighted that this year's Australia Day honours acknowledged two of my constituents, who have been awarded medals of the Order of Australia. Anne Horrigan-Dixon, OAM, and Dorothy Reading, OAM, have both shown extraordinary commitment to the causes they serve.

Anne is a remarkable woman who selflessly applies her extraordinary community-building skills to the greater benefit of our community. I first met her almost 30 years ago through her involvement in neighbourhood houses at Holden Street and substantially at the Fitzroy Learning Network. From there, I witnessed her involvement in refugee and asylum seeker issues at the local, state and national levels. She must also be acknowledged because she led innumerable community campaigns and tirelessly campaigned for more than 30 years to build a new North Fitzroy library, which will come to fruition in the next couple of months.

For Dorothy this honour recognises her as someone who has committed her life to the prevention of cancer and supporting those who suffer from the disease. She was a founding member of BreastScreen Victoria, later going on to serve as its chair, and she was instrumental in the creation of other cancer prevention strategies, such as Quit and PapScreen Victoria. Dorothy has served both the cancer council and the Victorian Cooperative Oncology Group.

These honours go some way to recognising the extraordinary work of these two great women, who I count as great friends and supporters, as I know all of my community does, in reflecting on these important Australia Day honours.

Dr Peter Frost

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — I rise this morning to acknowledge the retirement of the chief executive officer of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, Dr Peter Frost. Dr Frost of course not only was the CEO but also served as the acting Auditor-General for two extended periods, first following the retirement of Des Pearson and second following the resignation of John Doyle. The role is never straightforward, and Peter did an excellent job filling the gap left by Des Pearson. His second stint after the resignation of John Doyle was, I am sure, even more testing. I do not wish to dwell on that time, but I simply say that under exceptionally difficult circumstances Dr Frost did a wonderful job to keep the office and the critically important work it does constantly moving forward.

Peter was not of course a career auditor. His Victorian public service roles included first assistant secretary to the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, head of the Office of Public Sector Management and deputy secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. In academia he served as deputy vice-chancellor at RMIT. He worked in 33 countries as a project director and consultant for the World Bank, and he was a special adviser of public sector reform for the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. Peter is a former Menzies scholar and completed his doctorate in public policy and education at Harvard University.

Unfortunately I was not able to attend the farewell function for Peter at the end of last year, but I did not want his retirement to pass unnoted, as it marks the conclusion of a long and distinguished career of service not only to the state and people of Victoria but to public service across the globe. I am sure all members will join me in congratulating and thanking Peter for his service and for his commitment to the public sector and wishing him well in future endeavours.

Australia Day awards

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — Congratulations to all the new citizens and award recipients who participated in the City of Hume's Australia Day ceremony, which I had the pleasure of attending, in Craigieburn. Award winners included Young Citizen of the Year and St John Ambulance volunteer Coby Elyse McTaggart and the organiser of Sunbury's Christmas on the Green event, which was recognised as Community Event of the Year. Two local residents received the Citizen of the Year award this year: Sunbury's Mercedes Ramirez and Craigieburn's Nayana Bhandari.

Nayana is an extremely active member of the Craigieburn community, having moved to the area in recent years after arriving in Australia in 2008. In particular I wish to note Nayana's work in establishing the Oorja Foundation, a fantastic local organisation that aims to prevent family violence in culturally diverse families and help connect young multicultural families. Nayana has a passion for assisting newly settled families to build strong community connections through education, communication and emotional support. She is a women's rights advocate and committed to bridging the gap of gender equality and addressing the issue of violence against women.

I also wish to congratulate the family and colleagues of my late constituent, local icon Sebastiano Pitruzzello, who was awarded a posthumous Member of the Order of Australia as part of this year's Australia Day honours. Sebastiano migrated to Australia in 1963. Through hard work, passion and dedication he founded the hugely successful Pantalica Cheese Company and, later, Pitruzzello Estate in Sunbury. He is greatly missed by his family and friends, but he has been acknowledged in a very fitting way.

Glen Eira sports facilities

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — Last week I wrote to the mayor of the City of Glen Eira specifically on the issue of the lack of open space. It is something I have raised many times in this Parliament. This particular issue deals with the fact that many ratepayers have to play sport outside of the city, and we have clubs that exist for many constituents from outside of the city. What we are requesting — I am sure many other areas would have a similar situation — is that ratepayers get first priority on local playing facilities. I know this affects the Ajax Football Club. I know a number of soccer clubs within our area have to play outside of the area, yet many of their members are actual ratepayers. So I ask the Minister for Sport and also the Minister for Local Government to look into this.

Chinese New Year

Mr SOUTHWICK — I wish all of my Chinese constituents and friends a happy Chinese New Year for the Year of the Rooster.

Calvary Health Care Bethlehem

Mr SOUTHWICK — I also want to bring a point up around Calvary Health Care Bethlehem, which has a proposal to build a 19-storey high-rise development in Caulfield South. I have raised this before. I ask the Minister for Planning to intervene on this important issue. We have 300 residents who have already objected to this. This will be the largest building in Glen Eira, a skyscraper, and we ask the minister to intervene immediately on this important issue.

Lorraine Francis Community Award

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — At the end of each year I present the Lorraine Francis Community Award to a student from each school within or very near the Bentleigh electorate in recognition of exceptional leadership qualities demonstrated both at school and in the broader community. The award is named in honour of the late Lorraine Francis, former principal of my old school, St Peter's Primary School in East Bentleigh. Throughout November and December last year I had the pleasure of presenting the award to 21 students. Congratulations to Morgan Conroy from Southmoor Primary School, Denny Niu from Ormond Primary School, Anna Calvi from St Peter's Primary School, Eloise Griffin from St Catherine's Primary School, Lolly Seligmann from Valkstone Primary School, Emily Andjelic from McKinnon Primary School, Madelyn Boustead from Bentleigh Secondary College, Jonathon Summers from Berendale School, Isobel Barker from Bayside Special Developmental School, Thomas Herterich from McKinnon Secondary College, Amelia Jones-Denholm from Tucker Road Bentleigh Primary School, Oskar Cislo from St Paul's Primary School, David Bourke from Brighton Secondary College, Isabella Zambas from East Bentleigh Primary School, Molly Telfer from Bentleigh West Primary School, Dean Gidas from Coatesville Primary School, Jordan Petrakos from Southern Autistic School, Ruby Harkness from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Bentleigh, Patrick Allman from St James College, Emma Hedger from Kilvington Grammar School and Bella Maclean from Moorabbin Primary School.

These students were chosen by their school communities for leading by example and in doing so empowered their peers to be strong leaders. They have

now graduated from their respective schools, and I wish them the best for a bright future.

Gilbert Ampt

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — It is with great sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Gilbert Ampt, a life member of the National Party and an outstanding contributor to the Wimmera region. Gill's passion and advocacy for a fair deal for country Victorians, his dedication and support for farming and his home community of Gymbowen and his love for his family will not be forgotten. My deepest sympathies to Gladys and the Ampt family.

Warracknabeal emergency services complex

Ms KEALY — In rural areas there is considerable overlap of volunteers that give their time to support our emergency services. I thank all volunteers and emergency service workers for their commitment to protect our community and keep our people and property safe. A number of residents and organisations in the Warracknabeal region have raised with me the opportunity to establish an emergency services complex. Warracknabeal recently received funding for a new police station, and there is an immediate need for works to add the ambulance station extension of the State Emergency Services (SES) building. As these works must be undertaken in the short term it is logical that consideration be given to co-locate these emergency services into a single, purpose-built emergency services complex now, prior to undertaking works on any single emergency services building.

There are highly successful examples of combined emergency services facilities, such as the fantastic Country Fire Authority–SES complex in Edenhope, funded by the Nationals and Liberals when in government. An emergency service complex is supported by the Yarriambiack council's municipal emergency management planning committee, as this type of facility would achieve the best outcome to support our emergency service volunteers and staff in Warracknabeal. I urge the Minister for Emergency Services to take this unique opportunity to ensure that Warracknabeal has the emergency services complex it needs to best support our emergency service volunteers and staff and to provide sufficient funding to make this project a reality.

Drug harm reduction

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — In my maiden speech I said that as a scientist by background I would always focus on evidence-based policy over ideology.

Today I am imploring the Andrews government to adopt an evidence-based approach to drug harm minimisation. For example, we know from jurisdictions overseas that pill testing works to save lives at places like music festivals, yet this Labor government has ruled out a pill-testing trial. We know from Sydney as well as overseas that supervised injecting rooms work to save lives and improve safety and amenity on our streets, yet yesterday Labor said that they will not support a trial of this policy either.

This year we have already seen several young people die due to a bad batch of party drugs. This could have been prevented if these people had access to pill testing, because we know that when people are shown non-judgemental information about the dangers of the drugs they are about to take, they overwhelmingly choose to throw them away.

One person dies every two weeks from a drug overdose in Richmond. Dozens die each year despite huge resources being funnelled into law enforcement, such as drug sniffer dogs and CCTV. We can no longer bury our heads in the sand and simply pretend people do not take drugs or keep doing what is not working. Not if we actually want to save lives. We must take a new approach, and I implore this government to muster the courage to do so.

Harvest Home Primary School

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) — It is great to see another start of the school year under an Andrews Labor government. Finally we have a government that is responding to and supporting Victorians in the growth suburbs. Earlier this week I had the great privilege together with the Minister for Education to officially open the new primary school called Harvest Home Primary School in North Epping. This is a beautiful school with fantastic learning facilities for the children that are going there. I would like to congratulate the principal, Anthony Simone, and all teachers and staff who have worked so hard and are so committed and dedicated to preparing the school for the first day last Thursday, the day that I also attended to see all the excited children.

On the first day there were 280 students enrolled, yet another 20 arrived and enrolled actually on the day, making the school on its first day of opening a school with 300 students. Labor in government had planned that the school would have been opened last year, 2016; however, the Liberal government of the time delayed the building of that, to the detriment of the children and residents in the Wollert and Epping area. This delay in opening the school had a huge impact on the

neighbouring school, Epping Views Primary School, which, while it has been very successful, was catering for over four times the number of students that were expected to be at that school.

Paul King

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) — Yesterday marked the eighth anniversary of Black Saturday, an awful day when the forces of nature conspired to create a firestorm in which 173 souls perished. As we reflect on the devastation of that deadly day we recognise those firefighters who selflessly continue to potentially put themselves in harm's way to protect life and property.

In the Benambra district the fire season to date has been relatively calm but well managed by volunteer and career firefighters in the local area. There have been a couple of fire incidents around the Indigo Valley and Tangambalanga, where in excess of 30 tankers, 100 firefighters and at least five water-bombing aircraft were called into action.

Amongst the firefighters was a man I am proud to call a friend, a man who has been shielding the community from such blazes for more than 35 years as both a volunteer and staff member. Country Fire Authority district 24 operations manager Paul King was recognised with the Australian Fire Service Medal on Australia Day. 'Spider' told the local paper:

I used to listen out for the siren from school, at Wodonga High School, to bolt when I heard the fire siren.

He is a great role model for the community, testament to those firefighters, both paid and volunteer, who continue to protect our communities across the state and a more than worthy recipient of this recognition.

Further, condolences to the King family for the loss of 'Bones' — another great servant.

Metro Tunnel

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — The Melbourne Metro rail tunnel will be one of the most significant projects to transform our city in decades. It is a project that will create 10 000 jobs. It will create the second rail tunnel connecting our city and will deliver a huge boost for the Frankston train line service.

This project of course had its initiation late in the Brumby government's term. Labor left planning money for the then incoming Baillieu-Napthine governments to commence that detailed planning work, but after four years a lack of action and foresight in that important transport initiative resulted in a re-routed route that

would see the tunnel go through sewerage lines and was drawn on the back of a napkin. It seems that the do-nothing opposition is once again looking to its upper house colleagues to pass ridiculous motions to again try to stall the progress of important infrastructure projects like the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel.

This will be a fundamentally transformational project. It is our number one priority in Victoria according to the independent assessment of Infrastructure Australia, and it needs to be done. It will be done in 2026; it should have been done before that time. We should be completing this in 2022, and we would be if the previous government had had the foresight to put aside politics and the thinking that the tunnel was branded as a Labor project and got on with it. The Melbourne Metro rail tunnel will be great for my community, and I look forward to it progressing without delay.

Australia Day awards

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — Australia Day is the most important civic day across Ripon. I was pleased this year to participate in celebrations and ceremonies at Daylesford, Creswick, Amphitheatre and Stawell. Australia Day is also the day when some very special people across Ripon are recognised for their service to the community. I pay tribute to their service and recognise their importance to what makes the communities of Ripon so special, and it is my honour to place their names on the parliamentary record.

The Pyrenees Shire Council Citizen of the Year is Jayne Briody. William Gallagher is the Young Citizen of the Year, and the Community Event of the Year award went to the Big Avoca Do.

In Central Goldfields shire Leslie Mortlock, Charles Williams and Raymond O'Keefe from the Maryborough RSL were named joint citizens of the year. The Young Citizen of the Year is Tegan Dixon, and the Outstanding Community Organisation award went to the Casablanca Movie Club.

In Ararat shire the Citizen of the Year is Dianne Radford. The Harmony Award went to Father Andrew Hayes and Manzoor A. Mian, and the Healthy Living Award went to Kelli Felini.

In the Northern Grampians Shire Council the Citizens of the Year are Neil and Sheila Thornton. The Young Citizen of the Year is Ryan Kell. The Community Event of the Year was awarded to the Zumbo Just Desserts drought relief initiative at Navarre, and the Local Hero Award went to the Stawell Avenue of Honour project.

In Buloke shire the Citizen of the Year is Graeme 'Pickles' Harris. The Young Citizen of the Year is Mary-Anne Pollard, and the Community Event of the Year went to Back to Berriwillock.

In Loddon shire Christine Wattie received the Inglewood Community Service Award. The Tarnagulla Community Service Award went to Graeme Stewart and the Wedderburn Community Service Award to Michael Moore, and the community group award went to the Wedderburn Coach House Gallery and Museum.

In Hepburn shire the Citizen of the Year is Valerie Lawrence. The Community Group of the Year is the Mollonghip Poetry Slam, and the Young Citizen of the Year is Jacob Clarke-Demaj.

The City of Ballarat Young Citizen of the Year is Chloe Waddell of Mitchell Park.

Marilyn Beaumont

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — Today I would like to honour Marilyn Beaumont, a trailblazing feminist from my electorate whose work has been recognised with an Order of Australia Medal in this year's Australia Day honours. Marilyn has spent the last five decades crusading for women's rights across various roles in nursing, in health care advocacy and in the union movement.

As South Australian and then federal secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation Marilyn worked tirelessly to raise the profile of nursing as a profession in Australia. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation is now one of Australia's best and most influential and effective unions. Undoubtedly one of her greatest achievements was her five-year campaign as the head of Women's Health Victoria to remove abortion from the Victorian Crimes Act 1958. Because of Marilyn's dogged determination, Victorian women now have greater control of their sexual and reproductive health.

It is a great privilege to know Marilyn, and she is now very much part of the fantastic communities of Denver and Glenlyon in the Macedon Ranges. Marilyn, you are an inspiration to me and so many other women in the labour movement, and I commend you for devoting your life's work to advancing the working conditions for women and men, and to the health and wellbeing of women in Victoria and Australia. Congratulations on your Order of Australia Medal.

Judy Cope-Williams

Ms THOMAS — Congratulations to the Macedon Ranges Shire Citizen of the Year, Judy Cope-Williams, director of the Cope-Williams Foundation. The foundation provides financial assistance and development opportunities to local, young and emerging musicians. Judy, your passion for music and the arts is infectious. Thank you, and congratulations on your well-deserved award.

Australia Day

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) — On Australia Day the Koo Wee Rup Community Centre was at capacity for the annual Australia Day ceremony. The ceremony included presentations for the ‘just a good kid’ awards to local school students and also awards to adult leaders in the community. Well done to the new president of Koo Wee Rup Township Committee, Caroline Roff, on a very successful morning.

Later in the morning I enjoyed the Cardinia shire’s festivities and a citizenship ceremony at the Cardinia Cultural Centre in Pakenham. It was, as always, a packed venue, with many Australian flags proudly being waved. Congratulations to the Cardinia Shire Council on a great event.

The afternoon was spent at Bass Coast shire’s small yet intimate citizenship ceremony where Ramesh Bhandari, David Butcher, Gordon Maber and Anna Owondo became Australian citizens. Excellent events, and all very well attended.

Kilcunda Lobster Festival

Mr PAYNTER — On Sunday, 29 January, I opened the Kilcunda Lobster Festival. I had a ball spinning the wheel with Wonthaggi Rotary’s John Duscher. Many had an opportunity to walk home with a massive lobster. Well done to Andrea Bolch and the committee on yet another terrific festival and raising funds for worthwhile local community groups, including the Country Fire Authority, the State Emergency Service and other worthwhile causes. I love Australia Day and hope it remains on 26 January for all Australians to enjoy.

Bonbeach Life Saving Club

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — At a time when Donald Trump has been trying to implement an entry ban on citizens from certain Muslim countries, I was attending a very moving, joyful and inclusive awards ceremony at Bonbeach Life Saving Club. Seventeen newly arrived youth from Afghanistan, Pakistan and

Cambodia were recently awarded their surf rescue certificates and proudly undertook their first official patrol as lifeguards on beautiful Bonbeach.

Despite having no prior experience with the surf and despite most of them not being able to swim, these remarkable young people completed a year of swim training at the club before undertaking and successfully completing their certificates at Bonbeach Life Saving Club as part of Life Saving Victoria’s multicultural water safety and settlement strategy.

There were two girls among the group, aged 14 and 15. These girls, who are sisters, arrived by boat from Afghanistan just over two years ago. Their refugee status was accepted, and they settled in Noble Park with their family. Sadly, two other boats they were travelling with sunk on the way to Australia. There were no survivors. From that moment these girls wanted to learn to swim, and now they patrol at Bonbeach where they can help and protect others.

I commend Bonbeach Life Saving Club, in particular Campbell Jordan and Lloyd Thomas, for undertaking this terrific program and putting in so many hours to make this such a success. Programs like this benefit not only the young people involved but our broader communities. This is such a wonderful story of newly arrived young men and women volunteering their time to protect their new communities so soon after arriving in them. These stories need to be shared.

Vicki Jellie

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) — It is such a wonderful honour to be able to rise and pay tribute to Warrnambool’s Vicki Jellie, who was named Australia’s Local Hero for 2017 as part of the national Australia Day awards. I have spoken about Vicki in this place before. She is a truly remarkable woman, and my electorate is so fortunate to have her as one of its own. In 2008 when Vicki’s husband, Peter, passed away from cancer, she found plans he had made for a fundraiser. He had planned to kickstart a campaign to have radiotherapy services offered in Warrnambool. During his treatment Peter had to travel to Melbourne, spending the precious last few weeks of his life away from his friends, family and support networks in Warrnambool, and he did not want others to have that same experience.

So Vicki pursued his dream. She started Peter’s Project and rallied the community. She was told it would never happen, but she and the Peter’s Project committee did not give up. With the backing of the community they lobbied relentlessly and secured funding from the

federal and state coalition governments. Then with Vicki as the leader the community raised \$5 million in just nine months. We now have our brilliant cancer centre, which has already changed many lives of people in our community. It stands as a beacon to remind us that when we stand together, shoulder to shoulder as a community, even when are told we will not win, with determination we can achieve great things. Congratulations, Vicki. The whole of South-West Coast and I are so very proud of you.

Sam Courtney

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — I would like to pay tribute to three very special individuals who passed away recently: Sam Courtney, Sheila Evans and Bill Stanhope. All were long-time members of the Labor Party, but more than that, they were great contributors to Australian society. It is people like Sam, Sheila and Bill who do not seek recognition but contribute nonetheless.

Sam Courtney was a humble man. I got to know Sam a lot in the last few years, and I very much enjoyed our chats in his home in Oakleigh Road, Carnegie. Sam, even though he climbed the heights of corporate Australia, becoming managing director of IOOF, never lost his sense of social justice and community participation. That was evidenced by his involvement in the Labor Party — he supported me, Simon Crean, Ann Barker and other Labor Party people — as well as his strong involvement in his church.

Sheila Evans

Mr DIMOPOULOS — I first met Sheila Evans in the early 1990s, when I started working for Simon Crean, and she was always reliable and someone you could count on to help in the election. She was always a Labor stalwart.

Bill Stanhope

Mr DIMOPOULOS — For 37 years Bill Stanhope worked for the Victorian Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, specifically dealing with poultry. He was not just a poultry breeder; he was a poultry specialist and world renowned. He was a local Oakleigh identity. The house that he was born in and that his parents built still stands in Golf Links Avenue, Oakleigh, in the heart of my electorate, and he was very proud of his family, of his grandchildren and, specifically as a Labor man, of his granddaughter's husband, the member for Sunbury.

Eltham Dandenong Junior Basketball Tournament

Ms WARD (Eltham) — Congratulations to Greg Jeffers and the Eltham Wildcats for being the host with the most during Australia's biggest basketball tournament for the 39th time over the Australia Day weekend — a tournament with over 12 000 players from across Melbourne, Australia and New Zealand. Amazingly, they hosted 1357 teams and over 50 000 spectators and helpers during the four-day tournament.

Thank you and congratulations to those who made the Eltham Dandenong tournament such a success: 20-year veteran tournament director Peter Meehan; Alicia Vengust, external communications manager; first-timer Adam Currie, communications; 40-year veteran David Hickman, fixturing; Bianca Ananiev, fixturing; first-timer Shane Palmer, fixturing; Des Buchan, referee appointments; Elliot Green, referee appointments; Jacob Burnham, referee appointments; 15-year stalwarts Tony and Angela Bearzotto, financial administrators; Lorraine Harris, entries coordinator; and Sue Cross, with various roles including liaison for various teams. Connor Matthews was an operations officer and organised staff for 30 different venues around Melbourne. Jordan Canovan, as basketball development officer, put together all the fantastic Facebook media, one of which went global with the buzzer beater to secure a win for the Collingwood girls under-18s.

Eltham Football Club

Ms WARD — The AFL Women's competition kicked off on Friday night, and it was magnificent, so I want to talk about the pathway to that big league — grassroots footy, where girls football is taking off like a rocket too. That does not happen by accident; it happens with support and hard work. Last Sunday the Eltham Panthers junior football club had a girls AFL skills session. It was an outstanding success, with over 100 girls turning up. I would like to congratulate the committee, led by president Stewart McCallum and secretary Roslyn McCormick, for all their hard work. They had street stalls, they letterboxed, they had posters all over town and they worked tirelessly to create a fantastic day of footy. I know Jeff Karlake and Jeremy Teagle will do a terrific job.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: budget estimates 2016–17

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — I am delighted to start the parliamentary year speaking on reports, to continue my journey through the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee’s inquiry into budget estimates and to switch over to the 2016–17 year.

This is my first contribution on the 2016–17 report, and today I am going to concentrate on the transcript of the inquiry which was held on 12 May 2016. The minister at the time was Minister Mikakos from the other place. In her presentation Minister Mikakos noted — she was talking about youth justice — that the safety of staff, young people and the broader community was paramount, and she talked about the additional investments into the system. However, it was somewhat disturbing to note that throughout all the questions on Minister Mikakos’s presentation the government members of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) did not choose to ask the minister anything about youth justice. They did not feel that that was an important topic for them to concentrate on and instead used up the time in other ways.

Even on the day — on 12 May — the member for Gippsland South did home in with a number of questions on the spiralling problems in youth justice. In fact he asked what was being done about the fact that the number of assaults in youth justice facilities the year before last had been only 15 but last year had jumped to 23; it was clear the system was spiralling out of control. The minister did not have the detail around that. As the member for Gippsland South continued it became very clear that the minister did not understand what she was being asked, despite this being her portfolio.

Of course we have subsequently seen continued meltdowns across this portfolio. The staff at Malmsbury and the staff at Parkville have faced enormous numbers of assaults; they have had human faeces thrown at them; they have had completely out-of-control rioting again and again. We did not see that under the previous government. This is a factor of this government’s management of these facilities. Then of course we had the massive breakout from Malmsbury, and we had youth offenders on the run. As it was, 15 got out, and over the time they were on the run the crimes linked to those 15 people were an attempted armed robbery in Berwick; an assault at Bonbeach; two armed robberies at Noble Park, including one of threatening with a knife and another with a baseball bat; and a hit-and-run at Mulgrave.

There were multiple cars stolen, and there was an armed robbery in Hallam. It took some days for all of these people to be caught, and it took an enormous amount of police resources.

Yet we have this bungling, blundering, floundering minister who has had control of youth justice taken off her and put into another department yet she stays as the minister. This is an indictment of the office of a minister of the Crown. This person is not fit to hold this office, and she has proven this over and over again. I am not sure how much more she could possibly do to demonstrate that she is not fit for purpose as a minister, yet she holds her job. I find it truly extraordinary, and the protection racket that has been perpetrated to keep her in her position while all around is moved — because everybody knows she is failing — is just unbelievable. So I ask: who will be the minister who fronts up to PAEC this year? Surely it cannot be the inept incumbent — —

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

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: budget estimates 2016–17

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to make a contribution also on the report on the 2016–17 budget estimates. In doing so I want to make just one observation in response to the member for Ripon’s contribution. I chaired the session the member referred to when the Minister for Families and Children appeared before the committee. I believe 2 hours was set aside for the minister to come before the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. I seem to recall that at least 45 minutes of that hearing was lost because the opposition sought, by using a cheap and childish stunt, to call back the Minister for Public Transport. There was a 2-hour slot on the schedule, and the opposition had every opportunity to ask any question they wanted about youth justice, and what did they do? They were only interested in cheap, childish stunts, calling back the Minister for Public Transport, alleging she had misled the committee. If they were that serious and that focused on youth justice, they had every opportunity, but they failed to discharge those obligations. I just wanted to put that on the record.

I am absolutely delighted because I have some new material to work with. It gave me great joy when I broke the spine of this magnificent report. Where shall I start? Where should you start other than with finding 1? It is:

Initiative and project funding in the 2016–17 budget is intended to improve Victoria’s productivity per capita across

the areas of infrastructure, education, health, labour market participation and economic inclusion.

I was thrilled when I saw this finding. It is just sensational. Do you know why? It neatly and succinctly summarises the great work our government is doing, whether it is in relation to the Level Crossing Removal Authority — and level crossings have been well recognised as basically being a blocker for economic productivity and growth — or whether we are talking about the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel, which I note is the subject, again, of another stunt from those in the other place, who are trying to derail it.

If you were purporting to be economically responsible, why would you seek to torpedo a \$10 billion project that is going to employ thousands of people, that is going to be a world-changing project, that is going to create employment and increases in economic productivity? Why would you do that? I thought those opposite represented the party of Bolte — the man who built roads and made those sorts of investments — yet here they are. There has never been a major project that they have not tried to derail or to stop.

Ms Thomas interjected.

Mr PEARSON — I could not agree more with the member for Macedon. They do not know what they stand for.

The list just goes on and on. When you look at it, we are now spending about \$5.6 billion per annum in terms of our capital works projects, which is the greatest level of expenditure the state has ever seen. It absolutely dwarfs anything that the Kennett government did. When you are looking at projects like the CityLink widening project and the proposed western distributor, it is clear these are major investments in our state which will improve not only the competitiveness of Victoria and the productivity of our state but will actually create a fairer society.

The reality is that most of the high-paying, secure jobs for the 21st century are going to be broadly within the Hoddle grid and maybe further out — maybe within 5 or 10 kilometres. You cannot allow a situation to occur where people are deprived of participating in those labour markets because they live 50 or 70 or 80 kilometres away from those areas. You need a really good rail network, you need a really good road network and you need to make sure that people who live further afield can participate in these jobs. Just because you are a bright kid but were born east of Pakenham and come from a more humble or modest background should not mean you cannot participate in these sorts of jobs. You

can get a good job, a secure job, and build a great future for yourself.

This finding also goes back to some of the great work we are doing in terms of the education state, which is really going to underpin the future of our economy. I look at it in terms of the Jobs Victoria Employment Network, which in my electorate is going to make a profound difference in terms of trying to provide employment opportunities for people from the Horn of Africa, trying to get them off welfare and into work and trying to get them out of public housing and into the private market so that they can create their own wealth and their own prosperity like every other wave of immigrants that we have seen going back over decades.

Finding 1 says it all. It is a great finding. I love the finding, I love this report and I love PAEC. I commend the report.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: budget estimates 2016–17

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — I am not sure that I always support the member for Essendon in his love for the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) estimates process, but it is always interesting to hear his contributions. He talked a bit about jobs. I also want to talk a little bit about jobs and also aspects of the PAEC report on budget estimates for 2016–17, which I will be referring to. The jobs issue came up, as did the environment issue. We had quite a bit of discussion about environment and jobs through the process in the last couple of years.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr D. O'BRIEN — I hear some carping from the other side about jobs, but the carping stops very quickly when you talk about Gippsland where we are seeing a significant jobs crisis. Not only is the government not doing anything about it, but it is aiding and abetting the jobs crisis that we are facing in Gippsland.

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr D. O'BRIEN — I say to the member for Melton that you started the privatisation with Joan Kirner, who you like to talk about. You always forget about that, don't you? Joan Kirner started the privatisation of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. Let us talk about Hazelwood. The Labor Party said that they would have a phased shutdown of Hazelwood, but they have done absolutely nothing to either achieve that aim or to encourage the company to keep Hazelwood open. As my good friend and colleague the member for Morwell said this morning, Labor has failed dismally when it

comes to supporting jobs in Gippsland, particularly with respect to Hazelwood. Equally, it has failed when it comes to the Heyfield timber mill of Australian Sustainable Hardwoods.

Only a couple of weeks ago we saw the Premier and the Minister for Industry and Employment down in Portland offering \$200 million — although they did not say the actual figure it is believed to be \$200 million — to save Portland's Alcoa. I know the member for South-West Coast played a critical role in making sure that those jobs were saved. We have seen lots of support for the jobs in the south-west, we have seen lots of support for Alcoa, a foreign company, but the jobs of 250 workers at a good Australian company in a sustainable industry are threatened because this government is more interested in the jobs of three people — the members for Northcote, Brunswick and Richmond. They are the ones they are most interested in. They are more interested in appeasing the Greens, because they want to save the Leadbeater's possum.

The government inherited both the sustainable timber industry and a plan to protect the Leadbeater's possum, and in two years there have been 423 colonies of Leadbeater's possums found, which does bring into question how endangered this particular critter is. The previous government had a plan, and it was that the plan for locking up further forests would be reviewed once 200 had been found. Has that happened? No. The government has not done that. They are going to go ahead and allow these jobs at Australian Sustainable Hardwoods to be lost — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Gippsland South will continue his contribution when the matter is again before the house.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! I would like to acknowledge in the gallery today the Honourable Joy Burch, Speaker of the Parliament of the Australian Capital Territory, and her Clerk, Mr Tom Duncan. On behalf of the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and all members, we welcome you.

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I advise all honourable members that the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans will be absent from question time this week.

The Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing will answer any questions in his place.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Bail laws

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, every Victorian already knows when it comes to getting tough on crime you and your government are nothing more than talk.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Members on my right will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition is entitled to be heard in silence. He shall continue.

Mr GUY — How many more Victorians have to suffer another carjacking, home invasion, aggravated burglary, violent assault or die while you undertake yet another review?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Government members will come to order and allow the Premier to respond to a substantive question as put by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, and I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that the government is making record investments in our police force, giving not only \$2 billion worth of investment but also a new model to end the boom-and-bust cycle of recruitment of police, which police and the union have called on for many, many years. It is this government that is delivering the recruitment of more than 3000 additional police — not something done by those opposite.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I remind members that the Premier is entitled to silence when endeavouring to respond to a substantive question as put by the opposition. The Premier to continue, in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — That strong investment in giving the chief commissioner the resources he needs, the laws and powers he needs, the technology and equipment he needs — that is what is important and that is what our government is delivering.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about reviews, and perhaps that is a reference to the urgent advice that we

have sought from former Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Coghlan, which will be provided by 3 April.

I would remind and refer the Leader of the Opposition to the fact that when we had the terrible and tragic death of Jill Meagher and a review was instituted by those opposite, who were in government at that time, the former Attorney-General described it as immediate action, and there was cooperation and support — not down the low road but proper support — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I think this is a good opportunity for the Chair to remind all members of this at the beginning of the sitting. I quote:

Members must not disturb a member who is speaking, by hissing, chanting, clapping, booing, exclamations or other interruption —

and I quote —

Mr Speaker do call upon member by name, making such disturbance, and that every such person should incur the displeasure and censure of the house.

That was 22 January 1693. I remind members that there is a body of decisions, rulings and indeed standing orders that require that members allow the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and all members to be heard in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — Thank you for your guidance, Speaker. In the wake of the tragic death — —

Mr Guy interjected.

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

Mr ANDREWS — In the wake of the tragic death of Jill Meagher a process was put in place by the previous government, a process that was fully supported by the then opposition. That process took 11 months. The advice we are procuring from former DPP Coghlan will take less than 11 weeks. That is a powerful contrast, except for the fact of course that the support that the then opposition provided to the then government those years ago is seemingly absent from those opposite today. The low road will get us nowhere on this.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair is unable to hear the Premier. The Premier to continue, in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — That advice will be provided to the Attorney-General by 3 April. Change will be made. It will be made in good time. It will not take 11 months. And we will not leave to any future government what we were left, and that was unlegislated recommendations of that Callinan review — practical action and investment and I would have thought, I would have hoped, bipartisan support for real reform. It would seem there is no bipartisanship on this issue.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — After the Moomba riots, Premier, you said you would smash youth gangs and you have not. After multiple youth justice riots you promised to crack down on offenders and you did not. And following the Bourke Street tragedy you have refused to make any immediate changes to bail laws. Premier, there are changes to bail you can make right now to protect Victorians. Why are you putting off making any changes for months while you await the outcome of yet another review?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I made the point publicly quite recently, and I will make the point again for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, that the previous government, the Liberal-National government, have made some — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Kew and the member for Forest Hill are warned.

Mr ANDREWS — I made the point that the previous government made bail law changes. We have made bail law changes. Whilst those might be described as incremental changes, important incremental changes, the tragedy in Bourke Street calls us — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — We were told in 2013 that it was all fixed and that the bail reform that they made was the end of it. It turns out it is not.

We ought to do this properly to honour those who have died in Bourke Street, and that is exactly what we will do. The Coghlan advice will be here, not in 11 months but in less than 11 weeks, and then hopefully we can — all of us as a Parliament, not an opposition and a government, but as a Parliament — make the change that is necessary.

Questions and statements interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! Before calling on a minister to make a statement, I wish to welcome to the gallery a former member for Dandenong, John Pandazopoulos. Welcome.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Questions and statements resumed.

Ministers statements: Portland aluminium smelter

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I am very pleased to be able to update the house on progress that the government has been able to make in securing more than 2000 jobs directly and indirectly related to the Portland smelter, the Alcoa smelter down there. This is such an important industry — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, apparently not supported by those opposite.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hastings is now warned.

Mr ANDREWS — We were very pleased to be able to provide direct financial assistance to Alcoa in order to secure those 650 jobs at Alcoa’s Portland smelter directly and some 1600 indirect jobs. This is all about making sure that we get things done, that we support those jobs and those workers — and it sits in stark contrast. I can recall Alcoa at Point Henry. How did that end? Not as well as for Alcoa at Portland. A different government in charge, of course!

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier to continue, in silence. The Chair has advanced a number of warnings and will continue to do so. The Chair will not hesitate to withdraw members should they not cooperate and allow the Premier to continue in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — Of course, Alcoa’s facility at Portland is one of their safest, and one of the most efficient in the entire Alcoa global fleet. So these jobs are absolutely worth saving. It is worth getting in and doing the hard work, unlike some others, who sat by and allowed thousands of jobs to leave our state.

We are very pleased to have been able to make a direct financial contribution and secure these jobs in this

sector and we are very pleased to be joined by local members, only too happy to be very supportive of this announcement in their local community, despite the interjections of those opposite today. This is a great outcome for the Portland community, a great outcome for workers, and it just sits in stark contrast to those opposite, who did nothing, or nothing good, for four long years.

Bail laws

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the experience of off-duty Senior Constable Daniel Yeoman, who was stabbed in the eye in front of his family in a horrific home invasion by an attacker who had already been bailed twice. Premier, is it not a fact that every day you delay taking action on bail laws, dozens of violent offenders will continue to qualify for bail and be released back into our community to commit even more violent crimes like this attack on Daniel Yeoman?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I think he actually voted for the government’s changes around home invasions and carjacking — he seems to have forgotten — including presumptions against bail.

Mr Guy interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, a presumption against bail is a bail law, Leader of the Opposition. You voted for it; it seems you did not read it.

We honour the service of every member of Victoria Police, on duty or off duty. We offer our support, our thoughts and our actions in support of every victim of crime and we offer the Victorian community our commitment to make substantial reform to the bail laws in our state.

Mr Guy — When?

Mr ANDREWS — Well, not in 11 months. Former Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Coghlan’s advice will be available to the government in a matter of weeks, and we think that getting this right is the least —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Gembrook will come to order.

Mr ANDREWS — the victims and the families of those forever changed by the Bourke Street tragedy are

entitled to. That is my view. So whilst those opposite may criticise me for taking the weeks necessary to get this right, the families of those —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte is now warned, and so is the member for Gembrook.

Mr ANDREWS — who are dealing with the grief and tragedy of Bourke Street are owed nothing less than us making not incremental change but profound change. And that is what we will do, and we will do it once and we will do it properly.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Premier, why are you continuing to compromise the safety of every Victorian by waiting months before your bail review concludes, reports and makes recommendations, and then taking further months before you finally legislate instead of making urgent changes to bail laws now, such as immediately jailing violent offenders who breach their bail laws?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition ought to go and have a read of the Bail Act, actually. He seems to fundamentally misunderstand provisions that are on the books right now.

Mr Guy interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, it just proves that the Leader of the Opposition — —

Mr Burgess interjected.

