

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

Thursday, 20 September 2018

(Extract from book 13)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

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

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

Speaker

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

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER (to 25 February 2017)

Deputy Speaker

Ms J. MAREE EDWARDS (from 7 March 2017)

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

Acting Speakers

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

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. M. J. GUY

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

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals

Ms S. RYAN

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn ²	Polwarth	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent ³	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio ⁴	Melton	Ind
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Ms Roma ¹	South-West Coast	LP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John ⁵	Morwell	Ind
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁶	Gippsland South	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Paynter, Mr Brian Francis	Bass	LP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison ⁷	Northcote	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Riordan, Mr Richard ⁸	Polwarth	LP
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Ringwood	LP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian ⁹	Gippsland South	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Fyffe, Mrs Christine Anne	Evelyn	LP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux	Brunswick	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Graley, Ms Judith Ann	Narre Warren South	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahan	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Thorpe, Ms Lidia Alma ¹⁰	Northcote	Greens
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clarinda	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

¹ Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ ALP until 7 March 2017

⁵ Nats until 28 August 2017

⁶ Elected 14 March 2015

⁷ Died 23 August 2017

⁸ Elected 31 October 2015

⁹ Resigned 2 February 2015

¹⁰ Elected 18 November 2017

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

Legislative Assembly committees

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

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

Legislative Assembly select committees

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

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Noonan and Ms Thomson. (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes.

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

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

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

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

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

House Committee — (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr J. Bull, Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Staikos, Ms Suleyman and Mr Thompson. (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, Ms 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*): Dr Carling-Jenkins and Mr Gepp.

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

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

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Thursday, 20 September 2018

The SPEAKER (Hon. Colin Brooks) took the chair at 9.33 a.m. and read the prayer.

NOTICES OF MOTION**Removal**

The SPEAKER (09:34) — I wish to advise the house that notice of motion 13 will be removed from the notice paper unless the member wishing their notice to remain advises the Clerk in writing before 2.00 p.m. today.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Woorayl Street reserve, Carnegie

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the residents, businesses and broader community of the City of Glen Eira points out to the house that:

the City of Glen Eira has the least amount of open space per person of any council area in Melbourne; and

more residents live beyond the recommended 400 metres distance from open space than anywhere else in Victoria.

Yet a precious opportunity to protect and secure vital open space in central Carnegie is about to be lost with the state government's plans for development of the Woorayl Street reserve, Carnegie.

This will also be at the expense of significant river red gums, each more than 100 years old — in addition to the numerous established trees already lost to level crossing removal works in Carnegie, Murrumbeena and Hughesdale.

The linear park being created along the rail corridor will be narrow and at times overshadowed, without the direct physical and community links essential to the livability of our rapidly growing suburbs and not close to our local shopping villages.

Glen Eira deserves quality open space with good access to natural light close to our villages, like the Woorayl Street reserve in Carnegie.

The petitioners request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria put a stop to anything that will further eat up precious opportunities for open space in Glen Eira by:

abandoning its plans to build a large, high-rise development on the Woorayl Street reserve in Carnegie and gifting this open space back to the community.

By Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (851 signatures).

Blackburn–Railway roads, Blackburn

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the safety issues for pedestrians and other road users at the roundabout intersection of Blackburn Road and Railway Road in Blackburn.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria call on the Victorian government to improve safety at this intersection as a matter of priority.

By Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (79 signatures).

Voluntary assisted dying

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents of Victoria draws the attention of the house to:

1. the inherent value of every human life;
2. the fact that the state of Victoria has legislated to end the execution of convicted criminals;
3. the state of Victoria has promoted campaigns to reduce the large number of suicides in this state;
4. prior to the passage of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017 to assist a person in an act of suicide was a felony in Victoria;
5. the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017 legalises doctor-prescribed suicide in which a doctor facilitates a patient's act of self-killing, or suicide, by prescribing a lethal poison which the patient takes to kill himself or herself;
6. the act legalises state-sanctioned extrajudicial executions of patients by doctors when patients cannot kill themselves by suicide.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria introduce and pass a bill for an act to repeal at the first possible opportunity the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017.

By Mr WATT (Burwood) (450 signatures).

Drug driving

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

We the undersigned citizens of Victoria draw to the attention of the house community concerns about people who drive while under the influence of drugs and, in particular, those who repeatedly offend.