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

Mr ANDREWS — There is no road too low for this one over here. I remind him again. I wonder if he gave his speech in the cabinet when they set about an 11-month process?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! All members shall come to order. The Premier to continue, in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — Former DPP Coghlan will give to us — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, there are no excuses; they are not being offered. It is action that we are going to deliver, and we are going to get this right. We are not going to take 11 months as those opposite did in the wake of the tragic death of Jill Meagher. That was deemed by them at the time an appropriate amount of time. Well, I deem a matter of weeks an appropriate time in relation to this matter, and that is why we are going to get this done. Clearly we will have to do it without the cooperation of those opposite. We will do it anyway. That is what we will do — get it done. We will get it done, with or without those opposite.

Mr Battin interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I remind the member for Gembrook that he has been warned.

Ministers statements: Portland aluminium smelter

Mr NOONAN (Minister for Industry and Employment) — I am very pleased to follow the Premier and rise to acknowledge the great workers at Alcoa's smelter down in Portland, who today still have a job. This is thanks to the landmark intervention and support of this Andrews Labor government. There was much fear and uncertainty in the Portland community late last year with news that about 2000 jobs were at risk as a result of uncertainty over the future of the smelter.

We took important action to secure the future of the smelter for another four years, including high-level discussions between me, then federal industry minister, Greg Hunt, and Alcoa's global chief executive in New York, when we met to discuss the future. What we achieved is a fantastic outcome for the people of the south-west and the people of Victoria. Last month I stood with the Premier at a press conference in front of workers and saw tears in their eyes when we announced the breakthrough agreement to keep the plant open. We do not always see eye to eye, but on this issue the state and commonwealth governments were as one. I would like to thank the former minister for industry, Greg Hunt, for his support in our endeavours to keep the smelter open, and others in this chamber and the other.

Unfortunately we have not seen the same commitment from the Turnbull government to support auto workers and auto businesses here in Victoria. Just last week Toyota announced the closure of their manufacturing plant in Altona. This closure will regrettably see 2500 job losses at Toyota and up to 3000 in the supply chain. Labor governments will always stand with auto workers, but we are getting nothing from Canberra.

They have absolutely abandoned auto workers and absolutely abandoned auto businesses and the communities affected.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr NOONAN — We call on those opposite to pick up the phone and ask their Canberra mates to lift their game when it comes to the auto industry.

Bail laws

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. Premier, you were warned at the time that weakening juvenile bail laws would endanger community safety, and it has. Given the wave of violent crimes being committed by teen thugs since your changes, why will you not now immediately legislate to reverse your 2016 weakening of juvenile bail laws?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition asked his question of the Premier and will allow him to respond in silence.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The Leader of the Opposition says he will pass laws this week apparently. Well, they introduced a private members bill that did not include home invasion and had no presumptions against bail. We will get this done properly on the advice of former Director of Public Prosecutions — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier is entitled to silence. The Chair has advanced a number of warnings and will prosecute them to the end if necessary.

Mr ANDREWS — We will get this done in honour of all of those who died on Bourke Street and for the protection of every other Victorian. We will get this done on the advice of the former DPP, not on the advice of the former failed government.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — On a supplementary question, Premier, why are you also refusing to immediately introduce the presumption of remand for serious violent offenders despite the wave of crime this state has experienced over the last two years?

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr Guy interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition is warned. The Leader of the Opposition asked a question of the Premier; he should allow the Premier to respond.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I think the Leader of the Opposition is wrong in fact in terms of the assertions he makes. There are ‘presumptions against’ provisions; there are ‘exceptional circumstances’ provisions; there are many provisions within the Bail Act. But let us not have an argument about the current provisions; let us get on, as we are, and get Paul Coghlan’s advice and let us rewrite this act to keep Victorians safe. That is what we intend to do. We are not going to take 11 months of review, as others did; we think it is more urgent than that. I am not criticising those opposite. In fact at the time we offered them, as the then opposition, our full support. It is a great shame that that is not being repeated today by someone for whom, frankly, no road is too low. No road is too low for this Leader of the Opposition. But no matter, we will get this done.

Honourable members interjecting.

Questions and statements interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBERS

Members for Warrandyte and Mornington

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte and the member for Mornington will withdraw themselves from the house for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable members for Warrandyte and Mornington withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Questions and statements resumed.

Ministers statements: economy

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I rise to update the house on the continuing success of the Victorian economy. Whilst those opposite might have had a summer of sloth and indolence, the Victorian economy did not let up, with more jobs and more investment

generated over summer. Those opposite have got a saying, 'When we need to squeal, Pesutto's the deal'. They try to hide out. We are on the brink of creating 200 000 jobs in our first two years of government, which for those playing at home actually means more than double what the opposition managed in four years — four long, lost years.

We have beaten the time line that those opposite set prior to the previous election to create 200 000 —

Mr T. Smith interjected.

Questions and statements interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Kew

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Kew will withdraw himself from the house for the period of 1 hour. The Treasurer is entitled to silence when making a ministers statement. The Treasurer to continue, in silence.

Honourable member for Kew withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Ministers statements: economy

Questions and statements resumed.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — We have beaten the time line that those opposite set prior to the previous election of creating 200 000 jobs in three years — quite considerably, I might say. We have not yet matched the gargantuan training target of 1 billion Victorians, but then the size of their ego far exceeds their grasp of reality. Of those nearly 200 000 jobs created over two years, 120 000 are full-time positions, compared to the meagre 16 400 jobs those opposite created in four long, lost years. It should be a matter of joy for those members opposite and this house that Victoria last year created more jobs than the rest of the nation combined. Whilst the Victorian economy put on 118 500 new jobs last year, New South Wales, that great doyen of economic activity, put on 1000.

Youth justice system

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — My question is for the Premier. In the two years that I have been in this place I have spoken on a number of occasions about the hard work of the Neighbourhood Schools project and the

Lighthouse project in working with children and youth in the Shepparton district. The parole board noted in its latest report that of the 176 young people on sentence or remand in October 2015, 63 per cent were victims of abuse, trauma or neglect, 62 per cent had previously been suspended or expelled from school and 45 per cent had been previously involved with child protection. Welfare workers can often identify the youths who will be going into our youth detention centres. Building more prisons and reforming the bail laws are necessary in the short term, but everything points to early intervention as the way to emptying these detention centres. What is the government doing to ensure that early intervention programs are being introduced to stop the next cycle of young detainees?

Ms Allan interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House will come to order. The Premier to respond to the member for Shepparton, and the Premier will be heard in silence.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the member for Shepparton for her substantial question in relation to these matters. Before I go through a number of different things that the government is doing, I want to make the very clear point that I in no way excuse the behaviour of any young offender, but I do think it is very important that we try and explain that behaviour and put in place all practical programs and supports we can to end that treadmill approach, if you like, where people graduate from being juvenile offenders to adult offenders. That is no good for victims of crime, it is no good for safety and it is certainly no good for Victorian taxpayers. It represents in an enormous impost on our budget, the opportunity cost of which is investing in schools and hospitals.

Having said that, though, the point that the member for Shepparton makes is, I think, a very good one, and we do need to do more around early intervention and supporting those children and those young people who are clearly at risk of becoming youth offenders. To that end the government is providing additional money in terms of playgroups, so right from the very beginning in that early intervention cycle — \$4 million each year to enable supported playgroups so that every young person is getting that support from the earliest stage. There is additional support for three-year-old kinder and its expansion, support not just for programs but for new buildings because we know how important that is, particularly for vulnerable kids from families that are less than stable — families that are over-represented in the child protection system and that are, tragically,

over-represented in terms of the family violence statistics that we see each and every day.

That brings me to our record investment in the prevention of family violence. We know only too well and too painfully that so many of these young offenders and so many others who come to our attention for all the wrong reasons are coming from homes where family violence has become all too prevalent. In some respects, on the point that Neil Comrie made yesterday about the inability to provide rehabilitation in anything other than a secure location, the same point can be made — it is very difficult to provide the foundations for a responsible adult life, a productive adult life, if you are living in fear, if you are living in danger or if you are living in one of these families that clearly need more of our support.

I can go on of course. There is the \$43.8 million doctors in schools program, the Navigator program in our schools — some \$8.6 million — and various other investments at the centre of the education state and our equity funding. There is a very long list of things that we are doing now. But look, I am the first to say we can do more and we can do better, and that is exactly what we will do for these families and for the potential victims of anyone who makes that bad call, who goes the wrong way, who becomes an antisocial person or who becomes a threat and a risk to the safety of the community. All of us need to do more. All of us need to do better, and that is exactly what our government is committed to doing.

Supplementary question

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — In her report the Ombudsman, in February 2017, notes that of the 190 young people detained in youth justice facilities, 91 are on remand and 99 have been sentenced. This seriously begs the question about delays in our court system and why it is taking so long for those young people to come before the courts. What is your government doing to speed up the process for young people who are on remand, many of whom are not actually sentenced to prison?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — Again, on an equally substantial supplementary question, I can advise the member that additional resources were provided to establish a Children's Court remand court last year, and we have seen an almost immediate increase in the number of matters that are being heard. Some 161 cases were heard in the last month of last year. That is a significant increase, a very substantial increase, on what we had and what we have seen as a historical average in terms of remand matters.

The \$32 million youth justice package that we provided in December last year really is what is needed. If more is needed beyond that in terms of court resources or court practices, all of these matters, I think, or some of them certainly, will be picked up by former Director of Public Prosecutions Coghlan, and they remain under active consideration by the government. If there is more we can do to get the justice system moving faster and therefore provide greater protection to the community, member for Shepparton, be in no doubt we will do that work.

Ministers statements: Metro Tunnel

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — How pleased I am to advise the house of the substantial progress that is being made on the Metro Tunnel project. It is Victoria's biggest public transport infrastructure project since the construction of the city loop, and it is the project that is rated by Infrastructure Australia as one of national significance.

It is no surprise that it is a project of national significance. It is going to create up to 5000 jobs during its construction and make room for up to 40 000 extra passengers in both the morning and evening peak hours, meaning that more people will be able to get on more trains, more often. This is a project that might be being constructed in the heart of Melbourne, but it is going to benefit the suburbs and the regions. It does not matter whether you live in Bendigo or Broadmeadows or Bentleigh; this is something that is going to provide support for our public transport services right across the state.

This is a project that has been given the green light. The environment effects statement process has been approved and work has begun. But we must remember that this is a project that the Liberal Party in government scrapped. They stopped this project dead in its tracks — no extra jobs, no extra train services. I am sure the house will be just astonished to learn that they are still trying to stop this project. Never are the Liberal Party more energised or more engaged than when they are trying to stop a major public transport project and trying to stop us from delivering it.

Last night in the Legislative Council the shadow Minister for Planning, David Davis, confessed that he is seeking to delay this project. In his adjournment contribution last night he asked the planning minister to stop works going ahead on the Metro Tunnel project. The clear message from the Liberal Party to Victorians is that if you are stuck in traffic or waiting on a train, then stay there.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister's time has now expired! The minister will resume her seat.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of The Nationals on a substantive question, to be heard in silence.

Bail laws

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Premier, implementing recommendation 1 of the Callinan review of parole laws is now running three years late. You have not implemented the vast majority of the Harper review recommendations, despite it now being close to the second anniversary of the murder of Masa Vukotic, and you are yet to do a single thing about the recommendations of the victims of crime review to help those who have suffered at the hands of criminals. Premier, is it not a fact that your failures and inactions on these reviews and your refusal to do anything omitted to strengthen our bail laws are putting Victorian lives at risk?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The ministers for planning and housing will cooperate and allow the Premier to respond to the Leader of The Nationals.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The answer to the Leader of The Nationals' question is no.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Government members will come to order. The Leader of The Nationals is on his feet on a supplementary question and is entitled to silence.

Supplementary question

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — Thank you, Speaker. The reality is very different.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The members for Eltham, Footscray and Geelong are now warned. The Leader of The Nationals, in silence.

Mr WALSH — Premier, given your pattern of failure and inaction on all previous law and order reviews, how can Victorians have any confidence that you will finally toughen up and act on the recommendations of the Coghlan bail review?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing is now warned. The minister will not be warned again. The member for Essendon is warned. The Premier is entitled to silence when attempting to respond to the Leader of The Nationals.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — Thank you, Speaker, and I do thank the Leader of the National Party for the lecture on a record of failure. Rather than playing politics with these matters, we will make the lasting and profound reform that is required to keep our state safe, to support our chief commissioner and the women and men of Victoria Police, to honour every victim of crime and to support every Victorian to be safe in the greatest state in our nation.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Roads and Road Safety to make a ministers statement, to be heard in silence.

Ministers statements: level crossings

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — I rise to update the house on the good work that VicRoads has been doing on the removal of Melbourne's most dangerous and congested level crossings. VicRoads has worked with the Level Crossing Removal Authority, which has culminated this week in the removal of the ninth and tenth level crossings by the Andrews Labor government, and what great news it is. The Blackburn Road and Heatherdale Road crossings are no longer there. In that time we have also been doing work in Bayswater on the Mountain Highway and the Scoresby Road removal. They are great projects — a new station and new station forecourt, wider footpaths, traffic lights at Mountain Highway and the like. I know the community is very much overjoyed.

We know there have been over 800 people working on that project, and it adds to the 120 000 jobs that we have created since November 2014. Compare that with the 17 000 jobs in the four years when the last lot were in. What a slovenly effort. What an ordinary effort.

I had a little bit of an opportunity this morning to look around at who supported the Bayswater project. It was great. I noticed that the Knox City Council had allocated, in May 2016, \$1.7 million to add to this project to build a new library and the like. That was great. Then I had another little look-see and what did I find? I found a letter from the member for Bayswater in

January 2017. It must have been one of the Kellyanne Conway moments of state politics, an alternative facts moment whereby the member says:

I am very pleased to have instigated the removal of the level crossings ...

What a joke! This person must be a comedian. She absolutely is.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister's statement has concluded.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Government members will come to order. The time for questions without notice and minister statements has now concluded. Members will leave the house respectfully.

Ms Sandell — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, once again I have several questions on notice that have not been answered within the 30 days: question 11 982 to the Attorney-General; question 11 985 to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; question 12 067 to the Minister for Planning; three questions to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, questions 12 095, 12 096 and 12 122; and question 12 120 to the Minister for Education, which was answered but I believe insufficiently. I wonder if you could ask the Speaker to direct the ministers to answer these questions in a timely manner.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I shall refer that matter to the Speaker for his — —

Ms Asher interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I do not need any encouragement from the honourable member for Brighton. I shall refer that matter to the Speaker for his attention and to follow through with those ministers.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

South Barwon electorate

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — (12 205) My constituency question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I ask: will the minister disband the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) and hand over their responsibilities to the Surf Coast Shire Council — a simple yes or no. I raised a matter during the adjournment debate on 8 December, where I asked this same question. The response I received on 3 February I would have to say would be the most laughable response I have had to a question that I have posed in

this place in the six years that I have been an MP. The answer was that there was a bit of information about GORCC, when they were established and why that was done, and basically the minister then goes on to say:

The work that GORCC undertakes is well reported on their web page and I direct the member there for further information.

The question I asked was: will the minister disband the committee? I can look at the website anytime of the day, whenever I like, but I require a yes or no answer. Will the minister disband GORCC and hand over their responsibilities to the Surf Coast Shire Council?

Macedon electorate

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — (12 206) My constituency question is for the Minister for Education. The minister recently announced a \$10 million bushfire preparation program. My question is: when will upgrades to eligible schools in my electorate be completed? As many in this house know, my electorate contains some of Victoria's most high-risk fire danger areas. This very important program is ensuring that upgrades are happening across eligible schools, to 200 schools, including works such as the fitting of gutter guards, fire shutters, the installation of water tanks and the installation of sprinkler systems. I look forward to receiving a response from the minister.

Bayswater electorate

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) — (12 207) My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: when will an assessment of traffic flow through Bayswater be conducted, now that the main level crossing removal works — started by the former coalition government — are complete? The resequencing of traffic lights on Mountain Highway, Bayswater, is essential, as traffic is now banked up further and more often than before the level crossing was removed. The two sets of cross-intersection lights at Station Street and High Street are simply not in sync. Also just yesterday I waited over 3 minutes at the new Station Street pedestrian crossing whilst commuters departed the station at various paces, ensuring a constant pedestrian flow. Being so close to the corner of Mountain Highway, this stopped Station Street traffic, only three vehicles deep, preventing the flow of right-turning cars from the highway. VicRoads traffic specialists are urgently needed to fix the mess. The disillusioned motorists of the outer east look forward to the minister's response.

Essendon electorate

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — (12 208) I direct my constituency question to the Minister for Health, and I ask: what is the latest information about what the government is doing to support women to participate in breast screening in the Essendon area and more broadly? Recently I was very lucky to have had a meeting with Annie Cooper from BreastScreen Victoria. We had a really good conversation about the great work that they do, and we talked about the screening rates amongst eligible women, so I am really quite interested in learning more about what we can do to increase the rate, both in Essendon and more broadly.

Euroa electorate

Ms RYAN (Euroa) — (12 209) My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport, and I would like to know for how much longer the minister will refuse to provide new trains on the Albury line, which is currently providing residents with a Third World train service. The Andrews government shamefully scrapped the commitment that the Liberals and The Nationals made to provide new services on that line when it came to government. One of my constituents, Kathy Burden, travels to Melbourne twice a week from Benalla for work, but like many local people she is absolutely fed up with the state of the train system. She says that almost every time she catches the train it is either delayed or it suffers some malfunction. In September and August last year she kept a travel log, and of the 18 trips she took on V/Line, nine were delayed and others faced serious maintenance issues, including broken toilets and no buffet service.

Dandenong electorate

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — (12 210) My constituency question is to the Minister for Families and Children in the other place, and I ask: what is the Andrews Labor government doing to give certainty to families with young children, particularly in light of the Turnbull government’s lack of commitment to ongoing funding for four-year-old kindergarten after this year? It is very concerning to hear that the federal government is planning to end its kinder funding agreement with Victoria and the rest of the country in December. By ending the agreement, every kinder child will lose the equivalent of a day of kinder funding a week. Cutting access to kindergarten would be short-sighted and a detrimental move. The Productivity Commission has found that 15 hours a week of kindergarten is essential to improving a child’s readiness for school. In my community, kindergarten is a great leveller, ensuring all kids, no matter their background, get the best possible

start. Early childhood education is enormously important to the educational and life outcomes of children as they move into adulthood, and to cut it is to grow the gap between the haves and the have-nots. It is all well and good for the Prime Minister to have enjoyed a rolled gold education and all of the opportunities that stem from it, but to deny that to others is unconscionable and out of touch.

Melbourne electorate

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — (12 211) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. Why are there no plans to open the waiting room at Kensington train station? Kensington train station has a purpose-built and enclosed waiting room that remains off limits to the public because it is locked and has remained locked for a long time. This means that disabled passengers, elderly passengers, pregnant women like me, passengers travelling with young children and anyone who just wishes to wait out of the bitter Melbourne cold or the sweltering heat have nowhere to go but to wait on the exposed and windy platform. Having a place to sit and wait that is safe and out of the elements is so important to my constituents that locals have actually started a campaign to open the waiting rooms. It seems like a pretty sensible request to me. The waiting rooms are already there. There are similar ones open at other nearby train stations, and the community has shown a willingness to work together to help make and keep them as safe spaces. I look forward to hearing from the minister about what can be done to make that a reality.

Sunbury electorate

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — (12 212) My question is for the Minister for Health. What is the latest data on the number of women accessing the new BreastScreen service in Sunbury? I had the great pleasure of opening Victoria’s 40th BreastScreen Victoria clinic last year with the minister and the mayor of the City of Hume. Women in Victoria over 50 are eligible for a free mammogram every two years, and I ask for the latest data on the number of women accessing this fantastic, great Sunbury service.

Ripon electorate

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — (12 213) My question is to the Premier. On 7 April 2016 the Premier visited Ripon, announcing two much-needed \$75 000 grants to upgrade the water infrastructure at the Donald and Charlton recreation reserves. Premier, nearly 12 months on, the Donald and Charlton communities are asking where their promised funding is.

Yuroke electorate

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — (12 214) My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Noting the recent announcement of the Making Home Energy More Affordable program, how can low-income earners in the Yuroke electorate access this program and any other energy efficiency programs to reduce and manage their energy costs? As we know, energy costs can quickly add up, particularly in a city like Melbourne that often experiences extreme heat and blistering cold, sometimes on the same day. But it is not just heating and cooling; basic appliances that we all rely on like washing machines can take up a major portion of household energy use. I look forward to being able to provide Yuroke constituents with this information, and I thank the minister for her work in this important policy area.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: budget estimates 2016–17

Statements resumed.

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — I was talking about the disgraceful situation at the Heyfield Australian Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH) mill before we were interrupted. We have a situation where 150 000 cubic metres of supply was offered in a contract to ASH just two years ago, and now under this government we have only 80 000 being offered for next year and 60 000 in subsequent years, which the company says is not enough.

There are 250 jobs directly at Heyfield. This is a town of less than 2000 people, and about 1000 of them came out to a public meeting last week because they are so concerned about the future, not only of the mill but of their entire town. There are a further 7000 jobs downstream of this mill that rely on their supply. The reality is, if we do not supply this mill and it closes and the Victorian timber industry goes with it — because it is the biggest and most important part of the industry — we will be importing timber from overseas. We will be importing it from places that are less regulated and that do not have the environmental protections involved in regard to the forests, and that will be a bad environmental public policy outcome, let alone a bad economic one for Gippsland.

We have seen the government talk big, and just in question time we heard them talking about what they have done for Portland and Alcoa. I would like to remind the Premier of his comments about Engie when

Hazelwood closed. He said, 'This is a foreign company; this is a French-owned company, and there is nothing I can do about it'. Well, what is the difference between Hazelwood and Engie, and Portland and Alcoa? Alcoa is also a foreign-owned company.

At the same time when the announcement was made the Minister for Industry and Employment said:

We've been working around the clock to keep the smelter open because the Labor government looks out for workers and their families.

What are they doing for the workers of Hazelwood and Heyfield and their families? It is time the government actually stood up to the Greens, supported the jobs in Gippsland, supported the jobs at Hazelwood and supported the jobs at Heyfield. It will not cost any money at Heyfield; they just need to provide the timber and support our workers in Gippsland.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: budget estimates 2015–16

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — I refer to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's inquiry into the budget estimates for 2015–16, particularly in relation to the contribution by the Minister for Industry, who is now the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, who referred to how working as a collective presents the government with an opportunity to drive strategic advantage from that collaboration across the economic portfolios within government.

This is an important strategic position that the Victorian government has adopted and is prosecuting, and I want to thank the minister for coming to Broadmeadows this week with me. Together we visited Premcar Pty Ltd in Campbellfield, where the minister announced almost \$1 million in funding to provide 23 automotive supply chain companies with business support to plan for the future. Premcar has transformed itself from a supplier to Ford's performance vehicle range to a truly global engineering consultancy with a presence in China, India and Europe.

This is important in terms of how we actually deliver on economic development and how we take care of communities that are going through deindustrialisation, particularly in a time of terror. These are important issues of national significance as well, and to address this I have reached out to the federal government in good faith to have a unity ticket on how we actually deliver this. I have uncovered an unspent amount of money of \$1.324 billion that is available from the automotive transformation scheme to be used to help supply chain companies just like

Premcar to actually find new markets, keep the business going and keep the jobs.

The proposition that I am also addressing is that we have the chance with the unity ticket to address the threat of terrorism, crime and welfare dependency while delivering jobs and growth where they are needed most. This is an opportunity to turn postcodes of disadvantage into postcodes of hope. In good faith I wrote to the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, and to the then minister for industry, Greg Hunt, seeking a proposition on how we can address this in a collaborative approach to actually make this happen and to get this to work for the public interest. The evidence and urgency is compelling, and the critical insight into poverty, unemployment and crime is that a quarter of prisoners come from just 2 per cent of postcodes. So we need to have a coordinated strategy on this.

Then we have the other issue of trying to get the collaboration right between governments on big-picture issues such as refugees. We had the one-off humanitarian decision that former Prime Minister Tony Abbott made to take in 12 000 refugees from the slaughter in Syria. The issue is that most of these refugees are coming into the so-called postcodes of disadvantage in the City of Hume, and these are in the suburbs of Broadmeadows, Craigieburn, Roxburgh Park and Somerton, and, Deputy Speaker, as you would be aware, also in Melton and Wyndham.

What we are trying to do is say to the federal government, 'Yes, we are a big-hearted community, but this is a critical time'. We are going through this really difficult economic transition, and we need to get the support to take care of these new families that are coming in to give them the chance to get a job, to look at what resources they need and to address their particular problems. Hume's multicultural action plan working group has written to the commonwealth government to request further support for local service providers to assist the refugees for a period well beyond the initial weeks that are being funded at the moment.

With all of this happening, you can imagine I was absolutely gobsmacked to find out that on the last sitting day of the federal Parliament last year a proposition was put — a reference to the public works parliamentary committee of the federal Parliament — to look at having a detention centre in Broadmeadows. It would be for the highest and most extreme risk detainees, because the federal government wants to sell the Maribyrnong detention centre. That is not what we need in Broadmeadows; we need the federal government to honour its election promise and its

highest priority — jobs and growth. That is what is needed most. The economic, social and cultural connections — everything — comes to this point, and it is time for the federal government to stop looking at this area in a disparaging way and treating it with neglect. It should not be a case of managed decline or the reverse Robin Hood attitude of the former state coalition government. We need to take care of these communities.

Electoral Matters Committee: conduct of 2014 Victorian state election

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — I wish to make a couple of comments in relation to the Electoral Matters Committee's inquiry into the conduct of the 2014 Victorian state election. I particularly want to look at recommendation 23, which states:

The committee recommends the Electoral Act 2002 (Vic) be amended to require Independent candidates to lodge a statement of election return with the VEC within 60 days after the election, with the return noting the sources of funding received during the appropriate election campaign.

This arose because of a number of submissions that had come from the Morwell electorate during the 2014 election. The committee at page 156 put forward this view:

The committee notes that Independent candidates who contest Victorian state elections should be required, like federally registered political parties, to lodge a statement of election return with the VEC ...

The committee went on to say:

Given the significant increase in candidates at the 2014 Victorian state election, this measure will assist electors to identify Independent candidates' major sources of funding, and increase the transparency of Victoria's electoral processes.

I think that was a very, very important finding and recommendation of the Electoral Matters Committee — that is, to have the same rules apply to Independent candidates as apply to political parties. I was interested therefore to note the government's response to the Electoral Matters Committee report. The government's response read as follows:

The government supports in principle the recommendation.

The government went on to say, and I quote the government's response:

Consistent with the Special Minister of State's response to the Victorian Ombudsman's *Report on Recommendations* in June 2016, the government's preference is to consider reforms of political donation laws through federal harmonisation via the Council of Australian Governments framework.

This is a fair approach for the government to take. I think it is probably fair enough to say that these views have been articulated by my side of politics as well, but the fundamental question is that there is a different reporting regime for Independents than for political parties. So it was of considerable interest to me this morning when reading my copy of the *Age* on the train — I am the only person who reads a hard copy in my carriage regularly — that an article on page 6 reported that the federal government has signified an intention to look at the issues of donation laws. Indeed Senator Ryan, according to today's *Age*, is awaiting a parliamentary committee report from the equivalent of the Electoral Matters Committee in the federal Parliament looking at donations reform. I think it is probably clear to everyone that there will be some reform of political donation laws at a federal level, and I look forward to seeing the Labor government in Victoria's response, given that it has already indicated via its response to the Electoral Matters Committee report that it would favour a commonwealth approach to disclosure law.

I will be very interested to see what propositions the federal government will look at, and again I would urge the federal government — indeed I would urge the state Labor government — to be very cognisant of recommendation 23 of the Electoral Matters Committee, which did call for the same style of treatment of the declarations of donations for Independents as for political parties. Again I would remind the government when it is looking at this that it did in response to the Electoral Matters Committee say that it supported this recommendation in principle.

The committee also noted on page 155 that there is, if you like, a semi-reporting regime for Independent candidates — that is, and I quote:

... before the expiration of 20 weeks after election day, give the commission a statement in an approved form specifying that the candidate has spent or incurred in relation to the election which is not less than the entitlement, or less than the entitlement, being the amount specified in the statement.

That is not the same as the disclosure regime placed on political parties, so I see an enormous opportunity given that the Electoral Matters Committee is comprised of members of the coalition and the Labor Party — and the Sex Party is also represented. I see some enormous possibility now initially at a federal level for donations reform, where the same regime is applied to Independent candidates.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: budget estimates 2016–17

Ms WARD (Eltham) — I also rise, as my colleagues have, to speak about the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) report. The chair of PAEC — our fantastic chair of PAEC — has helped us deliver a terrific report on the budget estimates 2016–17.

I want to talk about the government's commitment to jobs. Finding 1 in the report highlights the \$53.2 million investment that this government is bringing to establish Jobs Victoria over the next five years. This is a significant investment in jobs in this community. I find it quite amazing, if not ironic, if not humorous, that those opposite will continue to talk about our lack of commitment to jobs, when we demonstrate day after day after day exactly how committed we are in this government to creating not just jobs but meaningful jobs and meaningful employment for the people who live in the state.

Finding 1 found:

Initiative and project funding in the 2016–17 budget is intended to improve Victoria's productivity per capita across the areas of infrastructure, education, health, labour market participation and economic inclusion.

It will be no surprise to people on this side of the house, but it might be a surprise to those on the other side, to be reminded that the unemployment rate was 6.6 per cent when we took office. I say it would be a bit of a surprise to those opposite because I really do not think they paid that much attention to unemployment levels or employment overall. The unemployment rate in this state is now 5.7 per cent, and in regional Victoria it is even better. The regional unemployment rate is 5.4 per cent, which is against a national average of 5.7 per cent. Around 200 000 jobs have been created since we came into government.

As the Treasurer said in question time today: Victoria has created more jobs than the whole nation combined. This state is carrying its weight tenfold when it comes to creating jobs for people in this state. In fact we are doing better than any other state in the nation; we are doing better than the nation combined. That is how well we are doing. That is how well this government is working to create jobs and employment in this state.

We have the strongest jobs growth in the nation, and what is also amazing is that we are creating meaningful work and we are creating great jobs with so little investment from the federal government. The national government underinvests substantially in this state. I

think we are now going backwards; just over 7 per cent of the national infrastructure investment goes into this state. Imagine what we could do if we were actually given the money we deserve.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Ms WARD — Absolutely right, member for Essendon — that we are entitled to. We have got more growth than other states in the nation. We had over 100 000 people come to this state last year — a growth rate of 1.9 per cent, which is faster than the national average of 1.4 per cent. Page 20 of the report says:

Victoria's high rate of population growth has the following effects:

it creates the need for greater infrastructure investment to ensure residents in these growth areas have the appropriate transport access to jobs and do not become a drain on productivity.

We are doing this, and, member for Essendon, how do you think we are doing this? Melbourne Metro is one of the keystones to doing this. Melbourne Metro is going to create over 10 000 jobs.

And what have we got opposite? We have got yet another example of roadblock, but in this case it is train block and it is jobs block. They want to block this state from developing, they want to block this state from growth and they certainly want to block this state from creating jobs — meaningful jobs, jobs with skills, jobs that train people, jobs that will give people jobs for life and that will help them develop the skills — —

Mr Pearson — Skills for life.

Ms WARD — Exactly, member for Essendon — skills for life. They should be ashamed that they want to keep slowing down projects. They wanted to slow down our level crossings, and we have already removed up to 11 of them. That is going to help our communities.

Yesterday I was with the Minister for Public Transport, talking about what is happening on the Hurstbridge line — the fantastic investment in that line that is going to create hundreds of jobs. There are jobs happening in this state, and we have got the Minister for Industry and Employment in the house at the moment, who is doing a terrific job by helping to create work in this state. The work that he has done with Alcoa is amazing, and our feds had to be dragged kicking and screaming yet again to help out workers in this state. The Liberal Party does not care about workers. They do not do anything to help workers. All they want to do is block progress, block

investment and block things from actually happening. They are happy when things do not happen; we are happy when things do happen.

**TRANSPORT INTEGRATION
AMENDMENT (HEAD, TRANSPORT FOR
VICTORIA AND OTHER GOVERNANCE
REFORMS) BILL 2016**

Council's amendment

Returned from Council with message relating to following amendment:

Clause 3, page 34, proposed section 65E, omit lines 10 to 14.

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

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) — I just rise to make a brief contribution in relation to this amendment to the Transport Integration Amendment (Head, Transport for Victoria and Other Governance Reforms) Bill 2016. Had this bill included all the provisions that the Andrews government sought to originally include, it would have allowed the Minister for Public Transport, as lead minister, with a stroke of a pen to abolish, by an order in council, authorities such as the Public Transport Development Authority, commonly known as PTV, and the Roads Corporation, which we all better know as VicRoads.

The opposition took the view that this would have been an extraordinary extension to ministerial powers and that parliamentary oversight by either house of Parliament was needed to enable Parliament to disallow what the government called its proposed transport restructuring orders. We put a number of options to the minister and to the government in relation to either house having a power to be able to disallow what the government called transport restructuring orders and finding a way that we could move this bill forward if our concerns were addressed.

In the end the Minister for Public Transport, after initially indicating to me that the opposition's proposed amendment was unacceptable, eventually agreed to the removal of this proposed extension to ministerial powers from the bill's clauses. This is what we are discussing now, having seen the bill pass through the upper house last night with amendments from Mr Edward O'Donohue.

The opposition notes that, in advance of this Transport for Victoria legislation being passed by both houses and receiving the royal assent, the government some months ago transferred 240 staff from Public Transport Victoria and 55 from VicRoads to the yet-to-be legislatively approved Transport for Victoria.

The opposition further notes that this change to administrative arrangements, resulting in the creation of Transport for Victoria, and other amendments to the government-owned V/Line's corporate structure are unlikely on their own to do anything to prevent a repeat of V/Line's disastrous Bombardier railcar wheel wear, its failure to correctly trigger level crossing boom barrier operations — which saw thousands of train trips replaced by slower buses a year ago — or the current cancellation of freight trains on lines like Yelta and Murrayville when temperatures are forecast to reach 33 degrees or above. That is a matter that we have been prosecuting both in and outside the Parliament and a matter that we will continue to prosecute.

It is worth noting on this occasion that only 12 months ago we did have that disastrous railcar wheel wear problem and the failure to trigger level crossing boom barriers, and of course we are currently seeing freight trains cancelled when temperatures are forecast to reach 33 degrees or above.

Some 20 per cent of staff from PTV who were supposed to transfer either resigned or went off to work elsewhere in the private sector or with other agencies or companies interstate.

Of course the final point that we all know is that this bill is about promoting one of the Labor mates to a particular role. It has been suggested that Gillian Miles may be the top person in this position, but we will wait to see what the government does with that in terms of promoting Gillian Miles to be that top person and making the Minister for Public Transport even more remote and less accountable, ensconced as she is in one of her three offices, such as the taxpayer-funded additional one at Bendigo railway station, when she needs to be out and about fixing the numerous problems on the lines such as those at Albury and Warrnambool, with their constant delays and, in the case of Albury, train cancellations, or on the Frankston line, where she is about to impose unwanted sky rails on thousands of residents, blighting the bayside.

Nonetheless, the opposition supports this amendment. We moved it, and we support what has been proposed. We put it through the upper house. I thank the minister for eventually agreeing to the removal of these

contentious extra ministerial powers from the bill. I support the bill now being passed through this house.

Motion agreed to.

RESOURCES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FRACKING BAN) BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 November 2016; motion of Mr NOONAN (Minister for Resources).

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — I rise to make a contribution on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. Firstly, the purpose of this bill is to prohibit onshore unconventional gas activity in Victoria, to legislate a moratorium on onshore conventional gas activity until June 2020, to prevent the state being the subject of litigation in relation to these matters and to empower the minister to purchase licences and permits surrendered by the ban.

The main provisions of this bill include clause 4, which inserts section 8AC into the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990, which prohibits exploration for or mining of coal seam gas on any land; clause 5, which looks at providing that any application for the exploration licence, mining licence or retention licence is ineffective and must not be accepted by the minister to the extent that it relates to coal seam gas; and clause 6, which inserts section 113A, which requires any person who discovers coal seam gas on any land to report the discovery to the minister in writing as soon as practicable after the discovery.

Clause 7 inserts section 121B, which allows the minister to pay for the surrender, within six months after the commencement of this bill, of any exploration, mining or retention licences that were in force immediately before the bill comes into operation and which entitled the licence-holder to explore for or mine coal seam gas. It allows the minister to prescribe the amount of payment by order published in the *Government Gazette*. Clause 7 deals with those licences that are currently in play. It is my understanding that there are 17 licences currently in play. I will come back to that later, but it is a very important element of this, because in terms of current licences in Victoria, this is the one element that allows compensation as such, and it is for the unconventional gas; it is for the fracking licences. That is very important to point out.

Clause 9 inserts section 16A into the Petroleum Act 1998 to prohibit any person carrying out hydraulic

fracturing when carrying out any petroleum operation, being any activity related to petroleum exploration or petroleum production.

Clause 10 inserts new section 17A into the Petroleum Act, which legislates a moratorium until 30 June 2020, prohibiting any petroleum exploration or petroleum production under the exploration permit, retention lease or production licence from the day the bill comes into operation. This clause is a moratorium on conventional exploration and drilling. This in effect puts into play via legislation the moratorium that existed prior to this legislation; it was certainly effected by the coalition when in government and later supported in 2015 — and I will talk more about that.

Clauses 7 and 11 amend the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 and the Petroleum Act to state that the state of Victoria is not liable in any way for any loss, damage or injury whatsoever resulting directly or indirectly from the proposed amendments or from measures under the policy moratorium that commenced on 24 August 2012. These relate not to the fracking licences or the unconventional gas licences that we have spoken about in relation to the earlier clause but deal with those stakeholders that feel that due to the moratorium they effectively are not able to go forward.

There has been a lot of publicity in recent times about that. We see that Gina Rinehart currently has a lawsuit against the government for some of those licences, and that relates to that particular clause. Let me say up-front that the Liberal-Nationals have always said they will never allow anything to happen that will put at risk the quality and quantity of groundwater because we know how important it is to our state.

Food and fibre production is one of the powerhouses of Victoria's economy and we must always ensure that the land and water resources for these vital industries are protected for our future. We know that food and fibre in the agricultural bowl and heartland is critical both for our domestic supply and also for our reputation internationally and I think that is very, very important, certainly in terms of where we go in the future in Victoria. They are some of the future industries and future opportunities, and some things that we should be harnessing and supporting. Therefore it should come as no surprise that the coalition supports a ban on fracking in Victoria.

In 2012, in response to the concerns about fracking, the coalition government provided strong leadership to the state's regional farmers by announcing a moratorium

on issuing new exploration and drilling licences for onshore gas, including coal seam gas.

Ms D'Ambrosio interjected.

Mr SOUTHWICK — The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change at the table says that was a moratorium, and I will come to that.

In 2015 the coalition announced its support for the extension of Victoria's onshore gas moratorium until 30 June 2020. The coalition, whether in government or opposition, have been very clear that we have not supported fracking in Victoria. We never have. We have never issued — —

Ms D'Ambrosio interjected.

Mr SOUTHWICK — The minister for energy can interject. But, Minister, I will come to your record on fracking shortly, because it is dismal. The only fracking that anybody has issued a licence for was licensed by the minister's government. It is your government, Minister. If I were you, Minister, I would stop interjecting because you have a poor record when it comes to fracking. This side of the house has a good record. We are proud of our record in contrast to yours. We will come to the record of you and your Labor government in terms of fracking very shortly. You can interject all you like, but your record is poor.

To further protect Victoria's farming community and the environment, particularly the water supply, the former coalition government in 2004 banned the use of BTEX chemicals, which are often used in fracking. Again, this is not just words, this is action. As I have said, and I will repeat this several times during this contribution, no fracking has ever occurred under a Victorian coalition government.

In August 2015 the Auditor-General tabled a report, *Unconventional Gas: Managing Risks and Impacts*, in which he said that the report supported the coalition's moratorium on fracking, citing that:

There are major problems with applying the current regime for regulating earth resources to unconventional gas activities ...

The Auditor-General went on to say that:

... the regime has too few environmental controls, weak consideration of the competing interests for the land involved and potential social impacts, a lack of early community engagement and too much ministerial discretion.

He concluded by saying that:

Victoria is not as well placed as it could be to respond to the environmental and community risks and impacts that could arise if the moratorium is lifted allowing unconventional gas activities to proceed in this state.

Additionally, the Legislative Council environment and planning committee, which had conducted an inquiry into onshore unconventional gas in Victoria, tabled its report shortly thereafter.

In 2012 the coalition government announced the moratorium on coal seam gas and hydraulic fracking to support Victoria's farming economy. At this point I will refer to the inquiry into onshore unconventional gas, which reported in December 2015. The Legislative Council environment and planning committee was tasked by the government to:

... consider matters relating to the exploration, extraction, production and rehabilitation for onshore unconventional gas and present an interim report no later than 1 September 2015 —

and to look into a whole range of things in terms of prospectivity, environmental and land productivity risks, the coexistence of onshore unconventional gas activities, with agricultural production and domestic and export market requirements, an affordable energy source for domestic consumers, and carbon dioxide emissions from these sources, as well as policy and regulatory safeguards that would be necessary to enable exploration and development of onshore unconventional gas resources including scientific work to inform the effective regulation of the gas industry, including the role of industry and government, particularly in relation to rigorous monitoring and enforcement, and the effectiveness of impact mitigation responses.

The inquiry was also asked to look at performance standards for managing environmental and health risks, including water quality, air quality, chemical use and land contamination; relevant domestic and international reviews — and this sixth term of reference is very important — and inquiries covering the management of risks for similar industries including, but not limited to, the Victorian Auditor-General Office's report, which I mentioned earlier, and other reports generated by the Victorian community and stakeholder engagement programs.

There are a couple of interesting things to point out when it comes to this other house inquiry. Firstly, when the reference to the inquiry was moved in May 2015, the coalition sought an amendment to the terms of reference for this very, very important inquiry, which was that the inquiry investigate conventional and unconventional gas. We thought, 'If we are to do the

body of work, let us do it properly and let us include everything. Let us include conventional gas — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr SOUTHWICK — No, there was no politicking here. It was about looking at doing the work properly. That is what we put up. You would think that a government that rolls out all sorts of spin about this particular issue — but, when it comes to action, has been the only political party that has given fracking licences in Victoria, which we will come back to in a minute — that claims it cares for the regions and claims it cares for farmers would give a hoot, but it does not.

When the amendment was put forward 18 people voted in favour of it, including coalition members, and 20 people voted against it. Certainly all Labor Party members voted against, but the Greens voted against it as well. It is telling here that the Greens and Labor vote would against it; what the Labor Party are trying to do is to work as closely as they can with the Greens, hand in hand, on a lot of this sort of stuff.

Instead of doing good policy work, which they could have done, looking at conventional and unconventional gas and doing all of the work necessary that the industry was clamouring for, that farmers were clamouring for and that manufacturers and householders all wanted, they basically said, 'Let's forget about conventional gas and let's just focus on unconventional gas', which means that the work has not started in the lead-up to the 2020 moratorium. The opportunity to start the work, to do the actual research to see where it was, has not been taken.

Yes, we were the ones. We were the side that put the moratorium in place. We believed in a 2020 moratorium, but this government has been lazy by just legislating a moratorium and doing nothing else. The evidence is here; they are doing absolutely nothing when it comes to the work, just claiming that they want the moratorium. What we want this government to do is some work on conventional gas. The industry is calling out for the government to do some work on conventional gas, but it is doing nothing.

Mr Noonan interjected.

Mr SOUTHWICK — Let us just come back to the issue, because the Minister for Resources is interjecting. Let me be clear here; I do not think I made my point clearly at the very beginning. The coalition supports a ban on fracking. We support that ban on fracking. We are the party that has actually demonstrated action when it comes to the ban on fracking. However, what has the Labor Party done when it comes to fracking?

Mr Walsh — What's your record?

Mr SOUTHWICK — What is their record, because the proof is in the pudding. The proof is not in the words and not in the interjections, but the proof is in the pudding. The previous Victorian Labor government issued 73 licences for unconventional gas exploration. But here is the kicker: how many fracking licences do you reckon they have approved? Twenty-three fracking licences. We are the parties — the National Party stand hand in hand with us on this — that absolutely do not support and have never supported fracking. The proof is in the pudding. We have never supported fracking. But what we see here is a rollover by the Labor Party from supporting fracking to not supporting it. The proof is in the pudding.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr SOUTHWICK — The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change was absent when it came to standing outside the front of Parliament with farmers, Lock the Gate and others about banning fracking. The Greens were there. I turned up. Where were you, Minister? You were missing in action when you had your opportunity, and now you want to take the credit. Now the Labor Party wants to take the credit for fracking. Our record stands very clear on fracking. Their record is absolutely dismal. The Labor Party's record on fracking is absolutely appalling. They should be ashamed of themselves. The fact that the Labor Party can claim credit for this is a disgrace. Quite frankly it is a disgrace.

Mr Noonan interjected.

Mr SOUTHWICK — You have issued 73 licences; that is what you have been doing. It is an embarrassment, Minister for Resources — an absolute embarrassment — that you have issued 73 licences and then claimed that you are looking after the farmers. You are looking after yourself; that is what you are doing. You are not looking after any farmers. You are not looking after regional Victoria. You are looking after yourself; that is what you are doing.

Mr Noonan — How many farms have you visited in the last six months?

Mr SOUTHWICK — Plenty. Let me be clear here. I went through the clauses. Under clause 7 the explanatory memorandum states:

New section 121B allows the minister to pay for the surrender, within six months after the commencement of this bill, of any exploration, mining, or retention licence that was in force immediately before this bill comes into operation ...

That is where the minister can actually pay back for the licences.

Mr Noonan — What's wrong with that?

Mr SOUTHWICK — Nothing is wrong with it, because they were the licences that you put out in the first place. You have issued these licences, and you are paying for them. That is what it is; you are paying for them. There would not have to be any compensation if you were clear in the first place, but what you have done is issue licences that should not have been issued in the first place. Now you hang your head in shame, going out there and saying, 'I've got to pay for something that we should never have done in the first place'. That is what is wrong with it. It is all very well for people to be high and mighty and righteous when it comes to this legislation. The proof is in the pudding here. The facts are very, very clear. The Labor Party has done nothing when it comes to fracking. They have not supported rural and regional Victoria. They have not supported the farmers. We have. That is very clear. We have.

Let us look at some of the other important things when it comes to this issue. As I said, what has been put in place is the work that needs to be done going forward. What we have had from this government up until this point is two years of nothing, quite frankly. I do not know how long this bill has taken to come to the Parliament. When did we second read this bill? It has been put off for six months.

Mr Noonan — Are you knocking the parliamentary inquiry, mate?

Mr SOUTHWICK — The inquiry already took place. You know very well that the inquiry took place, but you were dithering. The Labor Party has been dithering on this bill, and all the Labor Party has been doing by dithering is racking up taxpayer money from the sorts of people that are now suing it because it did not have a clear policy. The government has been dragging its feet for six months. There is an industry out there that did not know what was going on, and now it is suing the government because of the government's inaction.

Let us be clear: the only people that are dithering in this state are the Labor Party when it comes to policy — on everything, but particularly when it comes to energy and resources and particularly when it comes to jobs. We have seen that on the cost of living; we have seen that on energy prices. In fact from 1 January we have seen the cost of energy go absolutely through the roof — 10 per cent plus. But what did the Minister for

Energy, Environment and Climate Change say? She said, 'It won't go up more than 4 per cent'. What happened on 1 January? It went up 10 per cent. She said, 'Oh, no, that's all right. Don't worry. We're going to have some more wind farms and some solar, and that will take care of energy prices. That will reduce energy prices. At the same time we'll close Hazelwood, and we'll have no future for baseload power'.

This government has no policy for baseload power or clean energy or carbon capture — none of that. This government has actually lost control when it comes to energy prices, lost control of jobs and lost control of the cost of living. You know what? The people that count the most are the workers and the people who are struggling to put food on their table. It just demonstrates again that this Labor Party is not the party of the people. It is the party of members looking after themselves and their mates. That is what it is the party of — members looking after themselves and their mates. We have seen that very clearly here. There is no certainty.

As I said before, we have got unconventional — we have got fracking — and we have got conventional. In both instances, when it comes to this, we have supported a moratorium. We not only supported it but we actually created it. We created the moratorium. So what did these clowns say? These clowns have legislated it. These clowns have legislated what we put in. Well done. Heroes. Big tick.

On fracking, not one licence was created by us, not one.

Mr Walsh — Who banned BTEX?

Mr SOUTHWICK — Who banned BTEX? Not a word from the Labor Party. We banned BTEX and we had a moratorium on gas, and these clowns sit around and claim credit. We had a moratorium until 2020 and now the work needs to be done because industry people are crying out. They are crying out, workers are crying out and householders that are seeing a tripling of energy prices — and gas — are crying out. Everybody is seeing real hardship when it comes to energy prices. We did not have it when we were in government. We are getting it when this Labor Party is in government because they have no plan.

There is no plan here other than a political plan. There is no business plan, there is no plan for householders. There is just a political plan to sign up with the Greens. There is no certainty for industry, none whatsoever. Nothing could be clearer than your parliamentary inquiry, because if you were fair dinkum about it, you would have done the work by now. We would be sitting

in this Parliament now and we would have a report that spoke about conventional exploration and all the challenges and where we need to go to make sure we have got landowners working together — farmers working together with industry to make sure things are safe, make sure that unconventional drilling and exploration is only to be done appropriately and ultimately in a conventional matter and so that ultimately the beneficiaries would be the consumers and householders. That is what we want; that is what we are asking for. That is all we need — not a government that spins press releases. We do not want that; we want some action.

This has been an absolutely disgraceful government. They have done nothing; they have sat on their hands for years. They have come over here and they are taking claim for something that quite frankly we have stood up for. We have stood alongside farmers.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr SOUTHWICK — Let me remind you. I was out the front with Lock the Gate — there are videos there — with those guys.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr SOUTHWICK — On fracking. I was very clear and you have done nothing. It is appalling what you have done, taking credit for this. This is something that the Nationals and the Liberals have worked together on.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — What a historic day it is here in Victoria, a historic day for something that is vitally important for our state's future.

Mr Noonan — A day of action.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — Absolutely. We are a government that is united behind Victoria's regional and farming communities, a government determined to protect our primary producers, to protect our water resources and to protect our environment and a government that will now and forever of course ban fracking. What is really important for us is to get some perspective. In any debate that parliamentarians engage in, perspective is actually a salutary asset to have.

Mr Walsh interjected.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — I am absolutely going to tell the truth. The truth is this: we have got crocodile tears from those opposite, who claim they care about hardship, who claim they care about energy costs, who

claim a lot of things but never stand still with any single consistent policy for long enough to be measured against it. Frankly, the level of inconsistency on this issue knows no bounds. This is a party whose members when they were in government oversaw record levels of energy disconnections for Victorians. A record number of Victorians were disconnected from the energy supply and now members opposite claim they care about ordinary Victorians and their hardship.

Mr Walsh — How is it going now?

Ms D'AMBROSIO — How is it going now? Disconnections have actually gone down. Perhaps you need to have a reality check and look at the facts.

What is so important here of course is that we have listened. Our government has had a very consistent approach to this. Let us recall how all of this unfolded. Back in 2012 we, as the opposition, called on the government at the time to implement a moratorium on unconventional gas exploration — fracking — until there was an open and transparent parliamentary inquiry, a parliamentary inquiry with all the parties present, into all the issues. That is not what happened.

What happened instead? Instead the then Minister for Energy and Resources, the member for Malvern, who is mysteriously absent today, employed Peter Reith to run a shoddy stitch-up with you into coal seam gas — one that had no scientists at the table, one that had no environmental scientists at the table, one that had no farmers at the table, one that had no community members at the table. Lo and behold, what were the inquiry's recommendations? Let it rip. That is what we had from those opposite.

What happened then of course was that there was internal division among those opposite. You had the member for Malvern who wanted to let it rip and you had others who said, 'Oh, no. We're all getting shaky here. Let's put a moratorium on'. So they did that. Months later, in their confusion — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — I will tell you what: there is a lesson here for all politicians. We on this side were very clear at the time that there was emerging evidence to show that fracking was a problem. We can pretend that you are know-alls, but the fact is that your position has been so inconsistent that no-one can actually pin any consistency on you. We heard from you months later, after we thought, 'Oh, no. We've got to now ban conventional gas onshore'. So months later you did that, but you were dragged kicking and screaming to this.

Our position has been consistent right from day one: a moratorium on fracking and unconventional gas and the conduct of a proper, transparent and open science-based parliamentary inquiry. We did that, and we know we heard from 1600 people. There were 1600 submissions, with public hearings held throughout regional Victoria to ensure farmers, local councils, industry and communities could have their say — unlike Peter Reith, who simply passed by in his car and waved at the crowds that gathered to discuss coal seam gas, when they were with great anxiety trying to work out, 'How do we actually get a government to listen?'. Well, they had Peter Reith waving and going past, not stopping to actually talk to anybody, because the previous government had already made up their minds.

What we have got here of course is a bill that will actually deliver on and reflect the consistent commitments that we made. When we commit ourselves to something, we see it through. We have always said, and the Premier has always said, that there will be no fracking in Victoria unless the science shows that it is not detrimental to our environment and to primary producers and there is a consensus within the community. So that is exactly what we have seen through. The outcome is that the Minister for Resources, on behalf of the government, introduced a ban on fracking on 22 November last year to permanently ban all unconventional onshore gas activities, including hydraulic fracking and coal seam gas. This will provide absolute certainty to industry and remove the anxiety from communities, primary producers and environmentalists in terms of where this government stands on this thing.

Let us talk about those opposite because of their ongoing inconsistency on this. Yesterday, at 2 minutes to midnight, they decided, 'Geez, we'd better jump on this. The wind is against us; let's not oppose this bill'. But let us remember the record of those opposite: they do and say one thing, and within a matter of months, or when they get back into government, they do the exact opposite. I would love to see these people actually get up and become the leaders that people ought to have. Amongst their parliamentarians they ought to have good leaders. They are not leaders; what they are is a brake on the policy responses needed to reduce harm and risk to our communities and to sustain their wellbeing and prosperity.

You are only coming to this party now — and thank you very much for coming on board — because people right across regional Victoria are watching you. The test will be how consistent you are on this latest position. That is the test for you, because you have failed at every opportunity. You are not leaders. All you

do is use proxies amongst your federal friends to run your other arguments. That is what you do. You pretend to be leaders and fail to stand up to your federal friends. This is what we have got here.

Then you complain. It was not long ago that you also chimed in with this notion that we were running short of gas and that you were feeding your federal counterparts, the tag team, all these myths that you had created. The fact is we have got more gas than we need to sustain us for 20 years, and you know it. The sooner you rely on the facts and the science and are transparent in terms of openness with the community, the more respect you will gain. Take that tip from me, because we call it for what it is.

The people have spoken very loudly. Back in 2012 we knew there was emerging evidence to show that fracking activity was detrimental to our environment, to farming communities and of course to our watertable, which is part of all that, and it was creating real anxiety. The only government that has ever been consistent in all of this — we have seen it right through, and we were voted in to deliver this — is our government. I would love to see where the member for Malvern is. I really hope that he does come in here and tell us that he got it wrong and you all got it wrong back then, because that is what has happened.

You have only made this decision at 2 minutes to midnight. We welcome it — it is great, because it means there is less anxiety for the community — but do we trust you to actually see this through if ever you win government again? That is a big question, because we know what your record is. You jump on board, whether it was the climate change legislation or solar feed-in tariffs back in the mid-2000s, whether it was to do with energy efficiency programs that actually do put downward pressure on energy bills for consumers — you jump all over that when it suits you — but as soon as you win government all of that is gone out the window. Then you stand here complaining and crying crocodile tears about hardship for ordinary Victorians. Have some courage.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — You did not support the bill. We are delivering the bill because we are seeing through what our commitment was before the election, and this bill will save communities and their prosperity.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crisp) — Order! The minister's time has expired.

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — I rise to make a contribution on the Resources Legislation Amendment

(Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. In starting off can I just remind the minister at the table, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change — there were two ministers at the table — that it was actually a previous Labor government that issued 73 licences for unconventional gas exploration in Victoria and actually approved 23 fracking permits. So while the minister at the table talks about flip-flopping all over the place, it was her party when in government previously that issued those licences, so in some ways all it is doing now with this legislation is correcting a mistake it made prior to 2010, when it was last in government. The minister talked about the people in the gallery and about the people in country Victoria, but they just do not believe her because her party was the one that actually issued the licences and issued the permits to be in this particular place.

It was actually the Liberal and National parties that introduced legislation to ban benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes (BTEX). You had never, ever banned BTEX in this state. It was the Liberal-Nationals coalition that actually put in place the moratorium that you are now talking about legislating for, because we wanted to make sure that whatever happened in Victoria we protected the quality and quantity of our groundwater. As the member for Caulfield said in his contribution, we understand the importance of the agriculture sector and the food and fibre sector. The Labor Party is a Johnny-come-lately when it talks about support for the agriculture sector. We understand the value of that industry and its exports and how important they are to jobs in regional Victoria.

The Minister for Resources asked the rhetorical question, 'How many farms have you been to?'. My guess would be that the only time the Minister for Resources visits farms is when he wants to hold a press conference and wants to be able to issue a press release saying he was out there. I would hazard a bet that he did not even get any dust or mud on his shoes, because he probably hardly got out of the car. You do not have to be out of the car very long to get a photo opportunity or a TV grab and move on again. The Minister for Resources talked about visiting farms, but I am sure he did not get much dust or mud, let alone any cow manure, on his shoes. You would not want the minister to get cow manure on his shoes when he visits a farm.

The minister also talked about the issue of the inquiry by the Legislative Council Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning. The other house made a referral for the committee to do some detailed work on this, but what did the government actually do to the committee? They actually starved them of resources. The interim report by that committee said, 'We need

the resources and the tools to actually have a proper inquiry'. The government set the inquiry up, and then they starved it of resources. As much as I hesitate to quote Samantha Dunn, a very good supporter of the Labor Party, her comment about the upper house inquiry was that it is disappointing that the government, through the Parliament, chose not to release the necessary funding and resources to allow this to occur.

The government set up this inquiry but did not actually give the committee the resources. They did not enable the committee to go and look at other jurisdictions to see what happens around conventional gas onshore or unconventional gas onshore. They wanted to starve that committee of resources, and they did starve that committee of resources. If they are anywhere near the words they are talking about, they would have actually made sure that committee had the resources to do that work.

This piece of legislation, as has already been said, amends the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 to prevent the exploration for and mining of coal seam gas, to ban hydraulic fracturing and to enable the minister to pay and surrender certain mining licences, exploration licences and retention licences for coal seam gas; and amends the Petroleum Act 1998 to ban hydraulic fracturing, to impose a moratorium on petroleum exploration and petroleum production in onshore areas of Victoria until 30 June 2020 and to enable the minister to pay for the surrender of certain exploration permits, retention leases and production licences. It also amends the Resources Legislation Amendment (BTEX Prohibition and Other Matters) Act 2014. I think that has been very well and clearly set out.

I note the government's press release of this morning. The government talks about the opposition putting a press release out this morning almost simultaneously, going down those wires to everyone's email address. I think there were simultaneous press releases, but they say that we did not have a press release out last year or the year before or whenever. We both have press releases out this morning.

I remind the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, who is the minister at the table, that this legislation has sat on the notice paper for months and months. If the government were so committed to doing what they wanted to do, this could have been through both houses of Parliament last year, but they chose inaction on this particular issue. After two years of inaction, I notice in their press release they are now saying they will actually have the chief scientist do some work around conventional gas. As I think the

member for Caulfield said, we have an energy crisis here in Victoria, and it is an energy crisis and a cost crisis that was generated by the Andrews government and particularly by the minister at the table, who closed Hazelwood, which is pushing up electricity prices.

We know that gas prices are going up. I want to give the minister a couple of examples from my electorate. Kagome is a large food manufacturer in Echuca. Their gas bill this year is going up \$1.5 million. That is because of the policies of this current government in Victoria, which actually does not have any plan on how they are going to secure the energy supply for Victorian industry in the future. They have political spin, but they actually do not have any plan.

The other example I would like to use is Kyvalley milk in Kyabram. Kyvalley is run by the Mulcahy family. They are fourth-generation dairy farmers in that area. There are three families — Peter, David and Wayne and their respective families. They are one of the largest family-owned dairy operations here in Victoria. They have actually invested. They have innovated. They are exporting fresh milk to Malaysia and to Singapore. They are doing a fantastic job in doing all the things that we as a Parliament and we as Victorians aspire to. They are taking milk, they are value-adding to it and they are sending it overseas to Malaysia in bulk, where it is rebottled.

I met with them back in January, and their energy bill for electricity has gone up 50 per cent this year. If you put the two together, with their network charges and their energy charges, they have had a 25 per cent increase in their power bill. That is unsustainable for a business that is exporting. They employ over 100 people in Kyabram. Kyabram is a relatively large country town, but 100 jobs in that community is very important, and what is driving those electricity price increases is your policy, Minister, to close Hazelwood. They are saying, 'We actually need a state government here in Victoria that wants to save jobs and wants to protect the jobs'.

The Premier has made a lot of statements about how every job is worth fighting for. It seems to me that those words are empty rhetoric when it comes to jobs in country Victoria. If you look at Kyvalley Dairy, they have had a 25 per cent increase in their power bill. If you look at Kagome, they have had a \$1.5 million increase in their gas bill. That is not how you save jobs, Minister — you actually make sure you have a policy rather than spin to make sure they have the energy they need at prices they can afford so they can compete in the export markets. Your policy is about closing down, shedding jobs and making sure that people do not have

an opportunity to raise a family here in Victoria rather than having sensible economic policies for the future.

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

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

GRIEVANCES

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That grievances be noted.

Law and order

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — I rise to grieve for all Victorians who are facing an absolute crime epidemic that is out of control, and this government is doing absolutely nothing to fix these problems and make Victorians feel safe. In my contribution today I will refer to many of my constituents in the electorate of Caulfield that are feeling the same. Safety has always been paramount in Victoria. It is something that we all in many ways have taken for granted for so many years, but unfortunately Victorians do not feel safe now, thanks to the Andrews Labor government.

This all came to a crux on 12 March 2016. I want to refer to the Moomba riots of 2016, because that for me was an absolute turning point. It was a time when this government could have said that enough was enough. This government could have said, ‘We are going to ensure that we change the laws here in Victoria and that we send a strong signal to those who commit offences that that will not be tolerated and that we will stamp out the violence and thuggery on our streets’. In the Moomba riots 24 people were arrested — 20 of those were children. We saw all sorts of things that we would never have expected in Victoria. We saw shops being invaded, tables and chairs being thrown, lots of violence and lots of thuggery. At one point we saw two youths yelling out ‘f the police’ while running down Bourke Street. This government had an opportunity to send a very strong message after the Moomba riots, but it did absolutely nothing.

What is ironic is that this government and the Premier said, ‘We are coming after you’ two days after these riots. They said that the offenders would feel the full force of the law. It is very interesting — words are simply words. Words mean nothing if this Parliament, if this government, if this Premier do nothing, and that is what they have done. Since then we have seen stabbings, home invasions, car thefts and carjackings. We have seen it all and we have heard it all. Every single member of Parliament, it does not matter what

constituency you come from, would have had someone ring them, email them, contact them or front up and say, ‘My house has been invaded or burgled’ or ‘I have been assaulted’. All of them. Crime rates have gone absolutely through the roof to a point where people are living in fear.

I have a 13-year-old daughter. She has finally got to the point where she feels comfortable at home. She has got her independence and she is starting to learn about confidence. For an hour or two during the day she has even gone out to do some babysitting. Let me tell you that my daughter does not feel safe. A lot of children do not feel safe, and why do they not feel safe? It is because they are hearing, seeing and reading about the sorts of things where you have people coming in through the doggy doors of people’s homes. They come in through the doggy doors and steal through the night. They take keys and they take cars. What used to happen is that they would do that when people were not there, but now they commit these crimes while people are home. It is not a situation where if there is a two-storey house, they will commit the crime on the ground floor and not disturb the people upstairs. They will actually go upstairs with baseball bats and confront people and attack them.

That is what we are seeing on our streets right now, because, as we know, there are no consequences simply because this government has lost control. Why has it lost control? It is because it works very closely with its factional left that says, ‘We are going to do everything in terms of rehabilitation and working with these individuals but we are not going to have consequences’. We are not going to say that if people do the wrong thing. They have to understand that there are consequences. We should not let them out on bail a second or third time. We should not say, ‘That is okay, you can do it again’. The fact is that people know that in Victoria you can get away with it, and if you can get away with it, then more of this sort of stuff happens, and that is what we are seeing. It plays out like a week-in, week-out movement. You see the sorts of things that are happening on our streets and they just play out week after week.

It is the sort of situation like the one where a policeman was stabbed during a home invasion. An off-duty senior constable was stabbed at his home in Melbourne’s east. The offender had been bailed in the weeks before the attack. He was not bailed once but twice. We are seeing so many of these instances where there have been attacks and where people have been committing crimes.

In Glen Eira alone crimes against the person have gone up 46 per cent. We have seen total crime rise 26 per cent from 5700 offences to 7300 offences. In my electorate of Caulfield, in Elsternwick, twice in a matter of months two jewellery stores have been burgled. Firstly:

Masked thugs pointed a gun at bystanders on a suburban shopping strip as they made off with gold jewellery worth \$150 000 in a terrifying heist.

Three raiders — described as being of African appearance and as young as 18 — also wielded a machete and a hammer as they stormed ...

through the jewellers. This happened on 3 January 2017. A few months earlier, on 5 September, in a different jewellery store in Riddell Parade:

Two men have threatened staff with a gun and a sledgehammer during an armed robbery on an Elsternwick jewellery store on Monday afternoon.

Investigators have been told the two men entered the Riddell Parade store just after midday 5 September, threatening staff, smashing glass cabinets and stealing a quantity of jewellery ...

In both instances the people were threatened. I spoke to the staff in Riddell Parade only weeks after this attack, and six months later after talking to them I see they are still living in fear. They are still suffering the consequences of having somebody come in with a gun and a sledgehammer and attack them.

We have had shootings; we have had up to six shots fired in Glen Huntly Road. We have also had so many different attacks where people have been attacked in their homes. In one instance, just around the corner from me, we had 22 car thefts in one night. So there is no doubt that we are seeing these sorts of situations happening on our streets.

I wanted to refer to a particular situation here, a situation involving a young girl, a local, who again was attacked. She was attacked while driving at night. On 12 January she was carjacked, and she is still struggling to comprehend it. She was beaten, humiliated and robbed. Police attended, and were at the time very compassionate in the care that they provided. This is what she wrote to me last week:

It's extremely disheartening to feel so abandoned by those who are supposed to be the backbone of our community ...

They were less than enthused about prospects of catching these thugs, members of our now notorious —

gangs. This particular person, who lost her car, is a single mum. She runs a small business, doing nails and beauty. She had all her stuff in the car at the time

it was stolen as well, so she effectively lost the tools of her trade and she lost her business. She went to the insurance company, and the insurance company said, 'You need to pay a \$600 excess for the car. You need to pay another \$600 in excess for your business loss as well'. That is \$1200. She is a single mum, struggling to put food on the table, and she has just been told that she has no car and she has to pay \$1200 in excess payments.

She had no follow-up or contact from anybody, no support whatsoever. She went to her GP, because she has been struggling with this situation. The GP saw her, battered and bruised, after the crime, then informed me and some others about the potential for compensation. The GP said that people are entitled to \$3000, and this could be done through a victims of crime claim. She reported it to Victims of Crime and gave all the information. She was told not that they would get back to her in a day or in a few hours — this is somebody who is struggling to put food on the table — but she was told that it could take up to six months to get some form of compensation, some help, just to be able to put food on the table.

I was contacted last Thursday about this. Straightaway we emailed the government and asked: what can they do to intervene? This person is still waiting for a response. This person on Friday was struggling to put food on the table. This person is an emotional wreck, and it is all due to the spike in crime, the law and order issues on our streets, the fact there has been no support from the government and that they have no idea what to actually do in terms of fixing the situation.

Yesterday we grieved about the Bourke Street massacre. We grieved about that, and we grieved for six people who were killed. That is what we did — we grieved about it — and we said we would do something. Well, I will tell you what: when is this government going to do something? When is this government going to introduce some tough bail laws? When is this government going to show some leadership when it comes to law and order — not talk about it, not have another inquiry, not have another review, but get up and say, 'Let's do what this Parliament is meant to be doing and actually do something about it'? We are not hearing that from this government. It is all very well to use words, it is all very well to cry, but I think victims of crime want more than tears. Victims of crime want action. There is no action from this government, none whatsoever.

Let me tell you something very telling. This is very telling to me because I have a lot of Chinese friends and Chinese constituents, and I use WeChat as a form of

communication. Since the Bourke Street massacre, and through the lack of response and leadership from our Premier, there have been people on WeChat who never, ever get involved in politics calling on the Premier to resign and calling on the police minister to resign.

Why? Because the leadership is not there. People expect leadership. People expect this government to stand up and to show leadership, not to say, 'We are coming after you', not to say that the perpetrators will feel the full force of the law, and then do absolutely nothing, because do you know what people who perpetrate these crimes do? They laugh at you, and they say that this government is a joke, this Premier is a joke: 'Why should we take his threats as anything but just threats, when there is no follow through?'

And there is no follow through. We only have to look at the juvenile justice system. We have got 16-year-olds committing crimes that 40-year-olds are committing. They are put in detention with 12-year-olds, and treated the same. There are no consequences there. The offenders are reoffending, getting out on bail, then reoffending again, often violently. They are not just going out and putting something on a credit card when they should not be doing it. They are violently attacking, abusing, assaulting and scaring people. This is out of control — absolutely out of control — and if this government think it is just a law and order issue, they are wrong. It is bigger than this, and it is about the credibility of this state.

We call ourselves 'Melbourne, the most livable city'; we are proud of that. We are all proud to be Victorians, but let me tell you, the reputation of Victoria is on the line when this government treats law and order like a joke. The reputation of Victoria is on the line when they treat it like a joke. Let me say that students coming from overseas to study here — our number one export — are not going to be coming to Victoria if they have got to be looking over their shoulders and are worrying about being attacked. That is not going to happen at all. Tourists are not going to come to Victoria if they are feeling threatened about attacks on the street. That is not going to happen at all. It is time for this government to show some leadership.

Infrastructure development

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) — I grieve for the people of Victoria who had to experience the previous Liberal government, which did not start a single major public transport project, leaving Victorian passengers stranded on crowded trains and clogged roads. We are delivering the biggest investment in transport in Victoria's history, including the Metro Tunnel, 50 level crossing removals

and more than 100 new trains and trams. These huge projects will create more than 10 000 jobs and get people across Victoria home safer and sooner. This is what Victorians want; this is what my constituents want. We know that workers, that our communities, are very much aware that it is infrastructure projects like these that have provided better roads, better transport services and more jobs. Having more jobs in Geelong is critical for us.

We will build the western distributor because we do not just talk about projects to bust congestion; we get them done. The western distributor is long overdue as a second river crossing. This is a project that politicians have spoken about for decades, but it has taken the Andrews Labor government to actually get it done. It is a tunnel alternative to the West Gate Bridge which will slash traffic congestion on the M1 from Geelong all the way to Pakenham. The project will slash 20 minutes travel time from a return trip to the city from Geelong or Ballarat in the west.

This is what the people of Geelong want, and I have spoken to many constituents who are saying, 'We now have great confidence in your government, but please get this western distributor underway'. Our local businesses are confident in what our government is doing. The G21, the Committee for Geelong and the city council are confident in what this government is doing, and they want us to move on with the western distributor.

The \$5.5 billion project will include widening the West Gate Freeway from eight to 12 lanes between the M80 and Williamstown Road, building a tunnel under Yarraville — a true alternative to the West Gate Bridge — building a second river crossing over the Maribyrnong, constructing an elevated freeway along Footscray Road with direct links to the port of Melbourne, creating the longest managed motorway system in Australia all the way from Geelong to Pakenham, building kilometres of new cycling and pedestrian paths and completing the Federation Trail. Not only will it slash congestion and increase productivity; it will lead to a cleaner, healthier and safer inner west with 6000 trucks off the local roads. That has got to be a benefit to the local community.

Importantly the project will create 5600 jobs, part of the more than 15 000 jobs that our historic transport building program is already creating. Victorians want these jobs. Those opposite did nothing in four years to create jobs, and the people of Geelong know it. Their confidence in this government is high, and I am sure that that will continue through to the next election.

It is a project that those opposite would know nothing about, because it is a project that actually stacks up. The western distributor has a business case that can stand behind it, delivering our state a benefit of \$1.30 for every dollar of investment and boosting the Victorian economy by more than \$11 billion. Let us compare that to the effort of those opposite, whose only project and only hope was pinned to a business case that was an absolute failure. Their economic disaster of a project would have lost 55 cents for every dollar of public investment. It has been roundly condemned by the Victorian and commonwealth auditors-general, by the independent Infrastructure Victoria and by any expert worth their weight in salt, because it would not work. It would have actually increased traffic in Melbourne's northern suburbs, and many people in Geelong also questioned the benefits for them. It was such a dud that they refused to release it to the public and refused to properly submit it for assessment by Infrastructure Australia.

Our projects work. They hold up to scrutiny, they will slash congestion and we will be getting them done just as we promised. While those opposite failed to even begin one single major road project, contracts will be signed on the western distributor and work will begin by the end of the year. The Andrews Labor government's 2016–17 Victorian budget provided the full funding required to build the western distributor. Last year we allocated the full \$1.46 billion required over the forward estimates to get it done, and through a market-led, private-public partnership we are working with the private sector to deliver benefits for the community.

Those opposite pretend to be the friends of business and enterprise, but when it comes to delivery all they actually believe in is petty politics, because at every opportunity all they want to say is no. They say no to level crossings, no to a second river crossing and no to the Metro Tunnel, while we get stuff done. The people of Victoria know that, and that is why we are in government.

The expert western distributor authority is well into procurement on this project, with a preferred constructor selected and the environment effects statement process underway later this year, because Victorians cannot afford for these projects to be delayed any longer. The people of Geelong want it to happen; the people of Victoria want it to happen. People want to be able to get home at a reasonable time and to not have to worry about the congestion that they experience commuting to and from Melbourne. We cannot afford four wasted years of dithering and politicking like we had under those opposite.

The Turnbull government have refused to partner with Victoria to get these projects done. It is a disgrace — an absolute disgrace — but they will not hold us back; we will keep moving with this. And it is not about political pointscore, or it should not be. It must be about what is best for the people of Victoria and, for me, what is best for the people of Geelong. Those people that have to travel up and down that highway are saying, 'Just get on with it', which is exactly what we are going to do.

Victorians need the western distributor, a project that will slash congestion and create thousands of jobs. In Geelong we need those jobs. We need to have our workers getting that work and being able to travel on that road and get home safely and within a reasonable time. Those opposite will not hold us back; they are irrelevant. This is why those opposite were in government for one term. The people of Victoria want things done, and they will vote out a government that does not keep to its promises and look after the interests of the people of Victoria. We will get this project done, and the Local Jobs First policy will ensure on this project that 89 per cent of the land use management system is sourced locally and 82 per cent of local steel. Again that is what Victorians want; they want jobs, and that is how jobs are created.