The petitioners therefore respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Victoria calls on the Victorian government to legislate harsher penalties for drivers who have been found guilty of driving while under the influence of drugs and subsequently reoffend.

By Mr BURGESS (Hastings) (158 signatures).

Police numbers

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the legislative Assembly that Premier Daniel Andrews has failed to commit to providing additional police numbers and subsequently, as Victoria's population grows, the number of police per head goes backwards under Labor every day.

The petitioners therefore respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria calls on the Andrews Labor government to commit to providing additional frontline police numbers as a matter of priority.

By Mr BURGESS (Hastings) (18 signatures).

St Dunstan's Anglican Kindergarten

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents of Camberwell, Glen Iris and Hawthorn draws to the attention of the House the unsafe driving practices such as speeding which are occurring around St Dunstan's kindergarten on Wattle Valley Road, Camberwell, putting at risk the safety of the children attending the kindergarten.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria call on the Victorian government and VicRoads to reduce the speed limit outside St Dunstan's kindergarten on Wattle Valley Road, Camberwell to 40 km.

By Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) (38 signatures).

Baimbridge College

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of residents in the state of Victoria draws the attention of the house to concerns regarding the failure of the Andrews Labor government to fund the redevelopment of Hamilton's Baimbridge College.

The petition requests that the Andrews Labor government immediately provide funding to enable redevelopment and site consolidation works at Hamilton's Baimbridge College to support its students, staff and the wider school community.

By Ms KEALY (Lowan) (66 signatures).

Warracknabeal education precinct

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of residents in the state of Victoria draws the attention of the house to the need for urgent funding to allow consolidation of the Warracknabeal special school, secondary college and primary school on the one site.

The petition requests that the Andrews Labor government immediately provide funding to enable the Warracknabeal education precinct to be completed for the direct benefit of students and their teachers.

By Ms KEALY (Lowan) (309 signatures).

Walmer Street bridge, Kew

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of Walmer Street bridge users, and as Victorian residents, draws to the attention of the house the following:

The Walmer Street bridge, comprising the river and land bridge sections, which is heavily used by pedestrians and bike riders, is narrow, crowded and a hazard to all users.

Its width (1.7 metres at its narrowest) is insufficient to cope safely with the heavy utilisation by pedestrians and bike riders, as determined by Boroondara City Council usage counts and a recent safety audit.

The bridge is strategically important as it is a key link in the principal bicycle network and a bicycle priority route.

As such, it provides a vital link for the communities of Kew, Richmond, Abbotsford and beyond, providing sustainable and ready access to nearby parkland, transport hubs, businesses and community services.

A new bridge urgently needs to be built across the Yarra River at Walmer Street for the changing needs of the rapidly increasing population of the Abbotsford and Kew areas.

Your petitioners therefore request that to ensure the safety of the rapidly growing number of users, and to avoid potential closure of the bridge, the state government urgently fund a replacement, with a contemporary design, that meets both current standards and the needs of the growing number of users, in keeping with Melbourne's reputation as a world-class liveable city.

By Mr T. SMITH (Kew) (3080 signatures).

Capel Caravan Park

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the residents of the electorate of Nepean draws to the attention of the house:

1. The recent sale of the Capel Caravan Park in Capel Sound, currently with a 90 per cent occupancy of permanent residents, equating to 100 families and individuals who now face an uncertain future.
2. That the government take all steps necessary to assist residents to find alternative affordable accommodation should they choose to relocate.
3. That, as part of the current review of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, the government investigate protections for tenants against financial loss should a residential caravan park be sold.
4. A compensation regime already exists in NSW and could at a minimum be considered in Victoria in order to assist vulnerable residents to relocate.
5. That the costs for such relocation assistance may be far less than providing emergency housing and rental subsidy over the longer term to otherwise homeless residents.

By Mr DIXON (Nepean) (19 signatures).

Metro railway station announcements

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly:

This petition of residents of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house that the below signed request the Minister for Public Transport direct Melbourne metropolitan train authority (Metro) to reduce the noise pollution created by announcements at stations on the sky rail between Caulfield and Dandenong and in particular the removal of the bell tones at the start of the announcements. The amenity of residents has been further diminished by the intrusive nature of the announcements as the sound travels far further with the introduction of the elevated rail.

We respectfully request that the minister acts without delay to direct Metro to delete the notification bells from the start of announcements and reduce the volume of the announcements.