We have grown jobs in Victoria and in regional areas such as Geelong, and this is a priority for this government and for me. Only yesterday we announced 20 new jobs in the seat of Lara in the Geelong region. The unemployment rate in 2014 was 7.4 per cent for Geelong. In December 2016 it was down to 5.9 per cent. Victoria's rate was 6 per cent in 2016, down by 0.6 percentage points since coming to office. We are proud of those statistics and will continue to bring down unemployment in Geelong, in other regional centres and right across Victoria.

We are getting rid of nine of the most congested deathtraps in Melbourne. The Cranbourne-Pakenham corridor is the busiest in Melbourne. The boom gates at the nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong are down more than anywhere else in Victoria. The boom gates are down for up to an hour and a half in the 2-hour morning peak. They are also some of the most dangerous crossings in the state, the scenes of tragic deaths and many more injuries and near misses. The government's project gets rid of these crossings as quickly as possible, again keeping to our election commitments. These big infrastructure projects do create jobs, and that is what Victorians want to see.

Improvements to power and signalling mean trains will be able to run faster and closer together — more trains, less packed with less cancellations and delays.

With new high-capacity trains the number of passengers that can travel will increase by 42 per cent. Not just Metro trains but Gippsland V/Line and freight trains will benefit, with more services running faster and more reliably.

Elevating the train corridors provides 22.5 hectares in an area of Melbourne that has the least public open space. It also provides room for more car parking at the stations and a bike path along the entire corridor.

Motorists can be stuck for up to an hour and a half at a time at these intersections. They want them gone, and that is what we are doing. The opposition has supported Supreme Court action to delay the removal of these level crossings, but we are getting on with it.

The Local Jobs First policy will ensure that 92 per cent of the content of the project is sourced locally, including 50 per cent of the line signalling and 100 per cent local steel. The Major Projects Skills Guarantee will create 233 opportunities, including 161 apprenticeships, with 28 retrained and 133 new; and 72 trainees, with 11 retrained and 61 new. These are amazing statistics, and these are the sorts of jobs that mean particularly our young people who are wanting to do apprenticeships will have those opportunities. The government's infrastructure project is what is creating jobs, and these jobs are so critical to regions like Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. We want to ensure that we give our young people those opportunities and ensure that the services, the roads, our transport — all those things — are provided to those local communities.

There will be five new underground stations at Arden, Parkville, CBD North, CBD South and Domain, direct underground connections between the Metro Tunnel and city loop and Flinders Street station and Melbourne Central, 65 new high-capacity Metro trains running between Sunbury and the Cranbourne-Pakenham lines, and we are not wasting a day to get the Metro Tunnel done. Again, there are an enormous amount of jobs created there. The Andrews Labor government has provided every single dollar to deliver these projects, fully funded in the 2016–17 Victorian budget.

We have signed the first contract, the environment effects statement is done and early works are underway across Melbourne. One hundred utilities like water, gas and power and a massive 120-year-old sewer are being relocated and protected, again creating more jobs. Franklin and A'Beckett streets in the CBD are already closed so they can be transformed into major construction sites to build a new CBD North station. Construction crews will dig 11 storeys below the ground to construct the new

station below Swanston Street. A giant shaft will also be excavated at City Square near Flinders Street station to build the new CBD South station. These shafts will enable us to excavate around 2 million cubic metres of soil and rock, enough to fill 800 Olympic-sized swimming pools. These great craters in the city will become our brand-new underground stations, paving the way for the major tunnelling and station construction to begin next year.

The work is underway on St Kilda Road at the site of the new Domain station. A section of Domain Road will close, and St Kilda Road will be reconfigured to one lane in each direction between Dorcas Street and Toorak Road West while the new Domain station is built. These will be huge impacts while we build the Metro Tunnel, but that is what happens when you build the infrastructure Victoria needs. As I said earlier, we know that the big infrastructure projects are what create jobs, provide services and provide better facilities for our community, for Victorians and, again, for the people of Geelong. This is something those opposite want to deny, but the years of disruption will be nothing compared to the decades of benefits this project will bring not just to Melbourne but to our regional communities as well. Melbourne needs the Metro Tunnel, and we are getting it done.

Through its Local Jobs First Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) the Andrews government is committed to improving opportunities for local suppliers to create more new jobs and grow the economy. The VIPP ensures small and medium-sized enterprises are given a full and fair opportunity to compete for government contracts.

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

Law and order

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — Here we are in 2017, the first week in Parliament. Yesterday we stood in this place to respect and honour those Victorians who lost their lives. Yesterday the Premier stood in this house and said, and I quote:

There is nothing that I can say that will make things better for them and their families. There are no words from any of us that will make this right. It is only action that truly counts. That is why I promise them and promise every Victorian that, whatever circumstances put that man behind the wheel of that car at that time in that place, we will do everything we can so that that does not ever happen again.

Here we are, day two, and we are standing up in this place. We have had the member for Geelong give us a diatribe about a whole range of issues, but she did not

raise the one issue that Victorians want leadership on — that is, what this government is going to do to fix law and order in this state. Victorians are angry; Victorians want action. They want a Premier who will do more than say words in this place and say he will do whatever it takes to fix the problem, and here we are on day two, when we should be standing in this place debating changes to the bail legislation and when we should be putting changes in place to ensure that Victorians feel safer. But no, there is no action from this government.

We get a diatribe about local issues in someone's electorate. Whilst that might be important to that community, what Victorians are wanting at the moment is action from this government, using Parliament today, tomorrow and the next sitting to fix the bail system and to fix law and order in this state, but where is the agenda from this government? Where is the planning of this government to get on with the job, seeking leave of the opposition to debate these things forthwith in this house to make the changes that Victorians are expecting? We have had silence from this Premier. In fact all we hear from the Premier is, 'It's all okay. We're going to do another review'. Victorians are sick of reviews. Victorians are sick of hearing politicians say, 'Everything's okay, we've commissioned another review'. What they actually want is politicians to stand up, accept the fact that there is a problem and get on with it.

Today in this house the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of Senior Constable Daniel Yeoman. Senior Constable Daniel Yeoman is a constituent of mine. From the *Daily Mail Australia* of 22 November I quote:

A teenage boy accused of stabbing a senior off-duty police officer in between his eyes during a violent home invasion was reportedly granted bail twice in two weeks.

The 19-year-old boy from Scoresby allegedly broke into Senior Constable Daniel Yeoman's home in Melbourne's eastern suburbs at 1.50 a.m. on Saturday morning.

The teen is alleged to have assaulted his wife and then stabbed him multiple times before fleeing the home with the couple's Hyundai car ...

...

The teen was arrested at a nearby location after allegedly crashing the stolen car in Glen Iris.

...

The *Herald Sun* reported that the same boy, born in New Zealand, had been granted bail on 24 October and then again on 28 October for separate burglary offences.

That is Victoria. That is Melbourne. That is my community. That is what is important to Victorians.

That is what Victorians are expecting this government to fix. How many more times do we have to turn on the nightly news to hear of a home invasion, to hear of a carjacking, to hear of an assault or to hear of a death and to have no response from the Premier, to have no response from the Minister for Police and to have no response from the Attorney-General? Leadership is about action. Yes, you have got to listen, but then you have got to act.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WAKELING — I am more than happy to take up the interjections of those opposite, because if they are happy to stand in this place and say they are satisfied with the performance of their government on this issue, they stand condemned. Because it is not me that is passing judgement on this government, it is the Victorian community. Victorians are angry. Victorians want this mess fixed.

I think of the situation of Daniel Yeoman. As reported, he is a police officer, accustomed to dealing with situations of potential violence. But how many other Victorians who are not trained in self-defence and who are not trained in the activities of a police officer are having to face the situation? How many Victorians are living in fear of their home being invaded? How many Victorians are living in fear of their car being jacked whilst they are driving on Victorian streets? Daniel Yeoman received a wound to his forehead in between his eyes, just above his nose. That is what Victorians see occurring in our state and they see a government that is reluctant to do anything about it.

If, as he said yesterday, the Premier is truly wanting to fix this problem, he and his colleagues should be in this place explaining to this state what their legislative path is to fixing the problems that affect Victoria, and through consultation with the opposition we would be able to facilitate the passage of legislation through both houses of Parliament to remedy these problems. It is not just about legislation. It is about sending a message that you actually understand what the problems are that are affecting Victorians. It is the fact that you acknowledge and accept the fact there is a problem in this state and you are willing to do something about it. Quite frankly, another review does not cut it. Another review does not comfort residents in my electorate, residents in Melbourne or, quite frankly, residents across Victoria. They do not believe that is a responsible position by this government to fix this unwieldy problem.

The coalition has said that we will make changes if elected to government. We have said that we will

introduce legislation with new offences for carjacking and aggravated carjacking. We will make drive-by shooting an offence. We will abolish cash payments for scrap metal. We will deport violent criminals who are not Australian citizens. This government has the capacity to introduce those changes and more. With the support of the opposition it could speed those changes through this house and through the Council, to get them enacted and have them apply under Victorian law.

But when asked pointed questions by the opposition today, what was the Premier's response? He laid blame, he talked about former governments, he talked about reviews and he talked about actions of different offices within government. But at the end of the day the Premier did not stand up in this place and show the leadership that Victorians expect of the Premier and spell out his plan. That is not unreasonable. There is nothing unreasonable in that, because that is what people expect a Premier to do when faced with this situation.

Those on the other side can mock this issue as much as they like. They can criticise me as much as they like, but at the end of the day I stand up in this place representing my community. When we had the story of a woman who faced a home invasion relayed in this house last year, we learned that when her house was invaded she and her two adult daughters were in the house, and her immediate response was, 'I want to sell my house and find a safer suburb'. The rhetorical question to that is, 'Well, you tell me the safer suburb'. If living in Wantirna South in Melbourne's east is not safe, then where are we as a community?

People should feel safe in their homes, wherever they live. People should not be living in fear. People should not be feeling as though they need to buy a baseball bat to put under their bed — something they have never contemplated before. People should never feel as though they have to lock the doors of their cars when they are driving because they are fearful that someone will jump into the car with a knife or another weapon. This is something that has not occurred in Victoria before. And, quite frankly, if it cannot fix law and order in this state, then what is the number one priority for this government?

If Victorians do not feel safe in their own community, if families do not feel safe in their homes, if women do not feel safe in their cars and if women do not feel safe walking through their local community, then what else matters? Yes, as local members we can stand in this house and raise issues affecting our local community, and rightly so, but let us be blunt: the number one issue on everyone's lips at the moment, if you are walking

down Bourke Street, if you are walking down Collins Street, is, 'What are we going to do to fix law and order in this state?'.

The ball is squarely in the government's court. The ball is squarely in the Premier's court. He can lead. He can act. He can stand up here and explain to Victorians what he will do to fix it, but we do not hear those words from the Premier. We can take a partisan view in terms of the government's position on law and order, but quite frankly I think what the average punter on the street wants is just an answer as to what the government is going to do. The Premier has stood up and said, 'Well, we've got a review, but it's okay, because it's only 11 weeks away'. This government has been in place for two years. If they have not done the work over the Christmas holidays to identify a solution and put it through cabinet and bring it to Parliament and put the law in place, then they should just get on with it!

As a former minister in the Napthine government I understand the way the process of government works. I understand the way in which cabinet can make swift decisions, the way parliamentary counsel can draft legislation, and the way in which if there is a crisis government can act and act swiftly to deal with it. With everything that we have just dealt with yesterday, with the tragedy we have seen on Bourke Street, with the outpouring of emotion and anger and hate that people have about the current situation and the despair of those families that were affected, I was expecting the Premier to stand up yesterday and, as part of his acknowledgement of the sorrow and the agony that those families were going through, to lay out a legislative agenda to fix the problem. I expected the Premier to stand in this place and say, 'Out of all that terror, out of all the horror, we have listened, and we're going to act, and this is the action that we will take'.

If the Premier had stood up and said this was how he was going to fix the problem and that he wanted to introduce legislation on a bipartisan basis and get it through the Parliament, I think it would have happened. I can stand here during a grievance debate contribution and grieve for Victoria, grieve for Melbourne and grieve for my community about law and order, but I can tell you what I would prefer to be doing: instead of grieving about the problem I would prefer to be debating legislation to fix the problem. I would prefer to be standing here saying, 'These changes that the government are putting forward will help fix the problems in our state when it comes to law and order'.

But no, we are not here debating legislation. We are not here identifying a solution to make Victorians feel safer in our streets, to make women feel safer in their homes

and in their cars. I am standing here as a member of the opposition grieving on behalf of Victorians and imploring the Premier, the government and ministers to listen to the concerns affecting Victorians and to get on with it and act. I think there is nothing plainer at the moment, in 2017, than that Victorians are sick and tired of politicians talking but not actually delivering.

We see it in Canberra, we see it in other states and we see it in other countries. What people simply want are politicians who are prepared to stand up and say what they are going to do, and get on with it and do it. So that is what I grieve for. I grieve for the current status of this state when it comes to law and order. I can only hope that we will not be standing here again grieving about this but that we will get on with the job, make Victorians safer and get on with fixing up our laws and other important pieces of legislation, because that is what people elected us to do. They elected us to this place to look after them and to act, and that is what we all should be doing.

Former government performance

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — I grieve for Victoria and for those opposite, the team that I now call the team of regret, the team that did nothing — sorry, that did very little, to be really frank; I cannot say they did nothing — in the four years they were in power. I do, however, congratulate them on personifying the word ‘no’ and the word ‘opposition’. There is not an original idea amongst them. They just oppose: ‘No, no, no, no’. They say that Tony Abbott was Dr No, but these folks take no to a new level. I have said it before, but it is worth repeating: this is the scenario of the nightly news. The Andrews government has just kicked off another achievement, and this happens almost daily. It is great for Victoria, you might think. The Premier, or a minister or another one of my colleagues on this side are out in the community meeting with people, doing a doorstep with a background, be it a level crossing removal or a new school or a hospital, and the vision is great. The TV vision is great. It is a great project. Better still, what the cameras do not capture are the aspirations that have now been met by the community we have been engaged with for many years to achieve those projects. Those conversations and those ideas — that close collaboration with community — are not captured.

Nonetheless the bells and whistles, the buildings, the shovels, the turning of the sod are all captured; it is real community stuff. Then the nightly news cuts to the opposition. Where are they? Not 50 metres from where I am standing, on the steps of Parliament, consulting with whom? Their staffers and the media. That is who

they are consulting with. I mean, do these people ever get out? They venture 50 metres from their offices, they do a presser, they look angry, they walk away, they backslap — and that is their job done. Some of them do it really well, particularly the member for Hawthorn, but that is their job done.

Now, I think this is a great building — do not get me wrong — but while we make laws in this place, our ideas and our policy generation do not come from this building. Our ideas and our policy generation come from the community we serve. That is the difference between our side of politics and theirs.

We are not afraid to meet with people and get out to hear exactly what people are saying to us, even if the things they are saying to us we are not happy with or we do not necessarily agree with. What do those opposite say in the five-minute window into their lives? It is the same whingy, whiny script every night, basically, ‘No, no, no, no; we would have done it better’. As the member for Sunbury said, ‘We would have done this, we would done that’. That is what they say. But do you know what? They had four years to do better and they did not.

In all fairness though, it is very hard to compare governments. How do you compare the previous government, which did so little, with this government, which has done so much — and so much good. I have said it before, but in my community there was almost nothing for schools, very little for health and not a lot for road projects. There was an ambulance crisis in every community, including mine, and no additional police, just a recurrent police budget that was funded.

Mr J. Bull interjected.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — The member for Sunbury reminds me of the things that those opposite did to TAFE. Not only did they do very little for TAFE, but the little they did in removing the funding for TAFE was significant — in fact they gutted it.

They could not even deliver what they promised to deliver — for example, the Murrumbidgee level crossing, and I will come to that in a minute.

‘Bells and whistles’ is what we should call the last government and the current opposition. They love their bells and whistles. When it comes to delivering, there is nothing. These bells and whistles are removed from little boxes tucked away somewhere in the office of the Leader of the Opposition ready for the next show pony event. As I said, we saw that with the Murrumbidgee level crossing. They promised it in 2010, but come 2014, four years later, absolutely nothing had been

delivered. That crossing is still there. It is only now being removed because of us. They promised Rowville rail, they promised Doncaster rail, they promised Melbourne Metro and a train to the airport. It is a pretty long list. It is not just me saying this; it is on the official record, and this is just transport. They did not promise the east-west link and yet they were more committed to that than to anything else, and they tried to ram it through at the last minute, including a sneaky side letter that we have heard a lot about in this chamber.

In my community it took them just months out from an election to commit to a project to remove four level crossings on the Dandenong line. Those opposite came to my community with their nicely polished bells and whistles, which were removed from their boxes in their leader's office, loudly proclaiming their plan. Former Premier Denis Naphine reminded me of a town crier. He came to Carnegie station waving documents that we found out later were not even contracts. But the best thing about that event is that it was not even their idea to remove those crossings. It came as an unsolicited bid from the private sector from none other than Alan Stockdale. Does anyone remember Alan Stockdale, the Treasurer in a former Liberal government? But was it a good deal? Was it ever, but not for taxpayers! It was estimated to cost \$5 billion to remove just four level crossings —

Ms Ward interjected.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — I think we have delivered 10, member for Eltham, and those opposite were going to deliver four, which they did not, over four years at a cost of \$1 million every day for 15 years billed directly to the taxpayer of Victoria. They promised this on the eve of the election. They announced the bid. They came, they saw but they did not conquer. It was too little, too late. They obviously did not conquer, because when I was driving in that area on election day in 2014 the crossing was still there, so nothing happened.

To his credit, the former Minister for Public Transport did not do what the member for Malvern did. He did not sign off on the contract; he was not sure it represented value for money, and they are his own words. Come November 2014 all those opposite had was a plan. They had no contract, no designs and no time lines.

Ms Ward interjected.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — They had a hope, as the member for Eltham said. After four long years they left us with nothing.

What do they say now? You have the former Minister for Health in the other place — and what a great job he did in stuffing up that portfolio — and the member for Higgins in the federal Parliament, when she is actually paying attention to her local community, wildly claiming that the Liberals had contracts in place and they were just a minute away from removing those level crossings in my community. Again, they are their words and they are on the *Hansard* record of the member for Higgins. What a load of baloney. It is in black and white, firstly in a press release from the then Minister for Public Transport on 17 October 2014, six weeks before the election, which was a Friday, a usually quiet news day. It said that the government had signed an agreement. What does 'an agreement' mean? It was not a contract; we know that. The press release went on to say the following, and this is the minister speaking after four years of promises and the town crier waving documents:

We expect that we will be in a position to sign contracts in mid-2015 —

way past their term of government —

subject to the evaluation processes demonstrating the project represents value for money.

Infrastructure completion is expected around 2019 subject to the outcome of the competitive tender process.

Members should read between the lines on that one. It was a press statement giving them an out. Twice they use the words 'subject to'. In other words, it was a project that was not going to happen. It was a cover prior to an election. It did not fool Adam Carey in the *Age* though. In an excellent article in the *Age*, posted later that day, an article that I have referred to previously in this place with the headline 'Dandenong rail upgrade in disarray', he said:

The government's admission that it could not commit to the project before November's election puts in doubt a string of promised improvements to Melbourne's busiest railway corridor ...

...

The government and the consortium had originally sought to sign contracts for the \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion project by 30 September —

2014 —

but public transport minister Terry Mulder said he was not yet confident enough that every part of the project would deliver value for money for taxpayers.

But the real kicker was — and this is Adam Carey speaking — that:

The release was published on the government's website but, unusually, was not distributed widely to journalists.

I wonder why. It was hidden under the carpet. There were no time lines, not even a proper design. Some artist's impression was all we got with the theatrics and the bells and whistles.

I read an interesting article by Josh Gordon in the *Age* last week in which he said the Liberal government back then were back-ending their important work, like infrastructure projects. Others would have read the same article. Effectively it was all about political cycles and when best to actually do things to get a political benefit. That it is no way to run a government and it is definitely no way to run a state. According to the article, and I quote:

The challenge, so the thinking went, was to change the shape of the bell by extending the upswing, delaying the point at which the peak was reached, and slowing the eventual rate of decline.

In this, the former coalition government failed abysmally. If you charted its political trajectory, the bell shape would be tremendously skewed towards the start of the cycle, with a peak immediately after the 2010 election, followed by a tail of decline lasting almost four years ...

That is worth repeating: a tail of decline lasting almost four years. In other words, it was a tail of decline lasting almost as long as their term of government. It would be hard to find a more apt description of members of the previous government despite all their bluster.

But I turn back to today. Not only are opposition members trying to put a stop to our nine level crossings, as the member for Geelong said, taking the government all the way to the Supreme Court, but they are also trying to stop the Melbourne Metro Tunnel. What gall! They did very little in the four years they were in government, and then when there are state transforming plans they come in here and have the audacity to question our ability to deliver a project that they could not.

Let us lay out what we are doing. We are removing nine level crossings along the Dandenong corridor, including Carnegie, Murrumbeena, Hughesdale and Clayton, and 50 across Melbourne. Ours is one of the biggest projects in Victoria's history. That particular corridor is a \$1.6 billion project. We are getting things done and we are getting them done for the community that deserves to see the completion of those projects.

There are a long list of projects that the member for Geelong and others have referred to and will refer to in

their contributions. Before I mention a couple more, I want to go back to the former minister — —

Mr Katos interjected.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — We are collaborative in this place, member for South Barwon, so we talk about projects across Victoria because we feel a sense of ownership of them, as any good government should.

Not only did those opposite not do very much — in fact they said 'no' more than they said 'yes' by a ratio of 10 to 1 — but they also scared people. They spread misinformation — and that is the worst part about it. I will just refer to a couple of things in relation to the level crossing projects in my community. Mr Davis, the former Minister for Health in the other place, and others spread a selection of gossip and rumours and lies. They said we were going to get rid of three stations — Murrumbeena, Hughesdale and Carnegie — and replace them with a super-station. People were coming up to me and saying, 'Oh, my God. You are getting rid of Hughesdale station', and I would say, 'Where did you get that from?'. Of course it was from Mr Davis and the Liberal Party.

Ms Ward interjected.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — Alternative facts, that is right, member for Eltham. For me, this is a big one. They also spread a rumour that we would leave the rail lines on the ground and build others up above and that would cater for a diesel train running. I said to a constituent, 'Just remind me of the name of this project'. They said, 'What do you mean?'. I said, 'What's the name of the project that we're doing?'. They said, 'Level crossing removal'. I said, 'That's right. You can't remove a level crossing when you leave it on the ground, can you?'. That is absolute rubbish, and again it came from Mr Davis.

They just spread so much misinformation, like that it was going to be noisier, that it was going to be dirtier. One of the most bizarre ones — I do not know why this even made it onto Twitter — was that I do not live in my electorate so I do not care about it. Even if I did not live in my electorate, I would care about it because it is the electorate I represent, but I live in my electorate, and I am proud to live in my electorate. Some of the weirdest things came out. Not only were they a government that did very little but they are an opposition that does not just say no but actually spreads misinformation and lies.

The other day I went home and opened the letterbox at the house in which I live, in the electorate that I represent, and there was a DL-sized flyer. On the front

it said, 'Daniel Andrews and Steve Dimopoulos are responsible for the increase in your electricity prices'. I am Steve Dimopoulos and I am reading it, and I am thinking, 'Wow, when was the last time I was the CEO of an energy company? In fact when was the last time I was part of a government that sold the power companies to Wall Street?'. I did not sell the power companies to Wall Street.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — Your art of deflection is so sophisticated that it is breathtaking. You do things and then you completely forget about them and you almost convince yourself you did not do them. You sold the power companies and now you are blaming us for the increased prices, and we have strengthened the regulator. They on the other side are an outrageous group of people, and I am glad the electorate showed them the other side of this chamber because that is the side they belong on. I grieve for the people of my community for the four years they had to suffer under members opposite.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Before I call the honourable member for Kew, can I remind honourable members not to refer to other members as 'you', because 'you' is used to address the Speaker and therefore in using 'you' members are casting an aspersion and reflection on the Speaker in the chair.

Law and order

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) — I grieve for the people of Victoria and for the crime wave that has been afflicting them for two years under this shameful government that does not care about crime, far less its causes — a government that is soft on crime, a government that is soft on the causes of crime, a government that is soft on the people that cause crime, and a government that is more interested in the rights of victims than removing the rights of perpetrators.

Carjackings are up 80 per cent, assaults are up 13 per cent, robbery is up 22 per cent, break and enter offences are up 14 per cent, theft is up 18 per cent, and 37 per cent of all car thefts in this country occur in the once great state of Victoria. In our great city of Melbourne you could once walk down the main street during the Australian Open and not be accosted by a professional rent-a-crowd of so-called homeless people, these outrageous individuals with no respect for the law, who are smoking drugs and carrying on like you would not believe, like this is some Third World country in the centre of what was a magnificent city, our magnificent city of Melbourne. The lack of respect for the rule of

law is evidenced by the countless breaches of the law but most importantly in my opinion in recent times by homelessness — this faux homelessness which we have seen in the centre of Melbourne involving a crowd of people that for, example, hijacked the Vinnies CEO Sleepout last year, which I was a participant in.

Ms Thomas — Oh, no! When you were pretending.

Mr T. SMITH — I note that the member for Macedon is deriding what is a very important — —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ryall) — Order! Interjections will not be taken up.

Mr T. SMITH — Acting Speaker, thank you, but I am happy to be interjected on by the hapless member for Macedon. If she is going to defend the rights of protesters to hijack the Governor speaking at the CEO Sleepout, then God help her. We were all there sleeping out, raising money for homeless services — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — You can keep attacking the CEO Sleepout for as long as you like. It makes my day when you do. Then these people turned up and jumped the fence. The Governor had to be evacuated. We were verbally assaulted at the very least and threatened for simply being in the streets of a night, trying to raise money for homeless services. These sort of professional — I do not know what you would call them — brigands, rabble-rousers, annoyances to the public good, fringe dwellers, oddballs, people with no respect for decency, no respect for the rule of law, no respect for what it is to live in a civilised society, hijacked the night. They are the same sorts of people we have seen smoking drugs and becoming a disturbance all throughout Melbourne over the last couple of months.

I make this point because had Labor not removed the move-on laws, which they did as one of their very first acts in the justice space in this Parliament in 2015, the police would have had the requisite powers to shoo-on these pests without having recourse to arrest them. The police who came that night to Jeff's Shed, where we were sleeping outside, said that there were only 16 police on patrol in the whole of the city of Melbourne — 16 police! They said to us quite bluntly, 'We would love to be able to move these people on. We don't have the resources to arrest them because we simply don't have enough police on patrol this evening. But we do not have the powers because the powers have been taken away from us'. That is what the police told me. I am not inventing this. These are their words: 'We don't have the powers'.

We know why the government took away the move-on powers with regard to political protests — they obviously had to fill in their cheque for the union movement. These people gave as their first reform in the justice portfolio a statement of intent that they are not serious about crime and they are not serious about public disorder. We know they do not have any regard for public order and indeed for the justice portfolio — they have had half a dozen corrections ministers. I think they have had two and a half police ministers. But the point is the government's entire political mantra, their cornerstone, their grid, dare I say it, that Mr McLindon is so famous for imparting upon his former disciples, does not include law and order.

We read in the *Herald Sun* the other week that the Labor Party in the lead-up to the last election and upon coming into government should not talk about law and order and should not stray into the issues that its members are not, it would appear, naturally good at, shall we say. It shows, because for two years they have not talked about law and order; they have done nothing about law and order. Yet we now have a crisis in law and order. The problem is that, for evil to flourish, people — in this case very average people — need not do too much. Evil has flourished under this government; evil has flourished most profusely under this government, wherever we look. In our juvenile justice centres we have had 30 different incidents of riots and breakouts, the sort of stuff you would expect to see in Third World countries, not in Victoria.

The week after the tragedy in Bourke Street, where this awful person committed a heinous crime and when we were all coming to terms with the fact that he was out on bail and should not have been out on bail — the government ought to take this charge very, very seriously and we want to see action and not hear more talk, but I will get onto Bourke Street — we had a breakout from Malmsbury, with carjackings and car theft, a crime spree. The police did not even know who they were looking for. They did not even know why they were in jail. They had to apply for some order from the Children's Court or some such.

Ms Thomas — It's called the law.

Mr T. SMITH — It's called the law, and we need to change the law, because you people have no understanding of the fear that Victorians are facing. This is the same sort of left-wing garbage that has put us in the state we are now in. You have been in government —

Ms Thomas — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, could you ask the member for Kew to stop referring to

members of the opposition as 'you' and direct him to send his comments through you as the Chair.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ryall) — Order! I would ask the member for Kew to address his comments through the Chair to the government, rather than using the word 'you' directly to the Chair.

Mr T. SMITH — I apologise, Acting Speaker. Those opposite have been in government for 13 of the last 17 years. I think it is, I suppose, their legacy of continuous appointments to the bench of what are best described as bleeding hearts or lefties or people that do not understand that, if you do not send a strong message to those people who break the law, this will perpetuate more violent incidents. Victoria is the crime capital of this country for a reason. It is no coincidence that we have had this perpetual culture of timidity not only from the bench but indeed in law enforcement as well. That was seen most tragically in the events that led up to the Bourke Street massacre. We have a coroner's investigation, which I shall not pre-empt, but I think most commentary throughout this great city and our great state would suggest that at the very least there should be a far stronger response from those who are given the monopoly on preventing the use of violence within our society and are protected by law to do so. They should probably reflect on that and use the resources that are given to them in a far more robust fashion.

That is the message I am getting from my constituents in Kew, and that is what I am hearing in the media and around Victoria — that the system itself, the very heart of our justice system, is fundamentally broken and that we desperately need leadership from those opposite, leadership that has frankly been not forthcoming for two years, to fix this mess. I was on radio on Friday, and I made the point a couple of times: we just want these people locked up. They are a danger to all of us. They are a danger to this society. They are a danger to what it means to live in a city such as ours. Just lock them up. It is that simple: lock them up and do not let them out until they are not going to do it again. It is very, very simple.

You know, you can run around the relativity tree all day, every day on this stuff. You can say, 'Oh, what about this and what about that? That is not fair', and all the rest. Well, stop committing crimes, stop bashing people up in the streets, stop carjacking people and have some respect for the law. For you people to come in here and try to defend them is outrageous. It is absolutely outrageous. Melbourne is being turned into Johannesburg under this

government, and I am absolutely sick of it. I am sick of it, and it has got to stop.

We need to see not just leadership in terms of legislation but cultural leadership. It is the sort of leadership that says, 'No, no, no. We don't tolerate this sort of behaviour anymore, whether you are an Australian or not an Australian. If you are not an Australian, you should be deported. If you don't have the respect to live in our country and behave as we would expect you to behave under our laws — the laws passed by this Parliament or the commonwealth Parliament — then don't come here. Go home. Go back to where you came from'. It is that simple.

But at the same time, if you are an Australian, then we do not want you on the streets if you are going to behave like this. We want you to be incarcerated. We on this side of the house unashamedly say this. Our job in here, the fundamental role of this place — the very essence of the state — is to protect society, to protect the institutions of society and to protect the state itself from those who either ignore its authority or indeed its relevance in society.

I simply say again: the lawlessness in Victoria is multifaceted. It comes from a whole host of reasons, some of which are very tragic, I concede. But at the same time resolute leadership from people who actually mean what they say with regard to law enforcement, with regard to the justice system and with regard to a respect for the institutions and indeed the mainstream of our society, of what has made it such a peaceful and decent place to live, is paramount. And we have not seen that sort of leadership.

We saw a Premier who literally disappeared for most of summer — whoosh, disappeared! No-one saw him, until it was too late. Then he came back on his horse, riding to save us all, but it was all too late. It is an important job, being the Premier of Victoria. It should be taken seriously. This fundamental role of the Premier of Victoria is to keep our children, our brothers, our sisters, our parents and our grandparents — all of us in this wonderful society of ours — safe, not in the sense of the federal government's role from foreign foes but from foes who live amongst us, who will do us harm and who do not believe in what we believe in: respect for the law, respect for others, respect for decency and respect for the basic traditions of our Judaeo-Christian society of tolerance and of decency and of looking out for their fellow man, not robbing them or carjacking them in broad daylight at 1 o'clock in the afternoon at the Chadstone shopping centre or indeed multiple robberies at a jewellery store in Toorak.

I put on record my friendship with Tony Fialides, the proprietor of IMP Jewellery in Toorak, and the horror that his staff have gone through on two occasions in recent memory, where individuals walked through the front door, smashed the hell out of his jewellery store, terrorised his staff, bashed the staff member present with a gun and then disappeared off. They were not found immediately by a car chase, because we do not do that anymore, apparently, in Victoria, but eventually they were apprehended, and hopefully the full force of the law will be brought to bear on these people.

This is Dan's Victoria — Dan's Victoria where the Essendon Football Club has to put out a statement about home invasion, Dan's Victoria where police numbers have not kept up with population growth, Dan's Victoria where we have got this sort of spin, all talk, from those opposite. They say, 'Oh, it's not our fault; it's someone else's fault. You know, this is cyclical'. It simply did not happen two years ago.

Northwards we look, to our friends in New South Wales, where crime is going the opposite way, where crime is heading south. In Victoria it is heading north. There has got to be a reason for that. You cannot claim there is not a causal connection between a government that is soft on crime and a rise in crime. If they want to continue to do that, feel free; go for it. Jon Faine said on Friday, 'If you don't fix this, you'll lose the next election'. You can disregard my advice — go for it — but at the very least, for all of us, for all our sakes, for my friends' sake, for my grandparents' sake, for my parents' sake, for my sister's sake, for her husband's sake, for everyone's sake, can you please take these issues seriously? Put some more police on the street, appoint some magistrates who actually mean business, encourage the police to use the powers that they have been given to make our state safe again, because all of our lives depend on it.

Infrastructure development

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — It is always a pleasure to follow story time with the member for Kew. I grieve for those opposite, those members who for four long years had the greatest gift that the people of Victoria could give — government — and did absolutely nothing, not a single thing. I grieve for all those jobs that were not created as a result of the four years of inaction from those opposite. I grieve further because they come into this place week in, week out thinking that they are still in government, and the member for Kew just demonstrated that. They lecture us about what should be done and what they would have done. They look back on those four years they occupied the government benches, those long, dark, wasted years when they did

not do a thing. This government has done more in two years than those opposite could have ever dreamed of doing in four.

You do not have to look far and you do not have to talk to many people to find out where the problems started. In conversations with constituents, business, the private sector, the education sector and the construction sector you continue to hear the same message — that you could not simply meet with them. Their ministers were too busy; ministers did not want to know them. They never engaged and never took the time to listen to people from all walks of life, and this resulted in a do-nothing government. No-one could see them; they simply vanished. It was a government paralysed by inaction. In November 2014 the people of Victoria sent a very strong message, a powerful message, that they wanted a government that would put people first. Two years on, this government is getting on with putting people first after four years of such inaction.

This afternoon I am very keen to talk about the last two years from both the local and state perspectives. I am incredibly proud of all of the work that has been done both locally and right across the state from those on this side of the house. I do, however, want to pick up on one point. The member for Kew, who spoke before, mentioned the Jon Faine radio program. Towards the end of December last year there was a segment when Jon Faine had listeners actually ringing the radio station discussing whether the Andrews government was doing too much. Were there too many projects on the go in this state, and was construction causing too much disruption?

Mr T. Bull interjected.

Mr J. BULL — Possibly.

This is an incredible scenario. We had four years of nothing. We on this side of the house understand that there is significant disruption caused by major infrastructure projects. We certainly apologise for the delays, but we do not apologise for the projects themselves, because these are important projects. They are job-generating projects. They are projects that pay mortgages, that pay bills and that put food on the tables of hardworking Victorians, and they are projects that will set this state up for a very long time. The previous Liberal government did not start a single major public transport project, leaving Victorian passengers stranded on crowded trains and clogged roads.

Ms Thomas interjected.

Mr J. BULL — They were. Certainly they made some significant announcements, member for

Macedon, on airport rail, which is obviously very important — —

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr J. BULL — Airport rail, member for Melton — a very important project in my electorate and certainly something that I will advocate very strongly for.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ryall) — Order! Without assistance, thank you, member for Melton.

Mr J. BULL — But as we have heard from the member for Melton and the member for Macedon — —

Mr McGuire interjected.

Mr J. BULL — Was it platform 9¾ at the airport? You get off your Jetstar flight and push your trolley into the wall, although unlike what happens with platform 9¾, you actually bounce off the wall, the same way those opposite bounced off the election result — very, very poorly. In stark contrast, this government is delivering the biggest investment in transport in Victoria's history, including the Metro Tunnel; the removal of 50 of the worst level crossings, 10 of which are already gone; and 100 new trains and trams.

I wanted to talk about one of Australia's most important infrastructure projects, the Metro Tunnel. Cast your minds for just one second back to the 1960s and 1970s and imagine what Melbourne would look like without the city loop. I can see the member for Frankston is pondering that question. How would we function, and what would it look like? How would thousands of Victorians get in and out of the city each day without the loop? Then imagine for a second that in the 1970s — —

Ms Victoria — You guys opposed it.

Mr J. BULL — I take up the interjection of the member for Bayswater. I cannot say I was here at the time.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ryall) — Order! Do not take up interjections, member for Sunbury.

Mr J. BULL — Well, there were some opposing what went on yesterday, and I will get to that in a second.

Mr Edbrooke interjected.

Mr J. BULL — I am not going to go back that far, because I was not born then. The *1969 Melbourne Transportation Plan* was adopted, and from 1981

through to 1985 the loop progressively opened. I know the member for Bayswater is very keen to hear that. The problem we see, and the problem we have certainly experienced this week, is the opposition of those opposite.

Just yesterday in the upper house they put forward a motion to block the \$10.9 billion Melbourne Metro rail project. They want to see it abandoned, putting thousands of Victorian jobs at risk. What an utter disgrace. This is nothing but an obstructionist, negative and divisive stunt. It follows a failed attempt by the opposition last year, as we know, to stop the removal of nine of Victoria's worst level crossings on Melbourne's busiest line, again not for jobs, not for safety but for themselves.

Mr Dimopoulos — Politics.

Mr J. BULL — And for politics, member for Oakleigh. After four years of doing nothing, can you believe it? They are now trying to stop the most important infrastructure project in the nation. This is a vital project for the state and vital for my community in Sunbury, with a direct connection of the Sunbury line to the Cranbourne-Pakenham line. We know that this project will free up much-needed space in the city loop to run more trains more often across Melbourne. It will mean less crowding and less waiting, with room for 39 000 more passengers during the morning peak.

Mr Edbrooke — How many?

Mr J. BULL — Thirty-nine thousand more passengers during the peak, member for Frankston. It will not be station 9¾, I inform the member for Broadmeadows; these will be real stations — five of them. There will be real connections where you will be able to actually get off. They will not be mythical; there will not be any wand needed — —

Mr McGuire — You will actually get to your destination.

Mr J. BULL — You will get to your destination. There will be two 9-kilometre tunnels, five new stations — Arden, Parkville, CBD North, CBD South and of course Domain — and direct connections between the Metro Tunnel and of course the city loop. We are not wasting a single day in getting this project done, and those opposite should hang their heads in shame and explain to hardworking Victorians why they refuse to create jobs, as they did for four long, lonely, miserable, dark years in government. We have provided every single dollar to deliver this project, fully funded in the 2016–17 budget, and of course we have signed

the environment effects statement and early works are happening across Melbourne.

There are 100 utilities — water, gas and power, and a massive 120-year-old sewer is being relocated and protected. Construction crews will dig 11 storeys below the ground to construct the new station below Swanston Street. This, as I mentioned earlier, will mean significant disruption to the CBD, but we must do it now and this government is doing it now. A giant shaft will be excavated at City Square near Flinders Street station to build the new CBD South station, and these shafts, as I have heard other members mention this afternoon, will excavate around 2 million cubic metres of solid rock and soil, enough to fill 800 Olympic-size swimming pools, so this is a significant dig.

I want to talk about the job elements of the project for just a minute. This, to me, is not just the congestion-busting element of the project but the number of jobs that this project will create — —

Mr Dimopoulos — It will transform families.

Mr J. BULL — It will transform families, as the member for Oakleigh says. It will put food on people's tables, pay mortgages, upskill new apprentices and do the things this government believes in and that we know Victorians believe in. We know that our Local Jobs First policy will ensure that of this project, 88 per cent of Melbourne Metro will be sourced locally, and I can see that the minister is incredibly excited about this, with more commitments to come on future works. The major projects skills guarantee will create 100 opportunities, including 14 apprentices, five retained, nine new; 62 trainees, 18 retained and 44 new; and 24 engineering cadets, eight retained and 16 new.

When I was growing up I was very fortunate that my father was a surveyor and worked on many of the key water infrastructure projects around Sunbury — Rosslynne, Merrimu — and was lucky enough to work overseas for two years in Indonesia on a very important project in Medan. The family picked up and moved from Sunbury to Medan, where we lived for two years. I often look back at that project and think that it was, in many ways, the making of our family. Dad had an opportunity to learn new skills so that he was able to support his family. If you are to factor in just that experience and multiply it by the close to 5000 jobs that this project will create, I do not understand how — or why, for that matter — you would stand in the way of such an exciting, important project.

A section of Domain Road will close, and St Kilda Road will be reconfigured to just one lane. Certainly, as

I mentioned before, there is significant disruption. The years of disruption though will be nothing compared to the decades of benefits that this project will bring. One of the great elements, I think, of being a member — one of the real highlights in this job — is being able to speak to people at street stalls. I often have a regular street stall out the front of the Sunbury train station. When you are speaking to local residents about the metro project, often they will know of the project but will want a little bit more detail about it. When you go into the fact that from the Sunbury line they will be able to get direct access into the Parkville precinct, direct access into the Melbourne University precinct and direct access straight through the CBD to those new stations, they are excited.

Ms Thomas interjected.

Mr J. BULL — This is absolutely awesome, I agree with the member for Macedon. I have not touched on a whole raft of significant infrastructure projects that we are getting on with and delivering — the Tullamarine widening project, the western distributor project, the Monash upgrade of course, the Western Ring Road upgrade, plus literally hundreds of projects which will create thousands of jobs right across the state.

If we go to jobs, the Victorian unemployment rate was 6 per cent in December 2016 and our participation rate was 65.9 per cent, 1.2 per cent higher than the national average. Victorian unemployment is down 0.6 per cent since this government came to office, and close to 200 000 jobs have been created since we came to government. That is significant. The Andrews government has created over 120 000 full-time jobs since November 2014, and that is what this government is all about; making sure that we continue the pipeline of projects, the pipeline of work, to create jobs, manage congestion and ensure that we continue to be the most livable state in the nation.

I am extremely proud to be able to be part of a government that will, at each and every opportunity, put people first and ensure these projects go ahead, whether they are small projects in a member's electorate or the significant projects — Melbourne Metro, the Tullamarine widening, the western distributor, the Monash upgrade, the Western Ring Road, all of the projects that we know are important for the state and that reduce congestion, deliver jobs and do all the things that we know are important for the people of Victoria.

If I can finish where I started and look back at the legacy of those opposite, it is very disappointing. For four years there was not a single significant

infrastructure project — not one. We have heard about the airport rail. As an important project in my electorate, I am yet to see it. I did see the mythical station. I saw the glossy flyers — they were very nice. I think they said, 'Airport rail is coming'. I do not know what happened to it, but it just fell off the radar.

Those on this side of the house — the member for Oakleigh, the member for Broadmeadows, the member for Melton, the members for Frankston and Macedon, the member for Yuroke, certainly the member for Thomastown and of course the lead minister, the Minister for Industry and Employment, the very hardworking member for Williamstown — are all committed to their electorates, but they are committed to each and every Victorian to make sure that we continue to put people first.

Timber industry

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — I rise to contribute to the grievance debate today. I grieve for the timber workers of East Gippsland, including the 250 employees of the Australian Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH) mill at Heyfield and their families. I will just pick up on the comments from the honourable member for Sunbury, who said that this government is all about jobs and putting people first, and that is exactly what needs now to happen for the people of Heyfield.

As most of the house will know, in January the mill owners announced that the mill will close if a timber supply is not provided for it to remain a viable proposition. How we arrived at this point does require some explanation as it is a situation that the company and the industry should not find themselves in.

In 2014 there was an agreement with ASH for the supply of 150 000 cubic metres of timber for the next 10 years, with the option of another 10 years. Now, just over two years later, the offer from VicForests is 80 000 cubic metres, almost half of the original offer that was made in 2014. When asked why there has been such a massive reduction in what is being offered and where the missing 70 000 cubic metres of timber has gone VicForests has repeatedly stated in the media and in statements that the clear major reason the resource has disappeared is it has been placed into reserve in the past two years, primarily for Leadbeater's possum habitat.

In question time in the upper house yesterday the Minister for Agriculture said that the contract for the supply of 150 000 cubic metres was sitting with the previous Treasurer, who did not sign it. The reality is

that it was signed by the company on 30 October 2014, two business days before caretaker mode took effect. This was clearly not enough time to consider the contract's contents, let alone have the department look over it and prepare a brief. However, it was ready for the new Treasurer to get his teeth into immediately. This could have been done, but it was not.

Back to the issue of timber supply, you do not have to be a Rhodes scholar to work out that if you allow for the continued taking of a timber resource without replacing it, something has to give. You cannot take and not replace and expect there to be no ramifications. However, this taking without replacing has gone on, with the only thing that the minister would say in the interim being that no decisions would be made on timber resource allocation while her timber industry task force was deliberating. The task force that the minister refers to is a group that contains representatives from both environmental groups and the timber industry, put together by this government to determine the future of the timber industry in the state. At the time it was formed we on the side said that it would be very, very difficult for the task force to reach consensus on what are the main points of difference in the industry.

The problem is that the timber industry task force was meant to report back in June 2015 on the way forward but it did not, and the reason was that it could not reach consensus on the main points — surprise, surprise. It then had an extension and reported back months later on 9 September, but its report on 9 September acknowledged that it could still not reach consensus on the major issues. All the time the minister said that she would make no decisions while the task force was deliberating. This is not good enough.

I am now told that a subcommittee of the task force met with the Premier as recently as last week and it advised the Premier that on issues of short-term timber supply it still cannot reach consensus. The problem has been that while the task force has been deliberating, the minister has refused to allow negotiation on timber resource supply agreements. The government has been more than happy, while it has been not negotiating, to allow these areas to be placed into reserve continually.

Again in question time yesterday in the upper house the minister tried to deflect blame by saying it was the previous government that introduced the reserve areas around the confirmed Leadbeater's possum sightings. This was indeed a recommendation of the Independent Leadbeater's Possum Advisory Group. However, the minister's comments are very selective and actually border on being misleading. What she forgot to

mention was that in line with this recommendation it was also agreed that after 200 sightings or the identification of 200 Leadbeater's possum colonies, there would be a review of this measure with a view to ensuring a sustainable timber industry into the future. However, when we hit 200 colonies the government did nothing at all about initiating this review. It did nothing when we hit 250 colonies identified — or 300 or 350 or 400, which was twice the trigger point. In fact yesterday in the Legislative Council the minister said that there have now been over 400 sightings — it is 423 in fact — of the Leadbeater's possum. This government simply has not acted when it should have.

But I want to get back to the ineffective timber industry task force. What has this government's response to its task force not being able to reach consensus been? It said, 'We'll relieve the task force of that duty and we will set up a working party'. So the task force goes and a working party comes in in its place to make a decision on the future of Heyfield. It has been given four weeks to come up with a determination. We hear on the grapevine that the task force is going to look at things like transition to more plantation timber longer term, and that is all good. I am happy for the task force to explore these options — I have no problem with that — but it does not solve the pressing situation of immediate timber supply.

It is true that 1939 regrowth is not an infinite resource and that the timber industry needs to transition. Industry stakeholders in the timber industry have acknowledged this themselves. But we need to solve the issue of short-term supply to secure the jobs that are in danger. We need to bear in mind that plantation timber is presently not there, it is simply not there, to meet this need. The only answer to secure the future of ASH and the other mills facing the same supply concerns is to provide more resource in the short term and replace what has been removed.

Some will say that the timber is not there. This is simply not right. The timber was there two years ago. It has not evaporated into thin air; it has not gone anywhere. What we have seen is the minister allowing timber to be taken out of the industry resource area and placed into reserve without being replaced or, importantly, the promised reviews occurring that were meant to take place after the 200 Leadbeater's possum colonies were identified.

So if the timber industry is there, this is really quite simple. Political will can guarantee the supply that will save these jobs. If the timber is there, political will can do it. The dilemma the government has is whether it will provide the resource allocation to save these jobs or

whether it will live in fear of losing the inner metropolitan seats of Richmond, Brunswick and Northcote by making what will be an unpopular decision in those electorates where the Greens are closing in.

There have been a lot of misconceptions also about the company itself — Australian Sustainable Hardwoods — and I would like to put a few facts on the table. ASH uses 100 per cent of its hardwood from regrowth forests and plantations; 0 per cent comes from old growth. The current annual supply of timber for ASH comes from 6 per cent of the forestry area in Victoria that is available to the industry. The industry only has access to 6 per cent; 94 per cent is either in reserve or inaccessible. So if we start to remove some of that 6 per cent, we need to replace it.

ASH competes predominantly with imported product not domestic competitors. This point is a very important one. People have asked, ‘Why can’t the company make a viable business out of the reduced allocation of 80 000 cubic metres?’. As ASH management has pointed out on a number of occasions, it competes with imports, and to be competitive on price it needs quantity. The company has said that break-even is around 120 000 to 130 000 cubic metres, well above the 80 000 being offered, and that is just to break even without a profit margin.

If ASH goes, the question that arises is: where will the timber come from to meet the increasing demand for timber products that we have in this state? It cannot come from plantation because the plantation is simply not enough. It is not there, it is not in the ground to meet consumer demand. So while the push for some is to go to full plantation timber, it is worth noting a recent report from Poyry Consultants that found that plantation timber is not a direct substitute for native forest timber. It found that if native sawlogs were not available, appearance grade timber would be replaced by imports. So where will the timber supply to ASH come from to save these jobs and save this town? We end up looking at other states, but the availability is not there without impacting on their demand. So, again, we come back to increasing imports.

There have in recent years been some low-grade resources being exported on short-term contracts. This timber has been from spot sales; it was first offered to the domestic market and not taken up. VicForests has since advised that it will now be used domestically, but it is important to note it was low-grade timber, offered to the domestic market first and not taken up. I make that point because there has been some misinformation in some commentary around that timber.

Getting back to the increased imports: Australia currently imports \$4 billion of wood products, much of which comes from the forests of developing nations that do not have the same regulation or oversight as our timber industry here in Victoria. If we reduce our production without plantation replacement, we are only going to drive up these imports even more. I am sick of those predominantly from the city who paint our native timber industry as evil, and portray the industry that employs 21 000 people in Victoria in a bad light — a bad light that is very undeserving. It is wrong. These employees are often the people at the front of our bushfire defences in summer. In fact, a recent article quoted Deloitte Access Economics as saying that fighting bushfires will be much, much harder to do in Victoria without the native timber industry being in operation. We live in one of the most fire-prone areas in the world.

Yes, we do need to increase our plantation input over time, but at the same time a well-managed native timber industry needs to be maintained for a large number of reasons. In some cases, it is the same people who say they want to halt the destruction of rainforests in developing countries who also advocate to kill off our native timber industry. You certainly cannot have both. You cannot say, ‘We want to stop our imported timber. It is decimating other countries. The orangutan is losing its habitat’ — and on and on and on — and then say, ‘We also want to stop our native timber industry in Victoria’. You cannot have it both ways if the plantation timber is not there.

I also want to make some comments on the regional forest agreement (RFA) extension that this government signed off on last week. Whilst this related to East Gippsland, which is out of the area of ASH, there are some pertinent points that I wanted to make. The RFA in its attachments contains the following two comments. It says:

Parties will facilitate industry development through enhanced resource certainty, recognising that a purpose of this agreement is to provide long-term stability of forests and forest industries.

It also says that it will:

Ensure there is no net deterioration in timber production capacity.

This is a document that has been signed by the minister. It was extended by the minister a fortnight ago: ‘no net deterioration in timber production capacity’. So, with the minister having signed this agreement for this extension last week, we now have a situation where VicForests clearly says that the major reason that Australian Sustainable Hardwoods at Heyfield is facing

an uncertain future is because of the additional areas that have been put into reserve without being replaced.

It is in stark contrast to the wording in the document that the minister recently signed off on. How can the minister allow this to happen at Heyfield one week, and then sign a document saying that she supports no net deterioration of timber production capacity? It is saying one thing and doing something else completely.

I have no issues at all with the discussions that are going to go on about the increased use of plantation timber to meet increasing timber demand in this state into the future. They are discussions that absolutely need to go on; there is no doubt about that at all. But we can have, and we should continue to have, a sustainable and well-managed native timber industry. The industry has access to 6 per cent of our forest area in Victoria. Surely we can maintain that and do what we need to do in the other 94 per cent that is available? Political will will change this, and I call on the minister to save these jobs by returning or replacing the areas that have been lost to the industry these past two years while her task force has achieved nothing.

Opposition performance

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) — Today I grieve for the lazy and indolent Liberal and National Party opposition — lazy and indolent. I suppose I should provide a dictionary for them to look up what indolent means, but I will leave that to honourable members.

The honourable member for Ferntree Gully quoted before said that Victorians are angry. Of course they are angry — they are angry because they had four wasted, long years of a government, led by Mr Baillieu and Dr Napthine, who not only did bad things, but in fact did things to make things worse here in Victoria.

They are angry because when the Ombudsman in October 2010 gave our Labor government a report that said that Parkville youth justice centre needed to be fixed up, we started that process to fix it up. We then lost office in November 2010, and the lazy, indolent Liberal-Nationals government did two things: they shelved that report, and they shelved the master planning that had been done in terms of the Parkville youth justice centre to rebuild Parkville, to take out all the defects of the site that is now very, very old — that is, the plaster on the roof, the plaster on the walls, those types of defects.

What did the now Leader of the Opposition do around the cabinet table? He voted it down. What did the Honourable Mary Wooldridge, now in the Council,

who was the minister responsible, do? She voted it down around the cabinet table. They said they knew what the problems were, and they made a conscious decision — a decision that meant that the problems we are having today and that the community is having today continued to exist. Yet they will never take any responsibility. It is all about ‘Oh, this is bad. The community is angry. This is appalling’, but they made the decisions. They were the ones around the cabinet table who sat and twiddled their thumbs for four years. The decisions that they made, the decisions that they took under both Mr Baillieu and Dr Napthine, made things worse for Victorians and the youth justice system.

As soon as we got into government and as soon as the report last May was put in place, we had to restart the master planning process to renew, to build a new youth justice system — a fit-for-purpose youth justice system — here in Victoria, because the youth justice systems that we have at the moment are not working. That is the problem. They will come in here, they will go out on the front steps with the cameras rolling, grinning away and say, ‘Victoria is very angry’. When the spotlight is in their face they will never take responsibility for the actions that they took in government, the actions that they took when the Geoff Shaw government was in operation.

Let us have a look at police. What were their decisions when they were in government? Their decision was to take away resources from the police department, the support staff that were there to support the police, to do some of the menial jobs, to do some of the typing. Where do they go, 200 of them? ‘Bye-bye, see you later. Bye-bye, we’re not going to assist police in this state’. That was their decision.

Remember Jeff Kennett? He got rid of 900 police officers back in 1998–99, and yet that is what that government did just over two years ago. Not only that, what else did they do? They went out there and they undermined the police commissioner at the time, Simon Overland. Remember Sir Ken Jones? ‘Oh, we love Sir Ken Jones’, the person that went out there and undermined the police commissioner. Why did he undermine him? Because he wanted the job. He wanted the job, and yet he was assisted by the government members and by the parliamentary secretary at the time, who undermined Simon Overland. And what are they doing now?

Ms Thomas — They are doing the same thing.

Mr NARDELLA — That is correct, honourable member for Macedon. They are doing the same thing.

They are out there at the moment undermining Victoria Police, undermining Chief Commissioner Ashton and undermining the force, because that is what these weasels do. They get in there, like these grubs that get into timber. It is just a little bit at a time, and eventually the whole thing corrodes, and that is what these people, this opposition, want to do. They want to go in there as little grubs —

Mr Edbrooke — Termites.

Mr NARDELLA — termites — and destroy Victoria Police, and they are continuing to do that now instead of supporting them and instead of supporting us for putting in place 3100 extra police officers.

Listen to them. What did they say just before? ‘Oh, there is nothing happening’. They are angry, the hands go up and they become Italian for a little while. The honourable member for Hawthorn is Italian — —

Ms Thomas — As are you.

Mr NARDELLA — As am I, yes, correct. And they say ‘Oh, we’re angry’. In terms of then supporting the actions that we are taking, they are out there like little termites destroying the fabric of Victoria Police. They are white-anting the police, and they have form on this.

Remember the tragedy of Black Saturday, 2009? Peter Ryan and the National Party came in here and personally blamed Premier Brumby, because he caused those deaths! I was sitting here when the National Party did that. And what did they do today? They did the same thing. They blamed us for the tragic murders — and I call them murders — on Bourke Street. That is what they are doing. Everything is our problem — it is our problem, and we are getting on top of it — and it is our fault that it is occurring! I would love to have their crystal ball that tells us when these things are going to happen so we can stop them.

Ms Spence — A snowball.

Mr NARDELLA — Yes, as the honourable member for Yuroke says, a snowball. But they cannot continue to do this. They cannot continue to undermine Victoria Police and cause fear, as my honourable friend from Oakleigh talked about, in the community. They do this at every opportunity.

So then we get to Dr No. He did not do anything in government other than look after his mates out at Southbank. Dr No, the honourable Leader of the Opposition, comes into this place and in response to everything that we are doing says, ‘No, you’ve got to

stop. No, no, that is not the way to go. No, no, we don’t believe in this project’. With everything that we are doing to create jobs, to create a better transport system and a better road system and to support Victoria Police, it is Dr No.

We have the Dandenong-Cranbourne-Pakenham rail upgrade. We support that. As my friend the honourable member for Oakleigh spoke about, we are getting rid of all those level crossings; they are gone. Those death traps, as my honourable friend from Mordialloc says, are gone. We are getting rid of them. And yet what is the Honourable David Davis in the Legislative Council doing at the moment? He is out there white-anting the whole project, like little termites out there in the wood. He is trying to stop billions and billions of dollars worth of work being undertaken. He is undermining those thousands of jobs, new traineeships and new apprenticeships and the 20 hectares of new space that will be created underneath the rail lines.

The Honourable David Davis is undermining this project, and he does that on a consistent basis. He has supported people in trying to stop it in the Supreme Court in the past, and do you know what he is trying to do now, Speaker? He is trying to get his Liberal mates at Stonnington City Council, where there is a Liberal majority, to become the planning authority for a very small part of this major, \$11 billion project. Why? Because he wants to stop it. He wants to get the South Yarra railway station included — you know \$1 billion is not going to assist anything — and to stop this project and these jobs from being created. It is a shame, but what is his policy position?

What is the policy position of the Liberals and The Nationals? It is to do nothing, because for four years they did nothing. Not one thing. Not one rail crossing, not one road, not one new rail line, not one new carriage. All they did was kowtow. They genuflected to Geoff Shaw: ‘What do we do now, Geoff?’. ‘I’ll tell you later. I’ll let you know’. ‘Can we have a government business program?’. ‘I’ll look after you. I’ll do the right thing by you’. Of course they did.

I just want to touch on one of the great projects that we have finished. There are many projects, but let us talk about the Bayswater level crossing project that we completed. There are some minor works still to occur but essentially it is completed. We had the honourable member for Bayswater, who opposed the plans for removing this level crossing.

An honourable member — Who is present in the house.

Mr NARDELLA — She is present in the house at the moment. She tabled a petition with 1300 signatures and it was reported on in the *Knox Leader* of 8 May 2016. My understanding is that in the original design there was going to be a boom gate left at this level crossing — we are going to remove the level crossing, but hang on, we are going to leave a boom gate. I do not know how that works. I do not know. You either get rid of the level crossing and that gets rid of the boom gates or do it the Liberal way where you get rid of the level crossing and you keep a boom gate. I do not know. I suppose it is one of those mysteries that we have in our lives. Like the Holy Trinity, you have got the level crossing boom gate.

Ms Victoria — On a point of order, Speaker, can I just clarify with the member that he is agreeing this was actually started under the coalition government?

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair does not uphold the point of order.

Mr NARDELLA — I was going to get to that, Speaker, so she has pre-empted me. She opposed this level crossing removal, and in a letter dated January 2017 she backflipped. She now owns this level crossing that she opposed, and I quote:

I am very pleased to have instigated the removal of the level crossings at Mountain Highway and Scoresby Road, along with the much-needed rebuild of Bayswater station.

We do the work and the honourable member for Bayswater takes the credit. It is not a bad thing. For four years she could not take credit for anything. There was nothing happening, the level crossing was congested, but now after we have done the work she can take the credit. So I am happy for the honourable member for Bayswater. I am happy that she can now take the credit for something that we have done, part of the 10 that we have completed. There are 40 to go, and that is why I grieve for the lazy and indolent Liberal-National party opposition.

Question agreed to.

RESOURCES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FRACKING BAN) BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I am delighted to rise to speak on this important piece of legislation today. I could not be prouder than to lead a government that is

putting before this house and indeed the other place — this Parliament — a law to protect our clean, green image, a law to protect our primary producers, our farmers, our exporters, a law to protect our good name and good standing in international markets right across the world, a law to protect jobs, investment and confidence.

But today is not a day for the politicians to be taking credit, although I am sure some opposite will tell you that they were the architects of this bill, that all good things can be traced back to those opposite if only you spend long enough doing that tracing. This is not a day for politicians to be taking credit. This victory — and that is what it is — is a victory for common sense. It is a victory for jobs right throughout Victoria. It is a victory for farmers, for environmentalists, for activists, for ordinary Victorians. It is their victory because they said, ‘We will not stand for being ignored any longer. We want what we value protected. We want what every Victorian should value protected, and we want our voice heard’, and that is exactly what we delivered.

Whether it be farmers and environmentalists from the Otways, from Gippsland, from every part of our state, and not just from regional Victoria — as beautiful and important as regional Victoria is to the soul of our state, the production and economy of our state, our story and our meaning and purpose for the future — many people in metropolitan Melbourne have been just as passionate about these issues. What they have said to me and what my government has said is that there is no splitting the environment and the economy when it comes to these issues. There is no splitting those two things because they are the same thing, and if you are prepared to compromise safety, certainty, our image, the health of our communities and the health of our natural environment, then you will pay a very significant economic price. It is not one that I am prepared to pay. It is not one that regional communities are prepared to pay. It is not one that this government is prepared to pay.

Others have a different view, and when they take a break from trying to claim credit for things they had nothing to do with, they turn around and start bagging those very same things they pretend to have actually delivered. That is not leadership; that is fraud. That is what that is. It is fraud, but the problem for those who operate in that way is that it is all too obvious. Chief among that list are people who would say they are great listeners, they are great people who support primary production, who support the environment, people who used to get around with a leather jacket on, used to get around with a conscience, used to get around with a ‘Don’t you know, you’d better watch out for me,

because I'm right in the middle and I'm going to deal with all the truisms of politics. I can bring appeal from everywhere'. That thesis is not going so well at the moment.

Chief among those who just do not get it on this issue are the Prime Minister and his energy minister, Mr Frydenberg, because they are out there today saying that this legislation to ban unconventional gas extraction for all of our state now and forever is somehow wrong and that we should be ashamed of ourselves, that it is the wrong thing to do. I will say to all members assembled here and for *Hansard* for all time that if anyone in the coalition, state or federal, is in any doubt about the community's views on this issue, I am happy to take them to one farm after another, to one community after another, to one family after another, and hopefully they will hear the message that I have heard — that is, that this precious environment, our precious economy, all that we should cherish and hold dear are not worth gambling with. They are not worth risking, and they are certainly not worth trashing by putting up dangerous wells wherever you can see.

We are having none of that. We are having none of that in our state, and some can sit smugly thinking that they can walk both sides of the street on this issue. No, you cannot. There might be some who will have three positions. They will say it was their work, when of course it was not. They will bag it simultaneously, and then they will cleverly just wave it through the Parliament thinking that will allow their rampant hypocrisy to go unnoticed.

Well, no, I am afraid we are onto you, and so is the community. The fact of the matter in the history of this state, once this bill passes this place and the other, is that it is a Labor government that has delivered this outcome, a Labor government that has listened to communities and a Labor government that proudly says, 'Do not take your time to thank us'. No, thank the communities who have fought for this outcome. Thank the communities who said, 'We will be ignored no longer. A moratorium? Not good enough. We want certainty. We deserve it, and we want a government that will deliver that'. They are the people that should be congratulated. They are the people who should be so very proud as they listen to this debate today and in the days to come.

I want to thank my honourable friends the Minister for Industry and Employment and Minister for Resources, and the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change — the first time we have ever seen those portfolios combined, and what a great job she is doing in relation to those matters — and every member of our

team that has made sure they played their part as champions for their local community and in making sure that I understood. Little did they know that I was getting plenty of representations from lots of good people without the representations they were making, but everyone did their job to make sure that we understood that this was a change that had to be made.

Too much was at stake to allow this to go on, and I just say thank you to everybody in the government for the work that they have done and to the department. The consultations have been unprecedented. Again, he is not here to defend himself, but I will make the point that we did not go and get a certain former federal minister, not well known for consultation, to go out and run a sham consultation. We did it properly. We did not get Balaclava Pete to come out and do the sort of consultation that only he could do. We did not do that.

Mr M. O'Brien interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, are you for this or against it? That is a question for you.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr ANDREWS — Are you for it or against it? That is the question for you, my friend. You can keep interjecting all you want, but my microphone is on and yours is not, so keep it up. The question for you is: are you for this or against it, or are you sitting there pretty well on your own as you are?

Mr M. O'Brien interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — There will be a vote, will there? There will be a vote apparently. I sincerely hope so.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Government members will come to order, and the Premier will continue through the Chair.

Mr ANDREWS — If there is a vote, we will be able to see who is actually for and against protecting our environment, who is for and against protecting our economy and who is for and against listening to our communities and acting in their interest and who, quite frankly, is all over the shop and a disgrace. We will be able to see that. There are no members of the National Party here.

Mr McGuire interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Broadmeadows will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREWS — Interesting. Others can judge those who are serious about these matters and those who are frankly frauds when it comes these matters. I will leave it to the good judgement particularly of regional Victorians. They can pick someone who might qualify as a fraud a long way off. I can tell you that. I think it is fair to say they see those opposite coming. The final point — —

Mr M. O'Brien interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Malvern will come to order.

Mr ANDREWS — ‘Sunshine’, he is calling me. Mate, there would be no sunshine if it was up to you. Heaven knows where we would be. I am very proud to have you interject on me. I am very proud to have the member for Malvern opposed to me, because I reckon if the member for Malvern is against it, it is probably a good thing. They do not come any better than this bill, and I urge all members to support its urgent passage.

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — It is my absolute pleasure to speak today in favour of a permanent ban on fracking and unconventional gas in Victoria. As anyone watching can probably tell, I am only two and a half weeks away from giving birth to my first child, and I am pretty tired. I should probably be at home, but I really wanted to be here today. I had to be here to cast my vote in favour of this bill, and I am really proud to do so.

First and foremost I wanted to acknowledge the incredible work of activists across the state who have made this legislation possible and have put up an absolutely epic fight for a permanent ban on toxic gas fracking and onshore gas in Victoria. So while I have been proud to voice the Greens opposition to onshore gas, this victory really belongs to Lock the Gate, to the Gasfield Free movement, to Friends of the Earth and to all the community groups, farmers and locals across the state who organised tirelessly to protect their towns, their farms, their environment, their water and their health. Without the incredible fight you all put up, this bill would never, ever have come before Parliament.

It is often governments and ministers who get the credit for the decisions that change the future of our state and our country, and I am sure the history books will record their names. No doubt this government deserves some of the credit — they made the right decision in the end — but the lion’s share of the credit on this one really belongs to the people who stood up and who said

no to onshore gas and fracking right from the start, because this was a fight. Make no mistake about it. The government did not just wake up one day and change its mind; it had to be pushed.

In order to make sure there is a record somewhere of how this happened, I would like to give a brief overview of some elements of the campaign. I will not capture it all — it was so big, it was so diverse and I do not even know some of what happened — but I hope to do justice at least to some parts of it.

For many this campaign started a long time ago. I first became aware of it in 2011, when more and more gas companies began sniffing around Victoria, wanting to drill and frack for gas. It is true what the coalition opposition says: the previous Labor government had approved 73 gas licences and 23 fracking permits.

Seeing the devastation that fracking and onshore drilling caused in New South Wales and Queensland, communities here understandably started to get worried, but they also started to get organised. Friends of the Earth, local communities and farmers started what would be a long campaign. They borrowed tactics from New South Wales, such as surveying communities by doorknocking to gauge support or opposition to the gas industry. They got councils to pass motions against gas exploration. They ran tours by prominent activists like Drew Hutton and farmers from interstate who had already been affected by the gas industry. They ran film nights to spread the word and even threatened direct action by farmers and locals in places like Seaspray.

They built a campaign large enough to show the coalition government at the time that gas was not a popular industry, and the coalition government had to respond. Unfortunately, as we have heard, they responded with an inquiry headed by Peter Reith, an inquiry that did not have any farmers or community members or environmentalists as part of it. Unsurprisingly this inquiry recommended opening our state to the gas industry. But the campaign was so strong, and the community was so strong, that they did not let them get away with it, and the coalition realised they needed to do some actual public consultation. This led the coalition to putting in place a temporary moratorium on fracking in 2012.

But as is often the case with wins like this, this win was just temporary. Although the campaign was strong enough to force the coalition government to extend the moratorium until after the 2014 election, the movement knew that in order to get a permanent ban, in order to get permanent protection for our land, our water and

our environment, they had to make this a top election issue, an election issue that no party could ignore. Unfortunately leading into the 2014 election, rather than seeing Labor, the Liberals and The Nationals try to outdo each other to extend the moratorium or to extend the permanency of the ban, both sides looked scarily as if they were going to give in to the fossil fuel industry's demands.

We had the shadow Treasurer, Tim Pallas, speaking to a gas industry conference, saying Labor was doing everything it could to fast-track industry's ability to hunt for more gas in Victoria and that an inquiry was a way to reassure the public of the industry's merits. We had the Liberals and The Nationals flipping and flopping, telling one thing to the community and another to the industry. The situation looked pretty scary for farmers who might lose their prime agricultural land to gas wells, but the threat only motivated them. It motivated communities to campaign harder and stronger, and the movement grew. It consisted of groups across the state, from Portland and Torquay in the west to Mirboo North and Seaspray in the east, united in their view that the onshore gas industry would be toxic to our health, our farmland and our water.

Poowong became the first town to declare itself gas field free after a community survey in 2013, and an amazing 74 towns followed, with most towns showing support for a permanent ban of over 90 per cent. In some places I visited, like Macarthur and Bessiebelle, it was over 97 per cent in favour of a ban — in some places even higher. The campaign used the media effectively and engaged in creative tactics, with one farmer spelling out the words 'ban gas' with his sheep in a lovely YouTube video I encourage everybody to watch. More councils jumped on board, passing motions against onshore gas, following from Colac Otway shire's lead in 2011. The campaign was incredible; the campaign was unstoppable.

While all of this excellent, incredible work was happening in the community, in Parliament my Greens colleagues were keeping up the pressure. My upper house colleague Greg Barber worked with local communities to facilitate letters to Parliament and MPs on the issue. He travelled across the state speaking with those affected, especially those in Nationals-held seats, where the party had strangely gone silent on the issue — and I see there are none of them in the chamber today.

I was proud to see the Greens play a strong part in the campaign, though I am sure that Labor and the coalition will deny we had anything to do with it. In particular

the 2014 state election was a turning point. The Greens candidate for Western Victoria Region, Lloyd Davies, received calls from across the Western District from people who said they had never thought to vote Greens before but who were switching their vote because we were the only party that was actively campaigning against gas and had a clear policy for a permanent ban on onshore gas. Our vote doubled and trebled in small towns across the Western District and in Gippsland — in tiny, tiny rural booths where we never usually got a look-in.

The *Weekly Times* declared onshore gas a top election issue, and the old parties started to catch on. In the lead-up to the 2014 election the then Labor opposition realised they needed to say or do something more or risk losing votes across the state, so they committed to a parliamentary inquiry and public consultation on onshore gas and fracking. When they were elected and the inquiry began, over 1600 people and groups made submissions. It was the largest number of submissions to an inquiry in Parliament in Victoria's history, with the vast, vast majority in favour of a permanent gas ban. I want to thank my staff and volunteers who facilitated almost half of those submissions — more than 700. I would like to commend all of those who worked on the inquiry from all parties, but I particularly name Samantha Dunn from the Legislative Council, our Greens representative on the committee.

This overwhelming support for a gas ban led to a split in the Labor Party on the committee on the issue, with one Labor MP coming out and saying he was in support of an onshore gas industry in Victoria while two others said they were in favour of a permanent ban. Thanks to those who spoke out in favour of a ban.

The Liberal and National parties also seemed a bit confused about their position on gas throughout the inquiry. Although they were the ones who had put forward the moratorium in 2012, in the inquiry their MPs seemed like they were not opposed to an onshore gas industry, particularly a conventional one. The Nationals were often still disappointingly silent. But this changed over the course of three by-elections in 2015 in South-West Coast, in Polwarth and in Gippsland South. With no Labor candidates running, it was a contest between the Liberals and The Nationals, with both sides desperate for progressive Greens and Labor voters preferences to get them over the line.

I was pleased to help local Greens members and local anti-gas activists run campaigns, put ads in local papers, run events, spread the word and hand out anti-gas how-to-vote cards across these electorates. No voter, no

candidate and no party missed the message that in these elections gas was a top issue for voters.

Surprise, surprise, during the Gippsland South campaign The Nationals split from their Liberal colleagues and came out with a stronger position on gas, that of a farmer veto. Ahead of the South-West Coast and Polwarth by-elections, the Liberals eventually adopted a stronger position, realising it was political suicide to do anything else. They announced they wanted to extend the moratorium until 2020, effectively kicking the can down the road a little further.

I have travelled a lot to regional Victoria in my time as an MP, even though I am the member for Melbourne. I am the spokesperson for resources, the environment and climate change, and often with these issues the rubber hits the road in regional Victoria. I was pleased to host two regional tours, bringing farmer David Quince and MP Jeremy Buckingham down from New South Wales to listen to communities, share their success stories and lessons, add national support to the campaign and get some much-needed media attention at the pointy end.

Let us not forget the contribution of those in the city. The Greens commissioned a poll of marginal seats in the inner north of Melbourne and held community events to show the Labor Party that gas was also a vote-changing issue for people in inner-city marginal seats, as well as polls in regional Victoria. The city voters value Victoria's farmland, fresh food, water and environment as much as regional people and they are willing to change their votes away from the Labor Party if it did not have the guts to commit to a permanent ban. The campaign grew and grew and grew. Thousands attended rallies on the steps of Parliament culminating in one glorious day when the community declared the whole of Victoria a gas field-free state. It was all worth it, because now we are about to pass the first permanent ban on fracking of unconventional and coal seam gas and a moratorium on conventional onshore gas. I want to thank the government for listening to the community on this one. It took a long, hard campaign but it finally happened. We got there. Thanks for listening, thanks for taking action.

While it is sad that the Liberal and National parties have caused so much anger in the community by not disclosing how they would vote on this bill until the 11th hour yesterday, I am pleased to see they announced last night that they will vote in favour of it.

Of course we are disappointed that Labor has left the door open to an onshore conventional gas industry in

the future. We know this is harmful; just ask the folks down in Seaspray who are already being affected by it. Putting off the decision about onshore conventional gas until after the next state election is not a good decision. It just creates more uncertainty and stress in the local community. It is also really sad to see reports of the coalition saying that they will look at ways of removing the moratorium on onshore conventional gas in three years time. But we know that this movement is strong and that we can fight that in future too. I want communities to know that the Greens will be there right alongside them in this fight if it comes to that, because we know that if we are going to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, we simply must keep fossil fuels in the ground.

We already have untapped goldmines of renewable energy sources in Victoria that do not come with toxic warning labels. Solar and wind are primed for investment. It has never been clearer that our national energy market needs to turn away from the destructive industries of old like gas and coal and start powering the future with renewables. If we want to protect our fresh food, our water and our farmland, we cannot have an onshore gas industry in Victoria. The two are simply incompatible.

Lastly, I want to send my thoughts to those in other states who are fighting the toxic gas and fossil fuel industries. In New South Wales, in Queensland, in the Northern Territory and in other places there are still serious battles going on. But take heart. You can win. These battles are being fought by farmers, by Greens, by young people and by Indigenous activists. Make no mistake, they will win, because when the community rises up, when environmentalists join with farmers and with locals, when you have communities campaigning locally and allies inside parliaments, it can happen. Take heart. Keep up the good work, and thank you to everyone who made this possible.

Ms WARD (Eltham) — Before I speak on this bill, I would like to congratulate the member for Melbourne on the imminent arrival of her baby and wish her all the best. Congratulations. I wish her all the best with the birth of her baby. May her baby be an excellent sleeper.

It is very hard to talk on a bill straight after the Premier has come down and just gone to town, a Premier who has grown up in a country area, a Premier who knows exactly how important soil and water is to our primary producers, and a Premier who is very happy to sit down and talk with farmers and local communities and find out from them exactly what it is that matters to them and what concerns them. It is absolutely clear that fracking is something that scares them. It makes them

worry, it makes them afraid, it is something they do not want. That is very clear.

We were elected on a platform to put people first, to get things done after four years of nothingness, and this bill does exactly that. It is the result of two years of thorough consultation that included a parliamentary inquiry. Our ministers have consulted widely. There were over 1600 submissions to the inquiry and the overwhelming majority opposed fracking. The community do not want these chemicals injected into our precious soils. Our regional communities and farmers have long campaigned against fracking, and local governments have either opposed fracking or accepted that their communities are deeply uncomfortable and that there is no social licence to operate these operations.

This government has listened, and this bill is the result of listening to the communities that would be affected. We need to give them certainty. They need to know that their farming has a future. They need to know that their townships have futures. They need to know that their small businesses have futures and that they can plan ahead. They need to know that they will have the beautiful pristine environments that they inherited to pass on to generations to come. We want to remove anxiety around health concerns. We want to remove anxiety around economic stability, and there is a reason they are anxious.

The Prime Minister — the man who lives in his emerald tower in Sydney, the Wizard of Oz, President Trumble — knows why they are anxious. On *Q&A* with Tony Jones in 2011, as the then shadow minister for communications and broadband — we know how well the NBN has worked out under his stewardship — he said the following in response to a question from Tony Jones on behalf of a viewer:

The process of fracking inarguably devastates and poisons the local ecology. Why should rural landowners be forced to put up and shut up?

That was the question to Malcolm Turnbull, who responded:

Well, look, I think there is some very, very big issues here with mining and prime agricultural land. We have a lot more coal in Australia and a lot more gas than we have prime agricultural land. Our best agricultural land is very scarce in truth, not just in Australia but globally. The world food task — the task of feeding the world — is getting harder and harder because we are running out of water in many parts of the world, partly because of climate change and also because of the unsustainable extraction of groundwater, particularly in China. China's ability to feed its own population is diminishing. So, you know, we should regard our prime agricultural land as a very high priority. That's the first point.

The second point I want to make is water. When we think about coal seam gas extraction or, indeed, mining that affects groundwater systems, and remember the groundwater is what feeds the rivers, the groundwater is where most of our water in Australia is located, beneath our feet. That can affect water resources hundreds of miles from the location of the coal seam gas bore or, indeed, the mine. So it goes beyond, in answer to your question, not just the interest of the farmer. Because a farmer may agree, he may say, 'Fine, I'll take the money and you knock yourself out. You know, drill, do whatever you like in terms of fracking and coal seam gas extraction on my land' —

But I do not think you would find a farmer who would say that —

but what if that affects the watertable and the groundwater for the neighbours, not just next door but hundreds of miles away? What if lowering the water pressure to get coal seam gas out results in mound springs and bores and rivers, hundreds of miles away, losing their access to water? So the critical thing, I think yes, there are big issues with land access and I have spent time up in the Liverpool plains and sympathetic to the views of the farmers ...

See, he understands. In 2011 he understood. He went on to say:

We are talking about our most precious resource ... our water. We are the driest continent on earth. Now, I can tell you this, if you damage your groundwater sources, if you contaminate aquifers, whether it's by chemicals or whether it's by allowing contaminated water from a coal seam to get into a fresh water aquifer, you cannot fix it. You can't rehabilitate it.

That is exactly right — you cannot. If this pollution gets into our waterways, that is it — our water is dead and our primary producers are dead.

I call on those opposite to get out of their seats and take this up to the federal government, to take it up to the Liberal Party in Canberra and stand up for this state — stand up for our farmers, stand up for our rural communities and stand up for our environment. For far too long they have sat back and let the Liberal Party in Canberra do nothing for this state and in fact damage this state. When we are looking at federal government infrastructure investment in this state that is lower than 9 per cent, when we are looking at Victorians getting around \$92 per person from federal government infrastructure investment whereas in Queensland they are getting over \$360 per person, it is not good enough. Where are those opposite? They are not going to their mates in Canberra — their Liberal Party comrades, their National Party comrades — and standing up for this state. It is about time they did — it is absolutely about time they did. It is time that Malcolm Turnbull and his ministers got out of Gina Rinehart's private jet and started to look after the interests of working Victorians.

A farmer was quoted in the *Bairnsdale Advertiser* a couple of days ago as having said:

It's critical for farmers that a natural resource like water never be compromised.

He went on to say:

It's great to see the government —

the Andrews government —

backing in regional economies, rather than favouring top end industrial business. It shows they're listening to what we have to say, and have made a decision that's in the best interests of those communities.

Nothing truer could be said than that we are not favouring the top end of industrial people, which is exactly what those opposite do and exactly what their comrades in Canberra do — they favour the top end. They favour the big industrialists who are going to go in and destroy our beautiful plains in Gippsland and our plains in western Victoria. Those opposite are not interested in preserving our environment; they are not interested in preserving our waterways. They are interested in looking after their top end mates.

My mum and dad live in Gippsland; they do not want fracking. My brother lives in Gippsland; he does not want fracking. My sister-in-law is in Gippsland; she does not want fracking. My sister-in-law's parents are in Gippsland; they do not want fracking. Her sister lives in Gippsland; she does not want fracking. They do not want it because it damages communities, because it hurts communities.

It is time that those opposite got off their bottoms and did something active and positive for this state. They had four years in which they did nothing. They are having absolutely the same result in opposition. They are not going and knocking on Malcolm Turnbull's door. They are not telling him to stand up for Victorians. They are not telling him to invest in Victorian jobs. As I said earlier today, they are speed bumps. They do not want things to happen in this state, and they will not protect Victorian interests. They are only interested in the top end of town. They are interested in the top end of town and swanning about with Gina Rinehart, going over to Los Angeles and having photos taken with Hollywood celebrities. They are not interested in grassroots Victorian activism and grassroots Victorian interests. They do not want to look after workers; they do not want to look after farmers. It is all about the top end for them, and it is time that those opposite had a good reality check and realised that they really need to represent Victorians and the things that Victorians care about.

Victorians care about their economy. They want an economy that will grow, and it will grow in our regional communities if they are clean communities. This state has a reputation as a primary producer — the wonderful meats, the cheeses, the vegetables that we produce in this state are second to none, and we cannot afford that reputation to be damaged in any way. For these guys to be playing games with that, for these guys to not decide until the final minute how they were going to vote on this legislation, shows how lazy they are and how little they really care about this issue, how little they really care about what happens around the kitchen tables of our farming communities and in small businesses in our regional and rural towns — knowing what they are talking about and what they care about — because if they did they would have been banging on about this issue for years. This legislation would already have been enacted. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) — I rise to speak on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016 and reiterate statements I have been making for many years prior to joining this place. Our agricultural assets are significant and need to be respected and the value they provide our nation understood. Farming provides the foundation of the South-West Coast economy. Farmers are knowledgeable and skilled food producers who have been caring for the environment, some for generations and others, like my husband and me, for one generation, but all farmers want to pass on the land to the next generation in good condition.

Australian farmers pride themselves on producing a product that is in demand all over the world because of quality, taste and safety. Members of my community are strong in their conviction about the importance of agriculture. The message 'no fracking' has been received loud and clear. Farmers understand risk and take calculated risks every day, but the risk that fracking presents is not one my community wishes to take.

My husband and I bought our first dairy farm 19 years ago and have gone on to invest in more land. We are now a large operation, and our eldest son, Tom, took over the management of the farm last year. Sustainability and succession are not new words to farmers. We understand that our farm business is successful because we have rich, fertile land where our cattle can graze on clean, uncompromised pastures. The milk we produce in South-West Coast and across Victoria is of world-class quality, and the products made from that milk are in demand across the world because international markets know that anything that

comes from Australia is going to be high quality and free from risk. That is a reputation we as a nation cannot afford to lose and a reputation that I worked hard to strengthen as a dairy representative on the national body, the Australian Dairy Farmers board, as the chairman of the markets, trade and value chain policy advisory group.

My electorate covers the rich agricultural lands from Warrnambool through to the South Australian border. During my campaign to join this place, I was told by many people that they felt there was not enough evidence for them to be convinced that fracking is safe. They felt that the environment would be compromised and the ability for farmers to continue to produce clean, green products that are in demand globally would be destroyed. Their message was clear: no fracking. The community appreciates the result of this legislation.

It is good to see farmers finally being listened to, but it cannot stop there. To truly value the farming economy, we need to invest in finding a solution to rising costs of doing business. There is a food and fibre plan developed by the Great South Coast Group that Labor could fund tomorrow, and that would assist in improving the growth and profit opportunities for farmers. Many of the costs are imposed domestically. To assist farmers to produce food, we must develop policies that enable farming. Banning fracking is one step. The next issue the government needs to address is the skyrocketing power prices, or we will not be part of the countries that produce food for export like we do now. We may even compromise our ability to feed our own. Farmers will not keep farming if they cannot make a profit.

The world is about to embark on the greatest challenge ever faced by mankind. The equilibrium between supply and demand of food produced and food required is going out of sync. It is predicted that shortly demand will outstrip supply. There is a problem facing the world, the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced. In the next 50 years we will be required to produce the same amount of food that has been produced for the last 500 years by the collective global community.

My electorate has huge advantages which will enable it to be part of this challenge. It already is the leading milk producer in the country, with the ability for further growth. We also have huge water advantages — not only secure rainfall, but uncompromised underground water. South-West Coast successfully produces so many agricultural products: beef, lamb, seafood, grain, fibre and timber. The ability for increased productivity with the right policies to facilitate this is enormous. The food and fibre plan would assist in developing these

policies further. Each of these commodities, though, is based around having access to clean, uncompromised water, and there is huge potential for our region to become a food bowl for Asia. Again, we cannot do anything to jeopardise this.

Whilst the government has been quick to talk this bill up as showing support for farmers, the reality is that there are a number of other issues that it could address to truly help farmers, like the issues of affordable energy and energy supply. This government has, without adequate planning and forethought, closed Hazelwood overnight, rather than in a staged process. The result is market chaos. Milk processors are already concerned there will not be enough baseload power to dry milk into powder for export. I have quotes that a dairy business has supplied me that show power prices have skyrocketed by 300 per cent — not 4 per cent, as claimed by this government, but 300 per cent. This is a farming business. The cost cannot be passed on, and the farmer will just be sent further into desperation. Other businesses, like abalone farming businesses, which also cannot pass on costs, are reporting to me enormous increases in their power costs.

This government claims it had nothing to do with Hazelwood closing, but if you put a \$252 million tax on a business, you are sending them a clear message that you are not welcome here, and that is why Engie is leaving. With Hazelwood's closure looming, I also have fears that the grid will lose the cheap baseload energy, a base load that cannot be supplied at this time by renewable energy alone in a cost-effective and reliable way. Renewables are important, and South-West Coast can play a major role in the expansion of renewable energy with the proven prowess in this field of Keppel Prince in our electorate, but that does not detract from the fact that, even under this government's renewable energy target that it predicts for 2040, coal will still provide 60 per cent of Victoria's energy needs.

So whilst renewable energy needs to form part of the mix, the technology and science are not up to a standard where energy needs can be met efficiently through renewable energy methods. The government must invest more money in research so that renewable energy can become more efficient and cost effective and technologies can be improved. Until such time as renewable energy is efficient enough to provide a suitable base load, coal will need to form part of the energy generation mix. We cannot simply just stop using it. We must look at how it can be used in a more environmentally friendly way that meets our social obligations.

If energy supply is not reliable and is a massive cost burden, large businesses will be forced to send their business offshore to countries where the environment is not as highly valued and there are less stringent guidelines. While that will make Australia's and Victoria's emission rates look good, it is simply shifting the problem elsewhere. That is what would have happened if Alcoa in Portland had closed. Aluminium would still have been made, because it is in demand, but probably in a country that does not prioritise the environment nor invest in the research to continue to improve like we do in Australia. I am pleased it has been supported and will stay here in Victoria, where environmental concerns are taken seriously.

Across the chamber members are trying to claim they support farmers, but what are they doing to ensure that farmers have access to power? Many farmers in South-West Coast have no access to three-phase power. They rely on archaic infrastructure, which is holding back the industry.

I am pleased fracking is banned, but I cannot help but feel it is rather hypocritical of Labor to be saying that we on this side have been silent on this issue when the previous Labor government issued 73 licences for unconventional gas exploration and approved 23 fracking operations without public consultation. No fracking has ever occurred under a Victorian Liberal-Nationals government.

My position on this is one I have held for many, many years. Victoria's reputation as a clean food producer is far too important to my electorate and the state's future prosperity to be damaged. But supporting farmers to do business goes much further than the one bill, and I hope this government gets on with the job of doing the necessary work to address the policies to enable farming and fixes the rising costs of power that it has caused.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — What a pleasure it is today to rise to speak on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. Acting Speaker, in case you have not yet cottoned on, the Andrews Labor government is a government that is delivering on every single one of its election commitments, so it is a real delight to be in this house today in the first sitting week of 2017 to speak on this bill and ensure that we are giving clarity and certainty to farmers and industry across Victoria when it comes to this most important issue.

I did want to say what a delight it was to have the Premier in the house to speak on this bill and to make it

very clear again that fundamental to the way this government does business is listening to the community of Victoria. We make it our business to consult, to understand and to take action. This is a historic bill. It is great to hear it being debated today.

I also wanted to take note of the Premier's affirmation of the community and the community leadership in delivering into the house today this bill to ban fracking. If it were not for community campaigners, that sustained community campaign and a government that listened and showed leadership in this area, we would not be where we are today. When we went to the people in 2014 we had promised that we would have a parliamentary inquiry into onshore unconventional gas, and we delivered on that promise. That inquiry received a massive number of submissions — more than 1600 — and I might say, rather proudly, including from people from my own electorate of Macedon. What did those submissions overwhelmingly say? They said they wanted to see a permanent ban on fracking here in the state of Victoria in order to protect that most precious resource that we have — clean and green agricultural land and a food and fibre industry that is second to none. That is what this bill does.

I want to note that the committee was unable to reach consensus. Despite what we have heard from some of those on the other side of the house today, let us be clear. When they had an opportunity with the inquiry, they were not forthcoming with their support for this ban — in fact there were minority reports against a permanent ban. I want to take this opportunity to commend, as I said, those community campaigners; the Minister for Resources and former Minister for Resources for the work they have done; and in particular Harriet Shing and Shaun Leane in the other place for the work that they did on the inquiry.

I speak today on behalf of the beef farmers, sheep farmers, poultry farmers, winemakers and vegetable growers in my electorate and every constituent who has campaigned to see this permanent ban on fracking made law in this chamber, and we will be doing that today. This important legislation, as I said, will ban fracking for good. It could only be done by a government that has the foresight and the will to give the certainty that business, industry, farmers and the community need. It is very, very important that we protect our international reputation for high-quality and clean produce. I note that the previous speaker, the member for South-West Coast, pointed to the importance of this. Make no mistake, any threat to this reputation is a threat to jobs.

The importance of this reputation was brought home to me so clearly on a trip that I made to China last year. The cab drivers there had a bit of a joke about blue skies, that you would only see a blue sky in China if there was either an APEC meeting or the Olympics going on, because they closed down industry for days ahead of those events in order to ensure blue skies. That trip brought home to me how important it is that we protect our land for food production. I am very mindful of that as I represent a peri-urban seat where the land is under constant pressure, yet we have some very high quality land that produces some of the best quality horticultural product you will see in the world.

This is, as I said, a national first. The Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016 will permanently ban all onshore unconventional gas exploration and development, including hydraulic fracturing — fracking — and coal seam gas and extend the moratorium on conventional onshore gas exploration and development to 30 June 2020.

I am very glad to see that the Liberals and The Nationals have indicated that they will not oppose the bill. It has taken them a while to get there. What were they doing? The people of my electorate are right to ask, ‘What have the Liberal and National upper house members for Northern Victoria Region been doing over their summer break?’. I will tell you. They took a very, very long break; they took an exceedingly long break. Over the summer months I tried, via the local paper and via social media, to get the National Party member for northern Victoria, Luke O’Sullivan, to make some statement, to give us a commitment, to let the people of his electorate know where he stood on this issue, but what did I get? I got complete silence, because The Nationals were too frightened to take a stand on this issue. They had to wait until they got their orders from the state Liberal Party. Indeed it would appear that it was not until last night that they were clear that they were allowed to go out and say they supported a ban on fracking, because in my electorate we heard nothing from the National Party on this important issue.

Of course it was not just in my electorate that this silence from the National Party was noticed. I did note in the *Weekly Times* of 25 January this year an article by Gerard Deery, a wool grower from Bengworden in the member for Gippsland South’s electorate. This is what he had to say back on 25 January:

It is 64 days since the state government introduced legislation to permanently ban the exploration and development of all onshore unconventional gas in Victoria, including fracking and coal seam gas.

Sixty-four days of deafening silence from the National Party on how it intends to vote on this legislation next month.

It is not good enough for a political party that purports to represent the interests of farmers in this state to be absent without leave on the most important issue that we have debated in this house that impacts directly on the livelihood of farmers in this state. Once again they have shown themselves to be the cowards they are when it comes to standing up for the people, as I said, that they purport to represent.

I might reflect on the furore last year about Luke O’Sullivan in the Legislative Council and some of the challenges he faced taking up his seat in the other place. I might say this: I said at the time that no-one had noticed that Northern Victoria Region was without its National Party representative, and I can tell you right now that Northern Victoria Region remains confused as to what representation, if any, it has in these two chambers from the National Party. Where is Luke O’Sullivan? That is the question on the lips of people in my electorate. They have never seen him. They have never heard a peep from him. He will not stand up for farming communities. The Labor Party — the Andrews Labor government — has shown it is the only party that will stand up and protect our farmland in this place. This is a great bill. It is a historic bill. I am very proud to support it.

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) — I rise to speak this afternoon on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. I know this afternoon and today there are people and groups right across my electorate of Polwarth, taking in the hinterland of the Otways, along the coast, throughout Timboon, Apollo Bay, Anglesea, Deans Marsh and a whole raft of communities, that will welcome the fact that the Victorian Parliament has made a clear position on the fracking issue and unconventional gas exploration. It has been a concern of people that there have not been enough resources, enough expertise and enough information given out to the community about the safety, operation and otherwise of that type of mining and that type of natural resource extraction.

It concerns me that, on one hand, our friends across the way, speaker after speaker, have gotten up from the comfort of their apartment block in Melbourne or their inner urban electorate and professed great love for and attribution to country communities because they know best — ‘Once again it is perfectly fine for us to implement this ban, and we know best because we’re doing it for the farmers’ — while in the same breath we have a Minister for Water, for example, who is quite happy to pump endless amounts of water out for our

second-largest city here in Victoria, the city of Geelong, which from time to time almost relies solely on bore fields being pumped senseless in the Gerangamete area, and it is okay that they do that! They are not listening too hard to the farmers in that area that tell us that their water wells are drying up, that their dams will not fill, that Boundary Creek dries up and that we have fish kills, as we did multiple times that year.

Strangely, with that type of environmental problem, when it affects the lifestyles of those in Geelong, the member for Bellarine and the member for Geelong say, 'We don't worry too much about what farmers want then or what's needed for country communities at that point. No, we want to keep the fountains flowing in Geelong, and we want to keep industry going in Geelong. That's okay. We find plenty of time for that, and when we want to we sit there and work off and run a whole scare campaign on what gas is'.

Some of the things we have heard today are things such as gas and farming not being compatible; you cannot have them together. I beg to differ. There are lots of farms right across Victoria that have gas wells on them. As strange as it might seem, much of the gas we access from Bass Strait in fact comes from a well that is drilled onshore but goes offshore. We are perfectly happy with that. We know that we can drill a hole in the ground and that we can extract gas. Both sides of this house had agreed that a moratorium was required so that enough information could be gathered and put together so that we could go back to the Victorian community and tell them that these things can be safe and viable and that we can have an economic future here in Victoria, but we have not heard anything from this government about resources it might be going to allocate so that we can make sure that scientific work is being done and so we can make sure that the information is there.

What we have heard today, though, is how horrible gas exploration is — how evil it is. We have not heard that 60 or 70 per cent of every single household in the state of Victoria has gas hot water. They have gas central heating. People have gas in their daily lives. Every single household, just about, across the state of Victoria wakes up every morning and goes 'click' and turns on gas. We need gas in this state of Victoria, and the attitude and the rhetoric we have had across the other side shows no understanding. They say they are here for the workers of Victoria —

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr RIORDAN — Yes, you are quite right, member for Mordialloc. I know about this topic because I gladly

and proudly worked in this industry for 25 years before I joined this house, so I know it in detail. Obviously many on the other side of this house have no idea. I know what it is like when people's gas bottle runs out. I know what it is like. I got the phone call. For 25 years I would get phone calls from people whose gas connection was not working.

People in the state understand what it is like not to have gas. A responsible government does not sit there and start trying to pretend black is white and white is black and that gas is not important in the state. A responsible government does not sit here and say, 'We cannot have it'. My electorate, for example, will have, shortly, the most amount of wind farms, which is a great initiative. It shows the transition that we need to make to move to a new low-emission economy. That is great, but guess what? A wind farm does not work by itself; it needs an instant backup. Where do we think the instant backup for a wind farm comes from?

It is okay in Denmark, because we have lots of people telling us about the wind farms in Denmark and Portugal. They have got the nuclear power plants they plug in next door from France and other countries, but here in Victoria — here in Australia — we do not have that advantage. We are flat out on the other side of this house, and the government of the day is closing down coal because the votes in Melbourne and Richmond are more important than the jobs in the Latrobe Valley or in fact the viability of industry in this state. 'No', they go, 'we don't want that either', but what are we going to have? A whole bunch of wind farms? Has anyone on that side, for example, thought how many square kilometres completely covering the agricultural lands of Victoria we would need if we were not going to have gas backup for our wind farms, for example? Gas does that. That is the transition technology. That is the transition fuel that we need to make many of these renewable products.

For heaven's sake, we live in the coldest mainland state on this wonderful continent of Australia. Let us get something very straight that people in Victoria understand but this government certainly does not, and that is that when you are in the coldest state for six months of the year, what do people — elderly people, frail people, sick people — need? They need good, reliable energy. They need good, reliable heat. They need a good, reliable backup. It is all very well to say, 'We'll build wonderful 5-star and 6-star energy-efficient houses'. That is great if you are just about to fork out \$300 000 or \$400 000 for a new house.

What if you are an elderly retired pensioner in an old commission home in Broadmeadows or you are in one in the backblocks of my hometown in Colac? You do not have the luxury of retrofitting your house with 5-star rated windows and everything else. There is a reality about the way that people live in this state. Gas and the regular and reliable supply of gas is important, so we can be very happy today to see that the fracking ban has been brought in; that will definitely be music to many, many people's ears in my electorate. Many of those same people were thrilled in 2010 when the coalition government brought in a policy of bringing natural gas to country towns.

People in country towns and country communities are not all sitting on farms; they are in small towns and small communities, and they pay very, very big dollars to have gas and energy supplied to their homes. Natural gas is one option that was a great godsend to communities like Camperdown, Colac, Bannockburn, Terang and Winchelsea. Towns right across my electorate had an opportunity to benefit, to make them more livable and to make them communities that people would want to come to live in, because one of the things stopping those towns from expanding was the fact that they did not have affordable, reliable, accessible energy.

Then of course we move to the job opportunities that a good, strong gas policy in a state like Victoria delivers. Why do you think a company like Fonterra develops and spends the millions it does on a dairy factory in a small country town like Cobden? It is because it has access to natural gas. It knows that you cannot have 80 per cent of the milk in my electorate coming through if it cannot dry it, turn it into powder and export it. That is what gas does.

Gas provides an opportunity in the town of Camperdown, where there are currently people setting up the brand Camperdown Dairy, which specialises in organic farms. It is great for agriculture and it is great for the future. It is going to be a great premium brand for Victoria to export into China, the USA and across South-East Asia. But guess what? It cannot set up in Camperdown if it does not access to gas. We need access to gas.

By 2020 when the moratorium is lifted, if this government has its way, it will not have invested in the necessary science and research to make sure the community understands it. It will not have invested in the resources that will make sure that a company like Camperdown Dairy will know that it has security of gas supply.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr RIORDAN — I am talking about what is important to Victorians and regional and country Victorians. Unlike many of you who have made much of the fact that you have put on a pair of gumboots and visited the country, I live in the country. I have been in the country and I live with country people. I know what is important to them, and sitting here and grandstanding in Spring Street about closing up opportunities for people in country towns is not something the government ought be proud of. In fact, this side of the house ought be proud of its stance. It has brought gas to country communities through its 2010 program. It has worked actively to encourage it, and it will be a sad day in Victoria when we get to 2020 and will have had 10 years without any research or development into the provision of gas for the future in Victoria.

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — It is a great privilege to be able to join the debate on this historic piece of legislation before us today. I want to commend both the Minister for Industry and Employment and the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change for the great work that they have done and also the members of the upper house inquiry on producing quite an informative report on this important issue. It gave many people around the state the opportunity to voice their opinions. Some 1600 submissions were lodged to that upper house inquiry. The majority were opposed to the practice of fracking throughout Victoria, and one can understand why.

We have heard about that today — the great value of our agriculture and primary production and our ability to export food that is seen around the world as a quality, clean, green product. Particularly as there is a growing middle class in the Asian region, to be able to use that reputation as a quality producer and export into those markets is something that should not be put at risk. Certainly this piece of legislation says very clearly that the government will not allow that reputation to be put at risk, because it understands the importance of our environment as it relates to our economy and the ability to deliver jobs particularly in the food sector.

Those opposite seem to be critical of some of us on this side of the house who do not live in the country. I do not, but many of my colleagues do. I live in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. This piece of legislation is just as important for the northern suburbs of Melbourne as it is for country Victoria, because we in the northern suburbs are looking to food and beverage production as a key sector to drive jobs growth into the future. We are currently meeting the challenge of the winding down of the auto industry, and

manufacturing jobs in some areas are leaving the northern suburbs.

There are lots of success stories, and one of the areas we want to focus on in the northern suburbs is the food and beverage sector and being able to turn our great produce from our country cousins into great product. We have great tertiary institutions that focus on food production in the northern suburbs — RMIT University and La Trobe University — access to the northern suburbs food bowl up the Hume Highway and some great companies including Mission Foods, Nestlé and others located right in the northern suburbs.

There is this great synergy for the northern suburbs to capitalise on that growth. In the northern suburbs of Melbourne we know this ban on fracking, the protection of our reputation as a food producer and being able to export produce to other parts of the world that want that clean, green produce — those clean quality products — can be used to our advantage. This is a great piece of legislation, not just for country Victoria but for all of Victoria.

The Northern Melbourne RDA, the original development authority and NORTH Link, which is an economic development body for the northern suburbs, produced a report in 2014 that I have cited in this place a number of times. It talks about the benefit of the food and beverage sector in the northern suburbs. They predict that with the right support and investment that sector can grow in the northern suburbs from a turnover of some \$2.6 billion to \$5 billion in 10 years. That means the growth of some 7000 additional jobs with the conditions being right. That is a massive boost for the northern suburbs, an area that has been hit by a number of changes in the economy.

Existing businesses in the northern suburbs employ over 10 000 workers, so already many people in the northern suburbs rely on not just the big food manufacturers but also on quite a large number of small to medium size enterprises that are in many ways punching above their weight in exporting around the world. So the question is: if there is this risk to our reputation, risk to industry and risk to the environment on fracking, why is it that the federal government in particular, and some of those opposite in days gone past, have been so supportive of fracking in this state? Even as late as today the Prime Minister wildly criticised our government — and I am assuming by implication his own counterparts on the other side of the house — for taking this step. You would ask yourself: is it in the interests of securing gas supply?

The parliamentary committee inquiry report into gas supply cites a map supplied by Geoscience Australia and the Bureau of Resource & Energy Economics, 2014 figures I acknowledge, and shows that the Otway, Bass and Gippsland basins have remaining stores that are greater than what has been produced from those basins in the 40-something years that they have been in operation. To suggest that there is a shortage of gas in those basins I think is just wrong.

You want to ask yourself: why have gas prices gone up? And this is a real issue; gas prices going up is a real issue. It is an issue for consumers and it is an issue for businesses. When you talk to businesses — particularly, for example, in the food sector but in other areas where they use a lot of gas — they talk about the impact of this on their business. This is not an issue that affects Victoria alone; it is an issue that is affecting all of Australia. There is a very simple reason for it. The reason is that the federal government has allowed the export into Asia of liquefied natural gas, predominantly from plants in Queensland, so we have seen the price of gas, which used to be tied to contracts here in Victoria, now linked to the global price.

Victorian businesses and consumers have copped it in the neck from the Turnbull government because it decided to export our gas from the eastern seaboard to Asia. Effectively Malcolm Turnbull and his mates have said to the big multinationals, ‘You can export your gas overseas’. I think there is something like two times as much gas being exported now into Asia from Australia as the eastern seaboard currently uses, so a massive amount of gas is being exported, with massive profits of billions of dollars going to those multinationals while Victorian consumers and businesses have to pay much higher prices.

It has been estimated — and the parliamentary committee inquiry heard these figures — that gas prices could rise from the time of that inquiry over a ten-year period by as much as two to three times. This is a really serious threat to our economy and to the ability of households to manage their budgets, all because of a decision by the federal government to roll over to big companies that wanted to make massive profits by exporting their liquefied natural gas.

I actually agree with the member for Polwarth, who made his contribution before me, that gas is important. We do need a stable, strong supply of gas, and we do need it to be affordable. It has been a bedrock of Victorian industry for a long time, and also — I think it is a fact — Victorian households are the largest consumers of gas of all of the Australian states because it has been cheap and reliable as a source of heating,

cooking and so on. You need to protect that. The big threat to that is the federal government's decision to export our gas overseas. I think there is an argument for us — —

Mr D. O'Brien — Why would you lie about it? It has been going on for 10 years in Queensland.

Mr BROOKS — Those opposite are questioning this. I refer members opposite to the *Energy White Paper*, produced by the federal government in 2015. It says under 'Gas: Price trends':

Australia's gas markets are changing rapidly. The eastern Australian market, until now a domestic market, has commenced exports of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Supply now needs to meet domestic and international demand and domestic prices are naturally moving toward parity with higher international prices.

What we have seen from Malcolm Turnbull in recent times has been his attempt to deflect attention from his decision to export natural gas to this debate on fracking, to somehow suggest that locking up gas means that prices are going up. This is exactly what is happening, and the federal government will do anything that it can to deflect from the truth of this matter.

As I said at the beginning of my contribution, this is a very important issue, one of gas supply to Victoria. I know in our household gas prices have gone up, not just related to having teenagers taking longer showers all the time. Certainly, I think Victorians are seeing their gas bills rise. They want to know why those gas bills are rising, and they should look very carefully at the decisions the federal government has made to export our gas overseas.

Mr M. O'Brien — You shut down Hazelwood!

Mr BROOKS — Hazelwood does not produce gas. The last time I checked they were not a gas producer, member for Malvern. The member for Malvern should be aware this is a gas debate, not an electricity debate. The member for Malvern is confusing a number of sectors here. He has flip-flopped on this issue a number of times.

This is a great bill. It is one that protects our reputation as a clean, green producer of produce. It benefits agriculture. It benefits the northern suburbs of Melbourne, and I commend it to the house.

Mr D. O'Brien (Gippsland South) — I am pleased to rise to speak on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. I am proud to stand here as a Nationals MP, a party that has had a consistent position on this issue from the very start.

Ms Edwards interjected.

Mr D. O'Brien — I hear the laughter opposite, and I heard the comments of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change before, which were absolutely laughable in their suggestion that we have been flip-flopping on this issue. I was actually looking back into the history, and we have a very good record here. In 2012 it was the Liberal-Nationals coalition that introduced the moratorium on fracking in this state. In 2013 we extended the moratorium.

I was looking up a report in the *Age* from that time. When I hear those laughing about our consistent position, I wish to quote from that article, from when that was announced. It was from Friends of the Earth praising The Nationals leader and my predecessor, Peter Ryan, for his advocacy on this issue. Now, he may not welcome the praise from the Friends of the Earth, but those opposite cannot deny that that demonstrates the consistency we have had on this side.

So we extended the moratorium in 2013, and in 2014 we did what we said we were going to do and we banned benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene chemicals in the use of this industry. We established an extensive community consultation exercise, and I know people from right across the state had the opportunity in many towns and cities around the state to go in and hear about the issues, to express their concerns. There were a series of drop-in centres, where experts in the field were able to explain things to people. I went to a couple of those, and that was where I got a very clear message from a number of people in relation to their concerns about this industry.

Finally, with the commonwealth we started the detailed water and groundwater studies that were important to get a baseline understanding about groundwater throughout this state. I will turn to the government's form on this. I mentioned groundwater — I always love these debates when the Labor Party comes in and says how much it is the friend of the farmer and how much it understands natural resource use. I might just caution or provide a bit of advice to the member for Eltham, though: if you are talking about how important groundwater is, it is an 'aquifer', it is not an 'aqua-fire'. So when you say you are the expert and you understand all this, it is an 'aquifer', not an 'aqua-fire'. It does harm your credibility when you are not actually able to identify a fairly important term in this particular debate.

Labor is a very late convert to this issue, as mentioned by others before. Let us not forget the scorecard of fracking approvals in the state: 22 to the Labor Party,

zero to the Liberals and Nationals. Seventy-three exploration licences were approved by those on the other side in their last term of government. Then we come to now: in 2014 the now government committed, in the lead-up to the election, to a parliamentary inquiry into this issue. That was fine; it was a good idea. Then they gave the inquiry to an upper house committee — an upper house committee that does not have the resources of the joint house committees, which should have been given the job and the opportunity to really go into this. Those on the committee have said that they did not get the opportunity to really examine the details, and it was people like the member for Lowan and myself who had to fight pretty hard to even get that committee to come out to our electorates. We did get them to Sale and other parts of the state, but it was very difficult to do that because the government had not given that committee the necessary resources.

We hear members of the Labor Party saying that they are concerned for farmers. Let us be real here about what they are concerned about. The reason this is happening from a government perspective is about the Greens campaigning on this. It is not about Labor's concern for people in my electorate of Gippsland South; it is about concern for the electorates of Northcote, Brunswick and Richmond. That is what it is all about. Greg Barber, the member for Melbourne behind me and others have got this government exactly where they want them. They just push and prod and get the government out of sight and get them wedged, and then they come out and do something like this, not because of great concern for our farmers but because of concern for what the Greens might be doing on the left flank of the Labor Party. So that is why the government has acted.

Back to my electorate. There is no doubt that there is strong opposition in my electorate to fracking and to this industry. It is not unanimous, I might add — there are some who support the industry and want to give it a go — but it is very strong. I have sat at kitchen tables, I have been to saleyards and I have sat in pubs with some of the people in the gallery today, and I acknowledge the conversations I have had with them. They have been robust discussions because we did not always agree on everything, but we have had very good discussions, and I have listened. At Seaspray one day I turned up for a scheduled mobile electorate visit to find about 25 people there waiting for me, and guess what they wanted to discuss? So we had a very robust discussion, and I was as honest as I could be with those people on the day, and they were very honest with me. Today I will be voting on what I heard from my constituents.

As an ex-CEO of the National Irrigators Council I had some limited involvement in this industry in northern New South Wales and Queensland. I very rarely agree with former Labor premiers, but Anna Bligh at the time said that this debate was one of the worst debates in Australian history, and to some degree I agree with her. I have to say that some of the claims made by some of the Lock the Gate activists and other activists have been over the top.

There is a bit of a notion that extractive industries and farming cannot coexist. I do not agree with that. Gippsland is a good case where we have an extensive offshore industry which comes onshore at Longford in my electorate, and we also have of course the Latrobe Valley with its massive open-cut mines. We have been able to coexist with mining and gas extraction. However, onshore gas and unconventional gas — fracking in particular — are a very different beast altogether.

There are mixed views in Queensland and New South Wales. I have dealt with many of the farmers there in my time and have spoken to some of them since I have been in the Parliament here. There are some farmers that are supportive — there are some that do very well out of access payments and are quite happy to have the wells on their properties — but very clearly there are also some that vehemently oppose the industry and are very concerned about what it will do.

With respect to some of those areas which are, shall we say, extensive grazing lands, Gippsland is very different. It would be extremely difficult to imagine gas wells on the closely settled rolling green hills, particularly in South Gippsland. It is scenic and closely settled, and I am not sure that such an industry would work in my part of the state. It would probably be tricky to mine, and from what I have heard from various industry players and also from the Auditor-General's report and the parliamentary inquiry, there is, in all likelihood, no coal seam gas in the South Gippsland hills anyway. I acknowledge there probably is elsewhere. In many parts of my electorate I think there has been a lot of anxiety for no reason, because I do not believe that there is actually gas in those areas anyway. This bill will remove that anxiety, and that will be a good thing.

I acknowledge there is some gas that has been found and identified at Seaspray, and I acknowledge that there are comments in the *Australian* this morning about how much there is and that we should be developing that resource. To those companies I say: you have had the licence for 13 years, and if you have not developed it, I

am a little bit sceptical now seeing you squealing and saying that we should be using this.

I have a message for industry here: you have done a very poor job. If you are there to advocate for your industry and your companies, you have not done a very good job. Apart from Lakes Oil, no-one in the industry has made a genuine and serious attempt to engage with the community. On conventional onshore gas, with this bill extending the moratorium to 2020, industry has the next three years to have that conversation. They are a long way behind, and they really should reflect on that before they criticise the communities and before they criticise the MPs who are here supporting this ban today.

There are some in the industry, and there will be others, that will be critical of this ban and our position, including some in the commonwealth government, but I say there are genuine concerns for agriculture. Irrespective of what you might think about poisons and all sorts of things, we have already seen it in Gippsland. We saw it in the Yarram area, where the offshore extraction of oil and gas in Bass Strait and also the pumping of the aquifers in the Latrobe Valley coalmines have had an impact. We have seen farmers have significant impacts on their bores where they have had to drill their bores deeper and deeper every year as the watertable was drawn down. An onshore gas industry would potentially have the same impacts, and that is something that we have to be very, very careful about.

For those on both sides it is very clear to me that there are genuine concerns about this industry, and I am very happy to be seeing this bill pass here in the Parliament, because I think we do not want to take any risk with our farming and agricultural land, with our water and particularly with our groundwater supplies. Ultimately we must support our agricultural industries. It is critical to Gippsland, to Victoria and to Australia's future, and I will always stand here to support our farming industry and the communities that rely on it.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to make a contribution in relation to the bill before the house. I think it is worth noting that in the world in which we live now, where there is this great rush back behind tariff laws and this view that protectionism is the answer, it is worth acknowledging the fact that Victoria has got three great strengths: health care, education and food and fibre. They are our three great key strengths. The food and fibre sector is worth around about \$12 billion and employs about 190 000 Victorians. So they are three key strengths;

they are three things where the rest of the world looks to Victoria and says, 'Those three things you do well'.

The bill is important because it will protect without a shadow of a doubt the health, viability and vitality of the food and fibre sector. This is important because the reality is that the Asian middle class is projected to grow to 3 billion people by 2030. What we know from those businesses and those industries that have started to engage in those markets is that Australian produce is highly desired. It is seen as a luxury; it is seen as a high-quality, high-value product. It is something which is seen as basically a hallmark of success. The bill is important because of the fact that we can look at securing the strength of this sector and making sure that there are no doubts, hesitancy or reservations about the quality of what we produce.

I note the member for Gippsland South may, as others have done on the other side, condemn the former Labor government for issuing exploration licences to enable fracking, and basically then attacking this government for the actions taken by our predecessor. What I would say to the member for Gippsland South, who I know is studiously studying for his economics degree, is to remind him of a quote by John Maynard Keynes, who said, 'When the facts change, I change my mind'.

The reality is that since those exploration licences were issued there has been too much doubt. There has been too much cause for uncertainty about the impact that non-conventional onshore gas drilling can have. It can have a potentially significant impact on the watertable, on the aquifer. The reality is that because we have seen what has occurred in Queensland and New South Wales, we have changed our mind. Not only have we just said, 'That was then, this is now', but we are actually putting in legislation. We are recognising the fact that the world has changed in the last 15 years. Things have changed. Things are different, and industry wants certainty. Industry wants to know that it should not spend any more time on research and development in terms of fracking in Victoria, because Victoria is a no-go zone. We are making sure that with this bill we are sending a clear signal to the industry that that is a fact.

I note too that the member for Melbourne in her contribution seemed to think that all forms of gas are evil. I think that would be the way I could paraphrase the member for Melbourne's contribution. It did not matter whether it was conventional or non-conventional — all gas is bad. The other point I would make too is that because the member for Melbourne is the lead speaker for the Greens political party, she gets 20 minutes. I was here for her entire

contribution and she could not speak for 20 minutes; she spoke for 17 minutes. I also have had the privilege of checking the speaking list. What do we see? The member for Prahran is not listed to speak on this bill. Imagine that? A member of the Greens political party has an opportunity, as we all do as members in this place, to rise to their feet, to make a contribution on something I would have thought would have been important to the member for Prahran and yet he has squibbed it. He is not interested. Again, he is just a dilettante of the highest order. But, as I was saying, the member for Melbourne has this real issue about gas and of gas being evil. The reality is that we are going to embrace renewables, as we should.

I remember speaking a few years ago, around 2008, to an energy industry executive, and he made a couple of observations to me. I asked him, 'Could you get finance for a baseload coal-fired power station?', and he said, 'No bank will give us a loan for that, because they are not going to invest in a stranded asset'. When I asked, 'Let's suppose we shut down every baseload coal-fired power station tomorrow. How long would we be able to run the state using gas as baseload energy?', his response was, 'Seven years'. That was his assessment in terms of what was in Bass Strait then.

What we have to do is recognise the fact that we are transitioning to a cleaner carbon future. That means baseload energy must form part of the solution. It must, and for the foreseeable future we are going to be relying upon Loy Yang A and Loy Yang B, but at some point those assets will need to be retired. However, we need to make sure that when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining we are going to have reliable baseload capacity, because you cannot operate a civilised society — a modern, progressive 21st century economy — when every second day the lights go out. That is just completely and utterly irresponsible, so yes, we must embrace renewables. However, we must also think about trying to find a way in which we can have lower emission fossil fuels such as gas. A good thing too with gas is that a gas peaking plant can be turned on in 20 minutes. So if the wind stops and the sun stops shining, in 20 minutes time you can use gas as a baseload peaker to come in and then try to fill that gap. The reality is you cannot do that with coal-fired power stations, because they need about three days to get their boilers up and running.

This is a longwinded way of getting to this point — and I appreciate your indulgence, Acting Speaker, in allowing me to do so. It is a longwinded way of saying it is entirely appropriate for us to have this moratorium in place for onshore gas, because we need to do the work. We need to understand what reserves are there.

Where are they, how big are they, are they commercially viable, can we extract those onshore reserves without contaminating the watertable and can we make sure that we can access them easily? If they are on private land, what is an appropriate compensation regime and how do you do that? What are the appropriate planning approvals you put in place? This takes time, but it is work as a government we need to do. If it is a case of coming back to this place at some point in time in the future and saying we are not going to have onshore gas exploration because it is too risky or the reserves are not there or it just does not make sense, then we will do it. But we need to do that work. The bill is important to make sure that we have got that distinction.

We need to do that work, and I say to people like the member for Melbourne and the member for Prahran — if he had bothered to speak on an environmental bill — that the simplest answers are often the wrong answers. You have got to go away and do the work. You have got to do the research, you have got to investigate and then you have to make that call, but it is about making sure that we have a smooth transition.

As I have said in previous contributions on these sorts of bills, to some extent what we have been doing as an economy and as a state in having a high reliance on baseload brown coal-fired power stations is like driving along on a freeway without a seatbelt at 120 kilometres an hour. At some stage we are going to have to stop. At some stage we have got to try to slow down and probably put on the seatbelt so we are not injured. But in terms of what the member for Melbourne would have us do, she would say, 'You're going at 120. Just slam on the brakes now. Just put on the brakes now. Don't worry about the consequences. Don't worry about the workers that will be left behind. Don't worry about the destruction of industry. Don't worry about the impact that's going to have on creating a fair, just and equitable society'. You just cannot do that.

Those of us on this side of the house are from a responsible party. We are members of a responsible government. We recognise the fact that the voice of people like the member for Melbourne and the member for Prahran is the privileged voice of protest. I remember being at Melbourne University in the early 1990s, and I do wonder whatever happened to the privileged Trotskyists from Ormond College?

Ms Green — They joined the Greens!

Mr PEARSON — Exactly, member for Yan Yean. They became members of the Greens. That is what they are. They do not care about working people. They do

not care about rural communities. They are not prepared to do the hard work. They are not even prepared to speak on a bill on which I would have thought they would have had an interest in speaking. They are lazy. The reality is that this is a very, very sensibly thought out piece of legislation, and I commend it to the house.

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I rise this afternoon to make a contribution on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. I refer briefly to the contribution of the member for Essendon. If we had not adjourned after half a day yesterday and had sat here debating legislation, particularly as tomorrow we will be wasting the whole morning with the government trying to defend its roting of taxpayers money, I am sure members like the member for Prahran and other opposition members would have had more of an opportunity to speak on this bill. Instead the Parliament's time will be wasted defending Labor's rorts. That is where we are at.

The purpose of this bill is obviously to prohibit fracking permanently in Victoria and to legislate a moratorium for onshore gas exploration and extraction until June 2020. There are also obviously matters with regard to litigation around petroleum licences, and it gives the minister the power to purchase licences and permits affected by this ban.

The community that I represent is the City of Greater Geelong and the eastern half of the Surf Coast shire, and there is a licence sitting there at the moment. Petroleum exploration permit 163 sits over most of the Surf Coast shire in the South Barwon electorate. It goes right up almost into Geelong proper and into the Polwarth electorate as well.

I have said from the outset that I do not support fracking in the Surf Coast Shire or obviously South Barwon electorate. The Liberal and National parties have also said that we have never wanted to do anything to endanger our private agricultural land, our aquifers and our water table because the food and fibre industry is so valuable to Victoria, particularly on the Surf Coast. We have never wanted to do anything to endanger that.

I actually wrote to the Premier last year on 14 August. I might just quote part of that letter I wrote to him, where I said:

Exploration in this area —

being the petroleum exploration permit (PEP) 163 area —

will put at risk agriculture, tourism, water resources and residential zones all of which are integral to the Surf Coast.

I want to convey to you in the strongest terms that this exploration licence is totally inappropriate and that I am strongly opposed to it.

I note the initial permit ... was granted by Labor in 2002 and that Labor governments of which you have been a part have supported renewals of this permit on at least eight occasions.

You will be aware that I have strongly supported the extension of a moratorium on fracking.

I can indicate to you that you will face the strongest of opposition to the renewal or expansion of PEP 163.

I went on to say that I would be prepared to meet the Premier along with local advocates.

I know it is disorderly to mention people in the gallery, but I have one of those advocates, Alison Marchant from Frack Free Moriac, here today. I must admit it was remiss of me not to congratulate her on Australia Day. She won Surf Coast Citizen of the Year, but I got tied talking to other people and then we both left. So I do apologise for not congratulating her on that day, but I certainly congratulate her now. Alison did win that for her work in declaring Moriac frack-free and a lot of great work that was done around declaring other areas along the Surf Coast frack-free, so well done to Alison. She has done very well. There are people who live on the Surf Coast who are very, very passionate with regard to this exploration and the environment.

Quite frankly I am a bit perplexed. Lakes Oil has been mentioned a few times. In six years I have been an MP Lakes Oil has never contacted me and never once tried to lobby me — not even once for a PR exercise. If they are not going to lobby me or are not even prepared to speak to me, then they are certainly not lobbying the community or trying to explain themselves to the local community. I do find it quite amazing, as I have been in business. You want to promote yourself as a business and explain to people what you do. They have not bothered to do that, so I found that quite amazing.

I have also marched with the Surf Coast councillors and other groups. Alison was there that day. We marched on state Parliament and expressed that a lot of townships around Victoria had declared themselves frack-free, as has the Surf Coast Shire. I was certainly supporting my constituents in their wishes, because that is what I am here to do as their local representative — to convey the wishes of the majority of the residents of the Surf Coast and indeed South Barwon electorate, who are strongly opposed to fracking.

Even Minister Noonan, even though he was trying to criticise the coalition in a media release on 27 September, acknowledged:

... opposition whip and member for South Barwon Andrew Katos, who welcomed the ban and even boasted about his efforts in support of local community groups.

I thank the minister for putting me in his release, even though he was trying to criticise the coalition in that release.

As far as conventional gas goes, we made it very clear at the by-elections in the seat of Polwarth and the seat of South-West Coast that we would support the extension of the moratorium until June 2020. That is what this bill does as well. That is in line with policy that we have announced as coalition parties.

I am pleased that this has come before the house because, as I said earlier, the communities that I represent have voiced their opinions certainly to me and to all Victorians that they do not support fracking. We cannot guarantee, if we allow fracking, that it will not damage our water tables or that it will not damage our agricultural land. Victoria is renowned for its pristine water resources and our pristine agricultural land right across the world — not only in Australia but across the world. When people see produce from this state, they know it is clean and they know it is healthy, and that injects hundreds of millions of dollars into the Victorian exports and economy on a yearly basis.

We need to protect that. That is what banning fracking does, because we simply cannot guarantee there would be no damage to our land or water resources if we allowed fracking in this state. If we could guarantee it, it might be a different story, but there is no guarantee that fracking will not do that. A lot of evidence around the world shows that it has adverse impacts on our agricultural land and water tables. I want to leave a little bit of time to allow the member for Gippsland East up as the last contributor, so I am happy to commend the bill to the house.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — It gives me great pleasure to join the debate on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. This bill is just what Victorians across this great state asked for. It is the embodiment of what thousands and thousands of ordinary Victorians across the state asked for. What we see across the world at the moment is voters in droves — whatever country, whatever state — feeling disempowered. They are feeling like they are not listened to.

On Q&A on Monday, there was a plea from Lotte, a woman from Gippsland, who asked how an ordinary voter, an ordinary person can have their voice heard. Well, this is how you do it: you get out, you talk to people and you listen. You do not have a panicked ban because you think you might lose the election and you are not quite sure what to do, which is what those opposite did in 2013. They do not really care. You cannot actually trust them. You will not be able to trust them not to go back on their word around this because of their masters in Canberra.

We have seen their masters in Canberra: Josh Frydenberg, a minister from this state, and the Prime Minister from the great height of his Point Piper residence. He was the great white hope of the conservative side of politics. Does he listen to anyone? No, he does not listen to anyone. If he did, he would understand that ordinary people across this state and across this country do not want fracking. He has deliberately tried to use a smoke and mirrors trick to cover up the fact that actually the federal government's actions are in play here as it is exporting gas from the eastern seaboard. He is trying to use that ruse to create a cost-of-living issue around the issue of fracking. Well, I will tell him: yes, it is a cost-of-living issue. It actually could compromise the cost of living of every food and fibre producer across many regions of this state. Food and fibre are the absolute drivers of the economy in this state. I heard from the regional — —

Ms Kealy interjected.

Ms GREEN — You will get your chance, member for Lowan. You will get the microphone later, but you have not been in this Parliament — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms GREEN — If you actually sit back, Junior, you might actually learn something. If you actually listen to your community, you will hear that they do not want this. It is only the conservatives in Canberra who have the guts to say that they do want it. Those on the other side are trying to have a bet each way. Well, it is something that is wrong with the right of politics in this country — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Hutchins — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, we cannot hear our speaker on this side of the house due to the interjections coming from over there.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! The point of order is upheld. The member for Yan Yean, without assistance.

Ms GREEN — The shrieking harpy from Lowan might want to have her voice heard without the microphone, but she ought listen to those — —

Mr Morris — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, that language is entirely unparliamentary, and I ask you to get the member to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! My understanding of these matters is that if a member has taken offence, the member themselves must ask for a withdrawal to occur.

Mr Morris — Acting Speaker, the language is unparliamentary. That was the point of order: unparliamentary. I am asking the member to withdraw. I did not say anything about the individual.

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

Ms GREEN — Thank you for that ruling, Acting Speaker.

Ms Kealy — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, on the same statement as that raised in the previous point of order, I would ask that you request that the member for Yan Yean withdraw her comment.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! The member for Yan Yean to withdraw.

Ms GREEN — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I do not believe that that request was in order. It was just a repeat of the member for Mornington's point of order. There was no — —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! The member for Yan Yean must withdraw unconditionally.

Ms GREEN — I did not hear the word 'offence'; I thought she was just reiterating. Did the member say she had taken offence? If she has taken offence, I withdraw, but I am not surprised. These are the usual tactics of those opposite: not only do they try to silence rural communities but every time I am on my feet they do not want to hear — —

Ms Kealy — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I realise it may be very difficult for the member for Yan Yean to admit that her language is quite offensive and that she has offended other people, but I would ask you to ask her not to rant on and go through all the reasons it was not offensive but actually just to withdraw the comment, which clearly was quite offensive.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! I am sorry, member for Lowan, I believe the member had withdrawn and was continuing her contribution.

Ms GREEN — Again they would like — they always like — to interrupt when I talk about inconvenient truths like how they will not listen to communities.

The people of country Victoria actually remember what happened when the Kennett government sold off the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria. Did they care about access to gas? Did any conservatives stand up for communities' access to gas? The Gas and Fuel Corporation was sold. The mains were laid down the Princes Highway and the main street of Bairnsdale but they did not actually get gas until more than a decade later — actually more than 20 years later — when we were in government and we established our natural gas scheme so that communities could get access to cheap and reliable energy. So I will not be silenced by those who would not listen to the inconvenient truth. I will stand up for the food and fibre producers in Victoria and for those who want to protect our environment, but I will firstly stand up for jobs.

I recently heard the Alibaba corporation's Jack Ma, who has been in Australia, talking about how China has ruined its environment. That is why China, with its burgeoning economy, wants to buy our clean and green food. We have that reputation, and we are going to maintain it by banning unconventional gas in this state. We have listened to the community; we have got out and about. The only reason the conservatives should be fearful again is that they are failing to listen to their constituents and to listen to Victorians and to Australians. Malcolm Turnbull really should get out of Sydney. Not only is it not good enough for him not to spend a decent amount on infrastructure in Victoria but he wants to tell fibs about supposed threats to jobs in Victoria. The only job killers in this state have been on his side of politics. It was Tony Abbott, leading with his chin, who caused us to lose the automotive industry in this state, which has cost a huge number of jobs.

And what did those opposite do? They sat on their hands. It was good enough for the City of Whittlesea to have its own jobs plan. Those opposite, who were governing the state of Victoria, did not have a jobs plan and did not have a plan to address this threat to our economy. They certainly do not have a plan to address the threat to the economy that their friends in Canberra pose because of their push to say that states should not be allowed to and should not impose bans on fracking.

I stand up for Victorians. Those opposite should stand up for Victorians, whether it is ensuring we get a fair share of infrastructure funding or that we have jobs growth in a clean, green economy. Most importantly, they should stand up for their community and their right to have a say, their right to be heard, and they should listen to them.

The reason why they are under threat from the right of politics, from the Cory Bernardis of the world and the Pauline Hansons of the world, is because they are not listening. We were elected to govern for the whole of the state. We will listen to our own communities and we will listen to the pleas of those who have the misfortune to live in coalition seats whose pleas fall on deaf ears. I support this bill. I commend the work of the ministers and of the parliamentary committee, and I commend the bill to the house.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of the Honourable Maxine Morand, the member for Mount Waverley from 2002 to 2010.

RESOURCES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FRACKING BAN) BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) — I rise today to make a contribution to the debate on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. Well, sweet baby Jesus and the poor orphans — even the title of this amendment bill is misleading. The Andrews government would have you believe this is just a feel-good bill about banning onshore coal seam gas exploration and hydraulic fracturing.

Simply put, in Victoria it is pointless to frack in mud for coal seam gas. Geologically speaking, if Victoria has any commercial quantities of coal seam gas whatsoever, then it mostly sits in the closest thing to peat, which is lignite — brown coal. Natural resources 101 for the dummies in this place — the followers, the fake leaders, the green Kool-Aid sippers — —

Mr Richardson — Who?

Mr TILLEY — You heard me, the green Kool-Aid sippers or whatever those are on who support this

appalling bill. The premise in this bill is so impractical that we may as well be debating a bill on protecting black panthers in our state. This is an incredible waste of taxpayers money and resources.

There are a variety of names for different geological settings of onshore gas. There is coal seam gas. There is tight gas, shale oil gas and oil shale gas, which is not the same as shale oil gas. But it is easy to convince people that any gas exploration would literally muddy the waters. This debate should be about the real and exciting possibilities of Victoria having commercial quantities of viable, profitable onshore gas.

I am not going to use the bill terminology of unconventional gas because gas is gas, and it is under the ground. In the scheme of Australian gas supplies, Victoria is a very small player, but what Victoria does have is a highly developed gas infrastructure and a very small handful of explorers interested, in the first instance, in finding out if Victoria has onshore gas in commercial quantities. If so, can it be extracted safely and viably? And if so, how might this good, clean energy source benefit Victoria, especially our once proud manufacturing industry, which is looking for strong leadership in government, but not a government that, day after day, as we have seen in this place over the last two years, picks winners and losers and with absolute political bastardry sets them against each other?

The Andrews Labor government would have you believe our unconventional gas explorers are environmental terrorists. I simply say they are not. In fact they are brave, resourceful and are not constrained by a four-year political cycle. They have long-term visions and responsible planning. Today we should be throwing our full support behind them, not tarring and feathering them and running them out of our state, which seems to be the intention of this bill.

Being an exploration company is hard, and it is risky. There are years of disappointment with little or no return. For the sake of cunningly deceptive populist politics, with this bill, the Andrews Labor government has just made it even harder for these exploration companies that have already put so much investment into onshore gas exploration.

My electorate still has a very healthy manufacturing industry and the government of Victoria has a responsibility to protect not just the electorate of Benambra's manufacturing industry, but the manufacturing industry of Victoria. In my electorate manufacturing and farming go hand in glove. One of the ways we can protect our manufacturing industry is

by not being conned by this leftist Labor government and their dangerous extreme Greens buddies' deceptive campaign to block onshore gas exploration in this state.

Let me put this clearly on the record. I am advocating for environmentally responsible onshore gas exploration right now. Of course I am aware of some practices that have occurred in other jurisdictions in the past. The role and function of the numerous parliaments throughout our nation and we as legislators should be to kick those corporations that choose not to be a responsible partner until their noses bleed. However, this Premier would simply shut the gate on many of Victoria's primary resources — not just gas but coal, timber, fishing, just to mention a few.

The Andrews Labor government does not want you to find out the real facts about responsible, future sustainable industry in Victoria. This Premier thinks it is perfectly okay to ban gas exploration. After all, we are saving the planet. By blocking gas exploration I wonder if we are really saving the planet. By banning gas exploration in this state, will there really be any effect on climate change one way or another? Probably not. Banning gas exploration in Victoria will not bring Labor any closer to their zero emissions target.

Labor's zero emissions target is not real. It is a great big con. It is a fake target. In fact it is a fugazi. In a very short space of time, under the boot of the Andrews Labor government, Victoria has had some old nicknames reinforced, such as the nanny state, the union state and the lefty state. But now we have a couple of new ones: we have the youth crime state and we have the nimby state.

Allow me to remind you of what happened a few short years ago to Victoria's oleochemical industry, when we last shut the gate in this state on facts and science to save the orangutans. Several years ago the offshore palm oil industry convinced Victorians not to buy beauty, cleaning, food or any glycerine-based products where animals were harmed in the making of them. It was a passionate campaign. Fair enough. But it was also a deceptive campaign. The gate was firmly shut on the facts. The palm oil industry actively discouraged further introspection or genuine inquiry of the facts. There was no thought to what the consequences for Victoria might be but, what the hell, we were saving the orangutans and it felt good.

Too late in the game, Victorians discovered that many of these food, beauty and cleaning products used chemicals such as glycerine and glycol products. Victoria was manufacturing these chemicals from our high-quality animal tallow. Tallow, for those who do

not know, is a by-product of our great abattoir industry, so clearly animals have to be harmed. But we were saving the animals and in one fell swoop we killed off Victoria's vibrant oleochemical manufacturing industry.

Meanwhile, in another place just to the north, across the seas, but not in our backyard, the offshore palm oil industry has grown exponentially. We are happy to say that it is okay for us to pop on our nice, animal cruelty-free lipstick because although my pretty lipstick has resulted in the destruction of thousands of acres of rainforest and is pushing animals like the orangutan closer to extinction, that is all right. We are all nimbies in this state, so it is okay.

I also wish to point out that it was the rising cost of energy that, combined with the offshore palm oil companies, killed off Victoria's oleochemical industry. The knock-on effect to the secondary industry was enormous. We can talk about shutting the gate and killing off industry in Victoria, and we continue to see that under this government. But having spent a little time studying the committee's report on onshore unconventional gas in Victoria, Lakes Oil said if they can extract this gas commercially, they will sign agreements guaranteeing supply and lower the market prices to industry. They have already signed agreements.

In our blind zeal to be good environmental, economic world citizens we must not shut the gate. Find out truthful, clear, clean facts around not just onshore gas but all of Victoria's primary resources. We have to stop being nimbies, buying products from Third World countries and turning a blind eye to their damaging and unsustainable practices.

Our very few explorers, the frontier champions, trying desperately to operate in Victoria, cannot commercially survive if we ban them from being able to do this job. They simply cannot eat unicorn cake to sustain themselves for the next three years. Since the moratorium has been produced we have done more than enough studies to allow more drilling to take place for the purposes of qualifying our reserves.

Just to show how hypocritical this government and the Lock the Gate campaign truly is, I say there has been more damage done to the environment and communities by this Andrews Labor government drilling during the sky rail construction than what these exploration companies have done to date with their exploration activities. I say: open the gate and let us go exploring.

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — What a pleasure it is to follow the member for Benambra. I have not heard a whole heap of contributions from the member for Benambra over the last couple of years, but that one was certainly a very special one nonetheless. The member in his contribution said gas — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr J. BULL — Did he? Well, I have been called far worse. The member in his contribution said that gas is gas. I am going to call on some of the science degree that I have actually got. I could just think off the top of my head of some of the types of gases that there are — argon, carbon dioxide, helium, neon, hydrogen — and just like there are many types of gases, member for Benambra, there are also different types of mining methods. We, the Andrews Labor government, are banning hydraulic fracking as well as coal seam gas, as studies prove that this is the greatest threat to groundwater.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to talk on this very important bill before the house. We know that this is an issue that has significant impact on farmers and on our regional communities right across the state. It is an issue that has attracted the greatest public interest, and there is obviously much media coverage, as we have seen. I know we will look back on today when this historic bill was put before the house, a very important bill for the protection of both our environment and our regional and rural communities.

The Andrews Labor government is not afraid to take on the tough decisions and make the hard calls. Unlike what we see day in, day out from Canberra, we know that this government has an agenda and is driven by its strong policies, underpinned by its determined values. We said in opposition that we would have a proper process to consider onshore gas, and we have delivered on that promise. The parliamentary inquiry, established in May 2015, considered all evidence, including the views of the Auditor-General. The inquiry received over 1600 submissions — a record, I believe — and heard from the community, industry, affected farmers, the resources sector and also licence-holders. The inquiry tabled its final report in December 2015, along with four minority reports. As we have heard this afternoon, the inquiry was unable to reach a consensus.

Do you know who else has not been able to reach consensus on this issue? Those opposite. If you look at the *Australian* newspaper today, a headline says: ‘PM slams gas policy backed by state Libs’. Uh-oh! The article says:

The split between the federal and Victorian coalitions over energy policy has dramatically widened, with Malcolm Turnbull blasting the state’s Labor government for ‘locking up’ gas supplies on an ideological basis on the same day that his Victorian counterparts voted to support the policy.

The state coalition will today reveal plans to wave through the Andrews government’s legislation to prevent all coal seam gas exploration and mining as well as extending a moratorium on onshore conventional gas exploration and development until 2020.

Here the cracks — or should I say the fracks — start to emerge. I know that yesterday was certainly not a good day for the Prime Minister. He spent much of his time in his office trying to appease those in the hard right, and in doing so he did not make any friends in the left and made absolutely no progress on his so-called jobs and innovation agenda for the nation. Cory Bernardi’s departure was just another slap in the face.

The article goes on to say:

Federal energy minister Josh Frydenberg said last night the heavy-handed approach was inappropriate. ‘More gas means more jobs and more investment’, he said. ‘Rather than pursuing statewide moratoriums and bans on conventional and unconventional gas exploration, the best way forward is a case-by-case approach that allows you to take into account relevant environmental and economic factors’.

So as we have seen time and time again from those opposite, they are nothing but a shambles. We saw after four long, dark, miserable, lonely, wasted years from those on the other side that they are split, and we can even see that in a number of the contributions of this afternoon, none more so than in that of the member for Benambra. The Nationals here say they support the bill; at the federal level they oppose it. The Nationals really need to decide whether they stand with their coalition partners or with Victorian farmers. The Andrews Labor government takes — —

Ms Kealy interjected.

Mr J. BULL — It is good to see The Nationals in the house. The Andrews Labor government takes a very different approach. We consulted directly with the community, industry, farmers and local governments in the Otways and Gippsland, and for years farmers and regional communities have campaigned against this risky practice. No doubt honourable members will be able to reflect on the time they have spent in rural and regional communities — time with family, time away on various vacations and holidays. Our image as a clean, green state, our whole range of national parks and our fantastic waterways right through the Gippsland to Otway regions are something that we really need to be proud of. It is something that we need to protect, and we

need to work very hard to ensure that these areas are protected not just for our generation but for future generations to come.

A number of farmers spoke to us about the threat to their land, their livelihood and the threat to the reputation of Victoria's agricultural sector. Families spoke to us about the risk to their health. It is certainly something that this government has listened to, and by way of the legislation before the house and the announcement last year, we can see that this is a government of action.

Victoria is the nation's top food and fibre producer, and we have an international reputation for high-quality, clean produce. Any risk to this reputation is a risk to the economy and a risk to jobs. The bill ends the quite high level of anxiety that is felt through regional Victoria that has existed around this practice for too long, and the decision shows what can be accomplished by a government that is prepared to always put people first and listen to the community. That is exactly what we were elected to do, and that is what we are doing — supporting Victorian farmers and their families in regional communities by protecting their produce and, of course, our environment.

We hear so much from The Nationals about how they stand up for farmers and how they support farmers, but it really is time that they listen and step up. I certainly know that the member for Lowan is prepared to step up for her community. I just think that so often they come into this place and lecture the government about the support given to farmers in rural communities, but time and time again I see the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture out in these communities delivering, whether it be through fire and drought relief or all the significant investments that this government makes within these extremely important local communities that are often very close-knit communities.

This is an important piece of legislation. We know that Victoria is Australia's largest producer and exporter of food and fibre products. This is built upon our reputation for quality, safety and reliability. Farmers that rely heavily on this image will certainly benefit from this legislation. If you look at the numbers, the sector accounts for 4.9 per cent of gross state product, and in 2014–15 it accounted for around half of the state's total goods exports. Through 2015–16 Victoria's food and fibre exports were valued at \$11.9 billion — a significant amount of money. We make up 26 per cent of Australia's total food and fibre exports, and Victoria continues to be Australia's largest state exporter.

We know that around 195 000 Victorians, mostly in rural and regional areas, are employed in the agricultural sector. Certainly in my electorate, although it is not defined as a regional or rural community, we have some great hobby farms around Sunbury itself. Those communities are of great value to the local constituency. Those operators are always prepared to come in and speak to me in my office around practices and procedures that they think will benefit them. Food and fibre has also been identified as a key future industry for Victoria as part of the government's Future Industries Fund, and I have spoken about what I believe to be our great investment in these communities.

I want to take the opportunity in the time that I have remaining to thank members of the parliamentary committee that worked very hard on this issue; the 1600 submitters, of course; and all those who took the time to write to the government about the issue. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the Premier and both ministers for making this bill possible, certainly for the long-term stability through this long-term ban to ensure that these areas are protected for good, that the environment is protected and that the health of these communities remains for good. I am very proud of the bill, and I commend it to the house.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — I rise today to add my contribution to the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. The Nationals position on fracking has always been clear: we will never support any activity that puts our valuable water and land resources at risk. I have been very fortunate to have been elected the member for Lowan, a country electorate where there are fantastic people who you can always have an open conversation with. No matter what their views are, no matter what their backgrounds are, you always have a respectful conversation.

During the preselection period, during the campaign and over the past two years as member for Lowan, I have had the good fortune to meet with many people who have been deeply concerned that Labor's poor record on fracking in country Victoria would be continued into the future. I fondly remember on one of my mobile office days going to Byaduk, a very small community in the southern area of my electorate in western Victoria. This community had between a dozen and 20 people turn up, and they wanted to speak to me solely about their concerns around fracking in the local region. People in Branxholme have similar concerns, and of course the Glenelg Shire Council put forward a motion regarding banning fracking in that area or unconventional gas in their region, which was unanimously passed.

Today's legislation will put an end to Labor's appalling record on its support of the fracking industry, including the reckless approval of 73 unconventional gas exploration licences and 23 fracking permits. It is astonishing to believe that people on any side of politics could somehow try to delete this history and think that they can have the moral high ground, particularly when you consider that those 73 unconventional gas exploration licences and 23 fracking permits were all granted without any consideration, environmental studies, water studies or community consultation. There was no consideration given to the risk to water and land resources.

We have heard from many people on the Labor or government side of the chamber today about how important the food and fibre industry is to regional Victoria and the state. This has not happened overnight. This is not a new industry. I am sure we have all heard the expression 'Australia rode on the sheep's back to economic success'. Wool was the main export commodity from 1871 to the 1960s. It was the first major export for Australia. The Nationals understand how important this food and fibre industry is. Again we look back to this record that Labor has and that its members are trying to conveniently forget. It was Labor that approved 73 fracking licences and 23 fracking permits. This cannot be deleted. The reason that my communities are so relieved at this point in time is that Labor members have actually said, 'You know what? We got this wrong. We didn't listen to country Victoria. We neglected you'. I am proud to stand with our local people and communities and support this ban on fracking.

I would like to outline our proud record in country Victoria, because I certainly will not back away from it. We will go by evidence, rather than trying to pick and choose what parts we will stand up for. I note that in all their contributions today Labor members have tended to conveniently forget their history of supporting the fracking industry in this state. In 2011 we came into government and we came into a mess, with people in all our country regions concerned about the exploitation of fracking in our regions. We knew we had to move very, very quickly to put an end to that. So in 2012 we rapidly put a moratorium on issuing new exploration licences for unconventional gas, essentially banning fracking in this state.

In 2014 we put forward and passed benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene legislation to ensure that these dangerous chemicals were not put into the land at all. We also during this time undertook an extensive water and environmental study and undertook one of the biggest community consultations, particularly in the

mining industry, that has ever occurred in this state. I know that at least three consultations were held in my region, and certainly it was appreciated by everybody that they could have their say regarding this important industry.

In 2015 we strongly supported and called for an extension of the moratorium. We also supported the inquiry into onshore unconventional gas. I will note at this point that in our amendment to the inquiry we proposed that the inquiry include conventional gas. It is an absolute shame that Labor and the Greens voted against an inquiry being extended to include conventional gas. Now we hear from the government that it is important that we extend the moratorium to 2020 so we can have, basically, an inquiry into conventional gas. Why have those opposite changed their minds so quickly? I hope it is because they have listened to what The Nationals put forward back in 2015.

We also look at the appalling record of how Labor treats country Victorians. It is not just about the 73 unconventional gas exploration licences and the 23 fracking permits with no prior water or environmental studies or community consultation. I noted earlier that there was discussion about supporting investment in country Victoria. Last year less than 3 per cent of the infrastructure budget was spent outside of Melbourne. How on earth can we expect country Victoria to grow and thrive, or even survive, if we do not have key investment in our schools, in our police stations, in our hospitals and in our roads? We simply cannot do that, so if those opposite are serious about this and if they are not all talk, I ask that they take some action and improve that figure.

I have heard from the Premier many times that 9 per cent is not enough for Victoria from the federal government, given we have got 25 per cent of the Australian population. In country Victoria we have got 25 per cent of the Victorian population, so come this year's budget I would like to see the Premier come through with the goods. I would like to see more than 9 per cent of the infrastructure budget spent on country Victoria if he is true to his word.

There is no plan by Labor to achieve balanced population growth. Of course, if they are not investing in country Victoria, they will not achieve that. They have abandoned country roads. They have scrapped the country roads and bridges program. They have cut hundreds of millions of dollars out of the country roads budget. When we hear of a road announcement in western Victoria, they actually mean Werribee. It is absolutely disgraceful, and our roads are falling apart because of that.

They have scrapped the Regional Victoria Living Expo, a program that was working to attract people from the city to the country, helping to take pressure off our city, balance population growth and stabilise the population in regional Victoria. Unfortunately this government cannot see beyond the tram tracks.

I am pleased and very proud to support this ban on fracking. I am very proud of our community members. I will not name them one by one, because no doubt I will forget somebody, but I thank anyone who has had a quiet one-on-one conversation with me, perhaps at Hamilton Sheepvention, perhaps at a community meeting, through social media, over the phone, by letter or by email — whatever it is — and I thank everybody in our local area who has supported and provided that information and feedback to me. I stand with them today to proudly support this ban on fracking.

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) — It is a great pleasure to rise to speak on the very important Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. I am really proud that I am debating this bill today. I am a bit confused about what the opposition is doing. We keep hearing different approaches to the bill, but we will see.

I want to start by thanking the Minister for Industry and Employment for his tireless work and consultation with the community, along with the Premier of Victoria. I also want to thank and congratulate the local communities who actively campaigned for this ban. As the Premier highlighted, this is a victory for our local communities. In particular I want to put on public record the hardworking commitment of people like Alison Marchant, who is in the gallery today, and all the dedicated people in the Geelong community who have worked hard on this issue for a very long time.

It is people like Alison who help leave positive legacies for our future generations, which is really, really important. Over the last, probably, three or four years I have had the opportunity to speak to many people about their concerns about fracking. It has been really interesting, particularly talking to young people, because young people are much more up to speed with what is going on in our community than we think they might be. Certainly when I was a kid I would never have thought of these issues. They are much more articulate and they have a much better understanding of the issues that are impacting our environment in particular. It has been really heartening, and it has filled me with confidence to talk to the up-and-coming young people in our community.

I also wanted to share with the chamber a couple of stories that I heard from young men who left Geelong

to look for work some years ago and went into the mining industry. They worked in fracking operations in New South Wales and Queensland. I caught up with them not long ago. They actually left that industry because they knew the damage that they were causing for the companies they worked for. They had concerns for their own families and for the future of our community. I thought it was really interesting that they actually left those jobs and came back to Geelong purely out of concern for what fracking was doing to the environment. They had firsthand experience. They had to deal with protesters, particularly in Queensland, which they found very difficult because they knew what they were doing was not right. I wanted to share that story because I think it is important that we do not underestimate what our younger generations are thinking and the concerns that they have about our environment.

There is no doubt that this was a serious issue for people in Geelong and the Geelong region. During the election campaign I was approached many times by many groups and individuals asking what we were going to do about this particular issue, so I am really proud of our local community and the work they have put in. I know it has been hard for them, but they have stuck at it. Our farming communities were concerned, but there was also concern from the community about the great risk to our reputation as a clean, green region. Our farming communities, agriculture, tourism, magnificent beaches, national parks and food and wine trails were all put at risk. Our diverse communities were all getting together and talking about this issue. They came together out of genuine concern. They were concerned about the impact of fracking on farms; the environment, including through water contamination; local industry; and the health and wellbeing of our community.

The people that came together to work on this particular issue formed Frack Free Geelong, Gasfield Free Torquay, Frack Free Grovedale, Frack Free Moriac, frack free Freshwater Creek, No Fracking Birregurra, Gasfield Free Deans Marsh and lots of other local environment groups. They are a diverse group of people from many different backgrounds, industries and political views, but they all had one thing in common — that is, the fight for a ban on fracking. The three local government areas in the Geelong region — the City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast shire and Colac Otway shire — all passed motions in favour of a ban and contributed to the parliamentary inquiries into onshore unconventional gas activity in Victoria.

Sixteen hundred community members, groups, experts and representatives from the resources sector made

submissions to the inquiry. When the Honourable David Davis, a member for Southern Metropolitan Region in the Legislative Council, wrecked that process, resulting in four minority reports, the Andrews government went out and spoke to farmers, industry and community groups across our region. I note the comments earlier about the Minister for Resources in particular not getting manure on his boots and all those sorts of ridiculous comments. That sort of statement is just ridiculous. The minister, the Premier and lots of members of Parliament were out there talking to the community about what affected them and what their concerns were, and they were actually listening to the community. And we heard the message. I heard the message, and it was very clear: they did not want to support fracking, they did not support the long-term damaging effects of fracking, they did not support the risks to people's health and wellbeing, they did not support the destruction of our environment and water supply, and they did not support the damage to tourism in our region.

Tourism was another big issue for many people and so many small businesses that rely on tourism had grave concerns about what fracking would do to their industry and their reputation in the community.

I note that the member for South Barwon in his contribution today mentioned that he sent a letter to the Premier. It is good to hear that he is supporting this bill. A number of local groups and individuals have complained recently that he did not return their calls or respond to their requests for him to outline what his position was on the ban and how he would respond to this bill, but I am pleased to hear today that he is actually supporting the bill. These groups are certainly not happy with the member for Polwarth, the member for South-West Coast or a member for Western Victoria Region in the Legislative Council, Simon Ramsay, who have never responded to their requests to have a discussion about fracking. Fracking would impact on all of these seats, but these members did not listen. They were not interested in listening.

The federal member for Corangamite has also been silent. She has provided no support, nor has she listened to her local community on this issue.

Ms Thomas — We know where she stands now.

Ms COUZENS — Yes, we do. This is not surprising given the commentary that is coming out of the federal Liberal government. In fact the federal Minister for the Environment and Energy has been highly critical of the ban, calling it disappointing. The federal Minister for Resources and Northern Australia,

a Nationals member, echoed those comments. Then of course there were the Prime Minister's comments yesterday, and I quote:

There they are, with this ideological, left approach that the Labor Party adopt, sitting on all of this gas and they are not prepared to touch it.

This is about them hiding the truth and their game of trickery. They do not want anyone to notice that the leap in gas prices is because of their longstanding federal policy. Those opposite cannot be trusted to continue a ban on fracking. Their masters in Canberra will have them change their tune down the track. This is a very real risk given that the community have strongly advocated for this ban. The state and federal Liberals have not listened to them at all.

I am really pleased to be speaking on this bill today. I am so proud of our local communities right across the Geelong region who have put in probably more than four years of hard yards and lobbying to see this bill come to fruition. I congratulate them. I congratulate the ministers involved and the Premier for the hard work they have done. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — Much of the legislation we deal with in this place is relatively pedestrian. It is important in its way, but seldom does a bill have significant implications that go well beyond its anticipated life. This is such a bill. It is not just an important bill, it is perhaps a critical bill for the future of the state. It is a bill that builds on the work of the former coalition government and a bill that will ensure our reputation for clean, green, sustainable agriculture is not compromised in any way.

The bill is intended to achieve three major outcomes: a ban on the development of coal seam gas extracted by any means, a ban on the practice of hydraulic fracture to harvest gas, and an extension of the 2012 moratorium on the development of conventional onshore gas facilities, which was put in place by the former coalition government and an extension of which to 2020 was proposed by the coalition in opposition in September 2015.

But there is an elephant in the room, and apparently this elephant is invisible to the government because the debate today is being held against a background of rapidly escalating energy prices, both electricity and gas — an escalation that in the case of gas, it has to be said, is being driven largely by market forces and in the case of electricity is being driven largely by the actions of the Andrews government.

The government sought to make the bill, in the context of this debate, about hydraulic fracturing, and that is without a doubt a significant component, but we cannot simply ignore this apparently invisible elephant — the energy price — because if it is ignored, it will not only cause tremendous social dislocation; it will destroy what is left of Victoria's manufacturing industries. We cannot just hope for the best. We cannot just hope that energy prices will somehow sort themselves out, because quite simply they will not.

The bill proposes amendments to the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990, largely to deal with the issues surrounding coal seam or unconventional gas, and also amendments to the Petroleum Act 1998 to deal with the issues surrounding the extraction of onshore conventional gas. Part 2 of the bill addresses the issues of coal seam gas. Definitions of 'coal seam gas' and 'hydraulic fracturing' are inserted into the principal act. 'Coal seam gas' is defined as natural gas when contained in oil shale or coal, while 'hydraulic fracturing' is defined as being the injection of a substance or substances into a bore under pressure for the purposes of stimulating a geological formation.

While relatively new in Australia, hydraulic fracturing has been employed in the United States to stimulate wells since the mid-1860s, and over time a variety of materials have been used. Originally it was largely explosive fluids like nitroglycerine while later on, in the 1930s, acid was introduced. A variant of hydraulic fracturing, massive hydraulic fracturing, is currently used on shale formations in the United States, and of course the process itself has been used widely to develop the Queensland coal seam gas fields.

When it comes to coal seam gas and to hydraulic fracturing, the role of the Parliament — the role of the government — is very much about risk management. There is of course in the recovery of coal seam gas, particularly through hydraulic fracturing, a considerable risk, and that was recognised by the former coalition government. As a consequence the moratorium that is still in place was imposed in 2012. It was further expanded in 2013 to include tight and shale gas.

In this regard I contrast the attitudes of the Baillieu and Napthine governments with that of earlier Labor administrations, because not one permit for the exploration or recovery of unconventional gas has been issued under a coalition government. Every single one of the 73 licences that have been issued for exploration for unconventional gas were issued under a Labor government. Every single one of the 23 fracking permits that have been approved in this state were approved under a Labor government, and there is

simply, in all of those approvals, not one example of public consultation — not a single example.

Additionally, as the Auditor-General's report confirmed, the relevant department did not brief a minister on unconventional gas development in Victoria from 2004 to 2011, so clearly Labor was asleep at the wheel. This new and potentially problematic industry was allowed to develop without proper risk management and without appropriate regulation. Unlike Labor, upon coming to government the coalition very quickly realised the risk posed by hydraulic fracturing to our agricultural industries, and we took action.

Clause 4 of the bill proposes a total ban on both exploration for and mining of coal seam gas and imposes significant penalties. Any coal seam gas that may be incidentally discovered must be reported. Hydraulic fracturing is banned. The issuance of exploration or mining licences, or the retention of a licence issued for coal seam gas, is also prevented. The reporting of any coal seam gas discoveries to the minister is required. A limit is proposed to be imposed on the liability of the government with changes implemented by this bill, and the minister is authorised to undertake buybacks, although in a limited time frame. Part 3 of the bill relates to the Petroleum Act and implements very similar arrangements. There are also consequential amendments to another act as a result of the banning of hydraulic fracturing and where provisions become redundant.

So that is the bill before the house. In many ways it is straightforward. Insofar as it relates to the prohibition of the exploration or recovery of unconventional gas, it is largely uncontroversial in this house. So too is the extension of the moratorium to 2020. Again the coalition have been leaders in this field. We announced our position on 28 September 2015, and our view remains unchanged. As the Leader of The Nationals noted at the time:

Extending the moratorium until 2020 will allow time for the regulatory work recommended by the Auditor-General to be carried out and for the findings of the parliamentary inquiry to be fully assessed.

Unfortunately there is little evidence to suggest the government is ensuring that the necessary work is undertaken or that the findings of the parliamentary committee have in fact been taken seriously. I suspect they do not actually intend to undertake any work at all to develop any safeguards and simply hope the problem will go away — but it will not.

Victoria is on the brink of an energy price crisis. The most recent report from the Australian Energy Market Commission released in December 2016 states clearly that in the three years from 2016 to 2019 electricity prices are set to skyrocket by 35 per cent. In the short term the impact is even worse, with prices set to rise by up to 40 per cent between 2016–17 and 2017–18 as a result of the closure of Hazelwood.

The National Australia Bank has forecast that Victorian households could be facing gas bill hikes of 50 per cent or more. Of course this hike comes on top of already significant increases. The bank's 2017 'Gas and LNG Market Outlook' indicates that prices in Victoria could rise to between \$8 and \$10 a gigajoule, up from \$2 to \$4 a gigajoule before the export plants were commissioned.

Earlier in this debate the Premier asked rhetorically if we were 'for' the Victorian economy. The fact is that the energy price crisis that is set to engulf this state will not only make life exceptionally difficult for households, it will take the axe to Victoria's manufacturing industry. Yet the government is doing absolutely nothing to deal with this crisis. It is doing absolutely nothing to ensure that the literally hundreds of thousands of jobs that depend on a reliable, reasonably priced energy source have a future beyond the next year or two. If the government continues to ignore the looming economic firestorm that a 35 per cent increase in electricity costs and a 50 per cent increase in gas costs will ignite, the very future of this state could be at risk.

So should we ban hydraulic fracturing? Absolutely. Should we continue the moratorium on onshore conventional gas until we get the regulatory framework right? Absolutely. But the government must start that work now. We cannot wait another five years; we cannot wait another 10. The cost to the Victorian economy and the cost to Victorian families in lost jobs and a skyrocketing cost of living is simply not sustainable.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — I am extremely proud to be able to rise today to contribute to the debate on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. This is such a significant bill. We are going to see certainty. It delivers certainty. We will see a permanent ban on the development and production of all unconventional gas in Victoria and an extension of the moratorium on conventional gas extraction out to 2020.

Following the member for Mornington, I feel as if this so-called energy price crisis is being blamed squarely on our farmers and our regional and rural communities,

and that is unfair and it is wrong. This reminds me of the debt and deficit crisis that was put on us before the last federal election. Again, that was another fraud put to the Australian public. If we are talking about rewriting history, or perhaps errors in history, I bring to the attention of the house that in 2013, during the moratorium that was put in place by the former Liberal government, I understand that four petroleum exploration payments were actually issued. They included unconventional gas as a potential target, including fracking. I will just put that on the record.

This bill, as we have heard, is all about listening to our communities. It is about listening to the science and listening to the experts. This bill is about decisive action by the Andrews Labor government to give those communities certainty and to deliver a way forward for those communities and for the clean, green future of this state. I do not think we can ever underestimate the value and importance of certainty. Certainty is something that each of us needs to shape our future. This bill is about Victoria's future — the future of our farming and rural communities, the thousands and thousands of jobs that go along with that and the families that depend on those jobs in those communities.

This is also about the future of Victoria's economy, the future of our energy production, innovation and of course our clean, green state. Obviously I do not represent farming communities in the Carrum electorate, but I do certainly represent many, many constituents who stand together with our farming communities and absolutely support this ban on fracking.

As we have heard, Victoria is the nation's top food and fibre producer. Our exports exceed \$12 billion and more than 190 000 Victorians are employed in the agricultural sector alone. Just looking at Gippsland, over one-third of Gippsland's businesses are involved in agriculture and fishing, and that is a lot of jobs for a lot of families. The dairy industry in Gippsland alone produces 21 per cent of Australia's milk, and horticultural production is huge. You do not just throw all of that away because of a Sydney-centric Prime Minister and a Sydney-centric federal Liberal government telling you to do so.

Let us look at some facts. The federal Liberal government does not act in Victoria's interests. The federal Liberal government has been dudding Victorians. Victoria is the fastest growing state and home to 25 per cent of Australia's population, yet what do we receive in federal infrastructure funding? A lousy 9 per cent. Malcolm Turnbull and the federal Liberal

government have no rational energy policy, no considered plan for our future energy need and absolutely no long-term vision that takes account of climate change or the enormous opportunities that exist for us to create thousands and thousands of jobs in the emerging renewable industry. The coalition is beholden to the coal industry at the federal level, and it is willing to sacrifice our farming communities and all the jobs that go with them and, indeed, our future potential as leaders in the renewable energy industry. And why? Because they stuffed up. The federal Liberal government's own policy has allowed gas prices to rise, and now it wants to blame our farmers. Our Victorian farmers are being blamed for its stuff up.

We do not blame our Victorian farmers. The Andrews Labor government does not say to our Victorian farmers, 'You're being hysterical; you're overreacting; you're not worth protecting'. On the contrary, we have listened to our farming communities and we have also listened to the science and to the experts. I think it is only fair that our farming community also takes on board the considered opinion of our scientists and other geological experts. They are the ones who are going to be directly impacted by all of this, and it is absolutely critical for them that their water supplies are not contaminated or compromised by fracking. They need to be satisfied that the risk to their prime agricultural land, the waterways and the aquifers are minimised and that the areas are protected.

Our Prime Minister and federal Minister for the Environment and Energy, Josh Frydenberg, have not mentioned anything about the risks to farmers and our farming communities in Victoria. They do not appear to be interested in regional economies and all the thousands of jobs that go with that and all the thousands of families who rely on those regional jobs. I have to say that until today the Victorian coalition has been silent. It has been absolutely absent, and it has not been backing our own Victorian families, that is for sure. I think it is sad for our farming communities that the coalition has shown us its flip-flopping, its hedging, its fudging and its dodging. Frankly it is showing no backbone and no support for Victorian farming communities. I feel as if the coalition has left these communities in limbo. Whether it has been too afraid to back them or too afraid to back Victorian jobs, we are not sure. We have seen this before, to the coalition's shame.

Good governments know how to back their communities. They do not do that at the last minute. They do not flip-flop. But the dithering shown by the Victorian coalition has led to heightened anxiety for so many thousands and thousands of Victorian families,

and it is unfair — it is absolutely unfair — that they have perpetrated this on our communities.

Some time ago I think it was the Leader of the Opposition who actually questioned why we were even introducing this legislation. He wondered why we could not simply continue a moratorium. I put to the Leader of the Opposition that if you ever spoke to any of the members of our farming communities, they would tell you why we need a ban on fracking, and that is certainty — certainty for their future and certainty for their communities. That response from the community has been absolutely overwhelming and near unanimous. For them that uncertainty over unconventional gas fracking has been one of the biggest and most significant issues affecting them. They want, and frankly demand and deserve, an end to that uncertainty, and that is what the Andrews Labor government is delivering to those communities. This is not a time to abandon those communities. We have seen that before. We have seen abandonment of industries like manufacturing, like our automotive industries in Victoria, and we are not going to stand for it. Jobs are too important to these communities; they are the backbone of these communities.

It appears that the coalition cares very little about our farming communities. If you take the emotion out of this and look at it objectively, it is just very hard to see how the coalition could possibly say that it has been there supporting or caring for our communities. It seems they care more about some tenuous claim that energy prices might be affected by a fracking ban, but we are talking about real people, and real people matter. Real people in real farming communities across Victoria matter. Sometimes these people, these real people, just have to come first. I submit that in this case the Andrews Labor government is putting those communities first. I absolutely commend this bill to the house.

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — I rise to make a contribution on the Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016. Let me open by clearly and categorically saying, as has been mentioned by previous speakers, that The Nationals support the ban on fracking. We need to revisit history to clarify where the government and opposition sit in relation to this matter. The reality is that some, including the previous speaker, have tried to rewrite some history on this. Fracking has only ever been approved to occur under one side of politics in this state, and that was Labor. It was banned by the coalition when it introduced the five-year moratorium in 2012. Prior to that Labor had granted 23 fracking licences and 73 exploration

licences for coal seam gas. If we have a look at the scorecard, it is nil on this side, 23 on the other.

Due to concerns raised by local councils, the Victorian Farmers Federation, farm groups and many other landholders, and because of the great unknown and the possible impact, the coalition stopped the industry that was going full steam ahead under Labor. You can see the irony in the minister calling on The Nationals and the Liberals to support the ban on an industry that has only ever occurred on his side of politics, an industry on which we introduced the original ban with a five-year moratorium. It was a decision, as was documented at the time, that did not sit well with all within the industry, but it was a decision that was made because of concerns that were being expressed by a number of our communities, mainly our food producers.

The voices I have listened to as we were going through this campaign were not those who were from outside the area, who were pulling up files and pulling up stories from mishaps around various parts of the world. It was the request of the farmers, often second and third generation, who simply did not want this going ahead. They did not want fracking. You would hear it at cattle sales, you would hear it at sporting events and you would hear it socially. There was clearly a high level of concern from what I would refer to generally as salt-of-the-earth people. These people welcomed the ban that we introduced in 2012. At the time it was a case of saying — the commentary in *Hansard* from that time will reflect that many speakers said this — that until we find out more about this industry that was introduced by the previous government and until we can assess the risks, we will stop this industry that the previous government was allowing to flourish.

Since that time we have had several inquiries, including one by the Auditor-General that outlined and expressed various concerns and risks. I guess an interesting point is that the discussions I have had on this issue since I have been in Parliament have included discussions with two geologists who by their own admission stated that they believe there are no coal seam gas (CSG) deposits in Victoria despite the fact that in the initial stages of this debate, when it hit the media, it was all about CSG.

I have lived in my electorate all the 50 years of my life, and I guess as all in this chamber do, particularly country members to a degree, I care enormously about the area that I represent. At different times as members of Parliament we are asked to make an assessment and make a call on different developments and different industries that are being proposed for our regions. Of course there are some people in all areas who do not

want any change — they do not want any new industry, they oppose development and they generally oppose growth. I am not one of those people; I think our regions need to be open for business and development. But ultimately you need to make a decision on these proposals that constantly come forward — they do — by weighing up all the available evidence, taking into consideration local views and then making a decision on whether you think this is a good or bad thing for your area, your region and your state.

This is what The Nationals did in coalition. That is why we introduced the original five-year moratorium. This is why we adopted the stance that we did — a stance that is reflected in the bill that we are debating here today. As I said, every decision you make in relation to your region and support or do not support will attract different responses, ranging from people who are extremely supportive to at times levels of angst. But at the end of the day you have got to be able to sit down and live with your own conscience, after weighing everything up, and be satisfied with the decision that you have made as an individual. That is why I support, and The Nationals support, the permanent ban on fracking.

The other element of this bill is the moratorium on conventional gas exploration and development until 2020. Now, the minister has said that this will allow for scientific, technical and environmental studies to be carried out on conventional gas — not dissimilar commentary to what was taking place here in 2012 in relation to unconventional gas. He said that these studies will look at the risks, the benefits and the impacts of conventional gas. This is a discussion that we do need to have, and it is a discussion that we need to have sensibly. The major reason for this discussion is that we have recently seen the forced closure of Hazelwood, and that has resulted in electricity prices going up between 10 and 20 per cent. This puts an enormous strain on not only small businesses and large businesses within our regions but also households, which are in a situation where their wages have not gone up 10 and 20 per cent to compensate for the power prices that we have.

Of course we have to transition to a greater use of renewables, but while we are having that discussion as a state, we always need to be talking about what is going to provide baseload power to our businesses, to industries and to households, and that is why we need to have that constant and ongoing discussion in relation to conventional gas use. If power prices do continue to rise without us exploring all available options, it will result in further business closures, and it will certainly result in further job losses. It would be remiss of us as

MPs on either side of the chamber to not be encouraging our having a good, hard, strong look at all of those available opportunities.

One of the areas where I think this government has not been as proactive as it should have been is in exploring all of those options to combat the increasing energy prices. We have had the big tax on Hazelwood and we have seen the implications of that, but we need to explore other options. I wind up this contribution by saying we support the ban on fracking.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Osborne Primary School

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — (12 215) I raise a matter this evening for the Minister for Education. The action I seek is that the minister refer sufficient funds to the 2017 budget to permit the commencement of urgently needed works at Osborne Primary School.

This is a matter that I have raised on a number of occasions in this Parliament. As I have previously advised the house, in 2014 then minister Dixon announced funding of \$960 000 for the school. Unfortunately that was not a commitment that was kept by Labor although, to be fair, a modest amount has been allocated — in fact a very modest amount. There have been two modest amounts, both from the condition assessment report process.

In contrast, the coalition committed a significant amount, and as I have also noted previously in the house, there was a legitimate expectation that an improving budgetary position would in fact allow a total rebuild.

In his response the current Minister for Education indicated that he would ensure that Osborne was on his radar. If it is, then he will know that the school has a dedicated and skilled staff and excellent school leadership but that the condition of the fabric still lets the school down.

The paucity of funding provided by Labor means that no major works can be undertaken — in fact only minor works, and then only in a piecemeal way. As the president of the school council has noted in correspondence:

... my fear is that when the works from this allocation is complete, that our school grounds will resemble a patchwork quilt, rather than a playground. This round of funding, I understand, is to be devoted to repairing water pipes and electrical cables, all of which are located underground, and will see us lift sections of the asphalted area where our basketball courts are located.

That is precisely why this school needs to have the appropriate funds allocated — to allow those works to be undertaken, and in a way that enables completion.

Labor promised for many years that it would completely rebuild the school. Of course, like 200 others, that rebuild never eventuated. The school is now growing, and we need those decade-old promises kept. To again quote the president of the school council:

Our school is struggling to deliver a 21st century standard of education utilising 20th century infrastructure. We all want the best education for our children, but sometimes I feel our 630-plus students, and growing, just have to 'make do' with whatever we can put together.

This is a school community that has worked hard for a very long time. They have made a terrific contribution to the school, but they simply cannot rebuild it on their own. They need the government to provide this funding, and they need the government to do it in this budget. I urge the minister not to let this plea fall again on deaf ears.

Sunbury Road duplication

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — (12 216) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I seek is for the minister to join me in inspecting Sunbury Road from where it joins the Tullamarine Freeway next to Melbourne Airport through to its entrance in Sunbury at the top of Goonawarra hill. This is a very important road. It is one of two main carriageways into Sunbury and one that has experienced significant pressure due to growth in Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges region.

I note the member for Macedon recently traversed Sunbury and Lancefield roads with the minister to discuss future duplication and the condition of the roads. I am fully supportive of this, as are the many residents in my electorate who use this road.

Sunbury Road, however, is experiencing significant pressures. At some points it is a dual carriageway, in others it is a single-lane carriageway. Residents have certainly relayed their frustrations to me about the pressure points and those interchanges where it is a dual and then single-lane carriageway. The congestion, the large volume of traffic in both the morning and afternoon peaks, and the proximity to Melbourne

international airport are all placing significant stress on Sunbury Road.

A key issue also remains — that is, the two-lane bluestone bridge in Bulla. The bridge, despite being aesthetically pleasing, cannot cater for the volume of traffic that currently uses it. There are a number of pressing, urgent matters to do with the bridge, and certainly in my view the construction of the Bulla bypass and the duplication of Sunbury Road, which has long been talked about, cannot happen soon enough. The future growth of Sunbury's south into Diggers Rest through precinct structure plans 1074 and 1075, as well as the growth along that further Macedon Ranges corridor, is happening reasonably quickly, and I ask the minister to join with me in inspecting the road at his earliest opportunity.

Heyfield timber mill

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — (12 217) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Agriculture, and the action I seek is for the minister to commit to the security of timber supply for the Australian Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH) mill in Heyfield. As the minister would well know, in January the mill owners announced the possible closure of the mill due to the amount of timber being offered by VicForests being greatly reduced. ASH employs 250 people locally, and the companies it supplies employ around 7000 people in Victoria alone, the majority of those in Melbourne, so this should be of great interest to all members in this house.

Negotiations commenced under the previous government in late 2014. An agreement for the supply of 155 000 cubic metres was on the table for 10 years, with the option of a further 10 years. Now, just over two years later, the offer from VicForests is 80 000 cubic metres. When questioned by the media on why the offer was 150 000 and is now 80 000, VicForests has said on a number of occasions that the missing 70 000 is predominantly due to the increased areas being put into reserve, primarily for Leadbeater's possum habitat.

It should come as no surprise to the minister that if you oversee large areas being placed into reserve and do not replace those areas, something has to give. The minister has failed to deal with this and on face value was seemingly ignoring that this was occurring and hoping it would go away. It was never going to go away. When you allow a resource to be taken and you do not replace it, a time like this is always going to arrive.

I am aware that the minister has recently set up a working party to give herself four weeks to achieve an outcome, and this will discuss such things as longer term supply and the greater use of plantation timber. These matters relate to longer term outcomes over the next 20 to 25 years because the plantation timber is not in the ground now to call on.

Whilst I support these discussions, it is the short to medium-term future of the mill that needs securing, and I request that the minister put the minds of the workers and their families at rest by providing a guarantee of supply for at least the next seven to 10 years. The timber was there two years ago — it has not evaporated into thin air — and there is nothing to stop the minister providing this short to medium-term security. All it needs is the political will.

So I ask the minister, while her working party is going about its business, to provide some guarantees to these families by securing their jobs in the short to medium term and securing the future of Heyfield.

Greenvale Reservoir Park

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — (12 218) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Noting the recent successful community open day for the plans to upgrade Greenvale Reservoir Park, can the minister please provide residents with an update on these plans and advise how residents can give their feedback?

Greenvale Reservoir Park has been a hub for locals in the Yuroke electorate for many years. I know locals have greatly enjoyed its facilities and open spaces, and I am sure it will continue to be a valuable community resource. That is why the news of a \$1.4 million upgrade has been greatly welcomed, and I thank residents and community groups, including the Craigieburn scouts, for attending the recent open day. The open day was a valuable chance to hear from Parks Victoria and landscape architects, and I am sure all residents will be grateful for an update from the minister and news about how they can contribute their feedback to the plans.

Rutherglen bypass

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) — (12 219) I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I seek is that the minister ensure that planning for a heavy vehicle bypass at Rutherglen be progressed as a matter of priority.

In the lead-up to the last federal election the Australian government announced substantial new investments in land transport infrastructure in Benambra, including \$4 million for the Kiewa Valley Highway upgrade and \$2 million to undertake planning for the Rutherglen bypass. The \$2 million for Rutherglen is specifically for planning to deliver a viable long-term route for heavy vehicles. The Victorian government has announced that it has agreed to match the funding for these projects. The federal government funding for Rutherglen will be released once the planning project is ready to commence.

The Indigo Shire Council is very keen to progress this planning. The need for a heavy vehicle detour in Rutherglen has been a perennial issue for residents, politicians and governments, but recent developments have exacerbated the problem. The creation of a regional Woolworths distribution centre, the relocation of the Wodonga cattle saleyards and the development of the Wodonga TAFE driver training centre, all located at Barnawartha, have been drivers in jobs and growth for the region, but a number of heavy vehicles are now using the town's narrow thoroughfare. A major rail freight siding has now also begun operations and potentially will add to the heavy vehicle traffic.

Constituents in Rutherglen and visitors to the area are concerned for their safety when getting in and out of their cars or simply crossing the street. A recently imposed 40-kilometre-an-hour speed limit has had little effect on mitigating the problem. Main Street, Rutherglen, was designed for horses and buggies, not B-doubles. Indigo shire is very keen to impress on all the importance of and the need for the release of some funds for interim works to get some trucks out of Main Street, Rutherglen.

Residents and tourists deserve this project to be progressed. A full report by Aurecon, commissioned by Indigo shire and VicRoads in 2010, shortlisted four alternate routes and considered environmental, social, economic and transport issues for all four options. The findings of part one of the study were presented to the Rutherglen community on 10 June 2009. It has been almost eight years, and there have been changes of government, but the statutory bodies have been working progressively on this issue.

Now that announcements have been made about financial commitments, that is certainly a positive step in the right direction for all governments over the last eight years. The Rutherglen community feels that the matter keeps ending up in the too-hard basket, and I look forward to the response from the minister.

Ballarat railway station precinct

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — (12 220) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Regional Development in the other place. The action I am seeking is that the minister outline the actions the department is taking to progress the Ballarat station precinct's redevelopment, including a detailed explanation of the significant economic benefits that will flow from the redevelopment of surplus land adjacent to the precinct.

Ballarat is fortunate to have one of the most beautiful stations in Victoria. But despite my positive view of Ballarat, the precinct surrounding this heritage-listed building is simply derelict. The Andrews government's actions to redevelop this underutilised and neglected part of central Ballarat will make a huge difference to the city.

The first stage of the redevelopment is really exciting. The heritage goods shed, currently in a disgraceful state, will be brought back to life as a convention centre and together with a 77-room, 4-star hotel, will increase the breadth of Ballarat's tourism offering, all while maintaining the heritage of the precinct and Ballarat station's role as a transport hub. But from my perspective the most important aspect is that this massive \$44 million investment in the station precinct will create jobs in construction and an ongoing economic boost to Ballarat.

Disappointingly the Save Our Station group is talking down this project and threatening confidence in Ballarat's future. Their proposal would rip \$19 million of private investment in this important project out of Ballarat. Scrapping this major redevelopment project, including the private investment in the project, would cost jobs both in construction and in the operation of the facilities to be constructed. I ask the minister to outline the expected economic benefits from this project because there is a degree of misinformation being peddled by this group about this great project.

Country Fire Authority Inglewood station

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — (12 221) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Emergency Services, and the action I seek is for him to ensure that an appropriately designed new fire station for Inglewood is commissioned and delivered during 2017. The Inglewood fire station is 153 years old. The brigade believes it to be the oldest fire station still operating in Victoria. Due to its size and location it cannot be extended. The current station is manifestly inadequate. Not all the firefighting vehicles fit in the station at one

time; there is no turnout room and men and women firefighters dress in an open locker area at the back of the tracks. Inglewood fire station is also the location for the group incident control room, yet there is no room for this important activity. The back meeting room cannot hold the entire brigade for meetings.

A new site is available. Region 20, to which the brigade belongs, has designated this new station as its number one priority. However, I have been contacted by the fire brigade captain, Mr Andrew Smith, who is dismayed on a number of levels about the way the negotiations are going. This relates to both the timing and the scope of the new fire station. The brigade has now been told that despite this being the number one project for the region it is very unlikely that it will be funded in the upcoming budget. So I say to the Minister for Emergency Services: why would that be the case for the number one project? It should be funded.

The other problem is that what is being offered is a type 1C1R station, which the brigade believes is inadequate for their needs, particularly because it only offers two bays and they need three to put their vehicles in. There is no group incident control room in the plan. The plan offers non-gender-specific toilets and a non-gender-specific turnout room. The brigade has a number of women firefighters and has specifically requested that they have male and female facilities. There is also no community meeting room, and this is particularly important for this brigade because it is very integrated into its community. It also needs a kitchen. All of these things appear to be too hard for the CFA to manage, so I would ask the minister to take a particular interest in this and move towards having this important facility delivered in Inglewood in this financial year.

Women in sport

Ms WARD (Eltham) — (12 222) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Sport, and the action I seek is for the minister to look at how the Andrews government can further invest in community sports facilities that are inclusive of girls and women.

Last Friday's inaugural AFLW game was a lockout, a fantastic hit. The whole weekend was a wonderful and historic celebration of women's footy, with over 60 000 people attending AFLW games and the 100 girls who attended Eltham Junior Football Club's girls footy skills day on Sunday. We know our female cricketers are smashing the world, our netballers are world champions and our Matildas are strong and successful. The sports pages now have women's sport role models for girls. Meg Lanning, Daisy Pearce and Moana Hope have now become household names.

Women and girls participating in sport is experiencing massive growth.

I note that last week the Minister for Sport and the Minister for Health launched the Changing Our Game — Advancing Gender Equality in Sport for Women and Girls program, which is a \$7.5 million program to further boost the profile of women's sport, increase women's and girls' participation in sport and highlight the importance of women's leadership in sport. Both ministers are to be commended for this initiative, which will build on the grassroots surge in girls' participation in sport that we are currently seeing.

The Andrews Labor government has already committed \$10 million to invest in female-friendly change rooms for grassroots sport across the state, with the Eltham Wildcats and the Research Junior Football Club benefiting from this grant, and I thank the minister for his support of my community. The days of girls having to change with a towel wrapped around them next to their car before and after sport are numbered. I ask the minister to advise me what growth he is expecting to see in girls' participation in grassroots sport and what preparations he is making for the additional added infrastructure that will be required to meet this demand.

Pakenham bus services

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) — (12 223) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is for the minister to review the current public bus routes in and around Pakenham with a view to adding further services connecting the northern and southern parts of Pakenham, particularly during the hours before and after school.

A constituent has brought to my attention the bus routes and timetables for Pakenham whilst trying to figure out the best way for her children living south of the highway to catch public transport to school if they attend a school close to the Princes Highway and access the schools north of the highway. Her son currently attends Beaconhills College in Pakenham. Whilst geographically the home is not far from the school, it is a decent walk — very close to 1 hour if using main roads, or less if using Toomuc Creek walking track, which many consider unsafe for walking alone.

Families living in Heritage Springs off McGregor Road, which includes a congested railway crossing that I have brought to the minister's attention on many occasions, are driving their children to many schools along the highway, including Pakenham Secondary College, Pakenham Consolidated School, Beaconhills College, Lakeside Lutheran college, St Francis Xavier

College, St Clare's Primary School and Heritage College, which are further down in Officer, because there is no other reasonable way to get there. This return trip, which is relatively short in distance, can take upwards of an hour during peak times.

It appears that the bus routes have not been altered in recent times to take into consideration the growing population south of the highway and the newer schools that have been built north of the highway. The traffic on McGregor Road in the morning and afternoon peak would be reduced if public transport in the form of buses was available to carry 50 passengers at a time, rather than 25 cars fully loaded with parents and children off to school or on their return trip home. There is no direct bus from the estates south of the railway track to the highway, which is clearly not adequate for a growing community. There is even evidence of at least one family using Uber to transport their children home from school.

I am asking the minister to add bus services in Pakenham to transport our students and other members of the public safely to their desired destinations.

Macedon electorate internet connectivity

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — (12 224) The adjournment matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, and the action I seek is for the minister to join me in my electorate to speak to small business owners and employers regarding the accessibility of fast and reliable internet in Macedon. The Turnbull government promised the people of my electorate that they would all have access to, and I quote, 'super fast internet' by the end of last year. Well, here we are: it is February 2017 and what do we see? Not super fast internet, not even fast internet. What we see is a federal Liberal government failing on its election commitments and failing the people of my electorate.

Over the summer I had the chance to talk to a number of business owners that employ locals, including many young apprentices. Our federal government should be ensuring these businesses have the 21st century infrastructure they need to grow their businesses and build employment locally. Instead telecommunications infrastructure projects here in Victoria have continually been underfunded by the federal Liberal government, and this has caused delay after delay to the rollout of the national broadband network in my electorate.

A number of weeks ago I had the opportunity to visit the owners and operators at Mt William Advanced Tree Nursery — and what a fantastic place it is. They took the time to outline to me just how competitive their

market is and how detrimental poor telecommunications connections are to the success of their business. They grow trees for months and months in anticipation of contracts, yet when it comes time to bid for contracts, frustratingly, their connection is so slow and intermittent that uploading one file can take hours and hours.

The Turnbull government continues to delay the delivery of vital infrastructure to regional Victoria and to my electorate. I look forward to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade visiting my electorate to meet with business owners. Together we will hold this Turnbull federal Liberal coalition government to account.

Responses

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — The member for Mornington raised a matter for the Minister for Education seeking more funds for works at Osborne Primary School. The member for Sunbury raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety seeking that he inspect the Sunbury Road-Tullamarine Freeway interchange. The member for Gippsland East raised a matter for the Minister for Agriculture seeking timber security supply for Australian Sustainable Hardwoods. The member for Yuroke raised a matter for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change seeking an update on the upgraded Greenvale Reservoir Park. The member for Benambra raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety seeking progress on the Rutherglen heavy vehicle bypass.

The member for Wendouree raised a matter for the Minister for Regional Development seeking that she outline the actions to progress the Ballarat station redevelopment and the economic benefits thereof. The member for Ripon raised a matter for the Minister for Emergency Services seeking funding for an appropriately designed fire station for Inglewood. The member for Eltham raised a matter for the Minister for Sport seeking further investment in community sports facilities inclusive of girls and women. The member for Bass raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport seeking a review of public bus routes in and around Pakenham. The member for Macedon raised a matter for the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade seeking a meeting of small business owners in Macedon regarding reliable internet connections. I will pass all those matters on to the relevant ministers.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 7.24 p.m.