By Ms STALEY (Ripon) (30 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petition presented by the honourable member for Burwood be considered next day of sitting by Mr WATT (Burwood).

Ordered that petition presented by the honourable member for Nepean be considered next day of sitting by Mr DIXON (Nepean).

Ordered that petition presented by the honourable member for Hawthorn be considered next day of sitting by Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn).

**CONSUMER POLICY RESEARCH
CENTRE**

Report 2017–18

Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation), by leave, presented report.

Tabled.

**PENALTY RATES AND FAIR PAY SELECT
COMMITTEE**

Penalty rates and fair pay

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Industrial Relations), by leave, presented government response.

Tabled.

DOCUMENTS**Tabled by Acting Clerk:**

Accident Compensation Conciliation Service — Report 2017–18

Adult, Community and Further Education Board — Report 2017–18

Agriculture Victoria Services Pty Ltd — Report 2017–18

Albury Wodonga Health — Report 2017–18

Alexandra District Health — Report 2017–18

Alfred Health — Report 2017–18

AMES Australia — Report 2017–18

Asset Confiscation Operations — Report 2017–18

Auditor-General:

Contract Management Capability in DHHS: Service Agreements — Ordered to be published

Report 2017–18

State Purchase Contracts — Ordered to be published

Austin Health — Report 2017–18

Australian Centre for the Moving Image — Report 2017–18

Australian Grand Prix Corporation — Report 2017–18

Ballarat General Cemeteries Trust — Report 2017–18

Ballarat Health Services — Report 2017–18

Barwon Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18

Bass Coast Health — Report 2017–18

Benalla Health — Report 2017–18

Bendigo Cemeteries Trust — Report 2017–18

Bendigo Health Care Group — Report 2017–18

Casterton Memorial Hospital — Report 2017–18

CenITex — Report 2017–18

Central Gippsland Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18

Central Highlands Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18

City West Water Corporation — Report 2017–18

Cohuna Community Nursing Home Inc — Report 2017–18

Coliban Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18

Commission for Children and Young People — Report 2017–18 — Ordered to be published

Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection — Report 2017–18 — Ordered to be published	Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee
Community Visitors — Report 2017–18 under s 35 of the <i>Disability Act 2006</i> , s 224 of the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> and s 195 of the <i>Supported Residential Services (Private Proprietors) Act 2010</i> — Ordered to be published	Report from the Minister for Women that she had received the Report 2017–18 of the Queen Victoria Women’s Centre Trust
<i>Confiscation Act 1997</i> — Report 2017–18 under s 139A	Forensic Leave Panel — Report 2017
Consumer Affairs Victoria — Report 2017–18 — Ordered to be published	Geelong Cemeteries Trust — Report 2017–18
Corangamite Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18	Geelong Performing Arts Centre Trust — Report 2017–18
Coronial Council of Victoria — Report 2017–18	Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation Ltd — Report 2017–18
Dairy Food Safety Victoria — Report 2017–18	Gippsland and Southern Rural Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
Dental Health Services Victoria — Report 2017–18	Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18
Djerriwarrh Health Services — Report 2017–18	Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18
Docklands Studios Melbourne Pty Ltd — Report 2017–18	Goulburn Murray Rural Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18	Goulburn Valley Health — Report 2017–18
East Gippsland Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18	Goulburn Valley Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
East Grampians Health Service — Report 2017–18	Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
Eastern Health — Report 2017–18	Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust — Report 2017–18
Echuca Regional Health — Report 2017–18	Harness Racing Victoria — Report 2017–18
Education and Training, Department of — Report 2017–18	Health Complaints Commissioner — Report 2017–18
Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme — Report 2017–18	Health Purchasing Victoria — Report 2017–18
Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Department of — Report 2017–18	Heathcote Health — Report 2017–18
Essential Services Commission — Report 2017–18	Hesse Rural Health Service — Report 2017–18
<i>Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958</i> — Report 2017–18 under s 42BI	Infrastructure Victoria — Report 2017–18
Film Victoria — Report 2016–17 (<i>in lieu of report previously tabled on Tuesday 21 September 2017</i>)	Judicial Entitlements Panel — Own Motion Recommendations to the Attorney-General
Film Victoria — Report 2017–18	Justice and Regulation, Department of — Report 2017–18
<i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> :	Kardinia Park Stadium Trust — Report 2017–18
Financial Report for the State of Victoria 2017–18, incorporating Quarterly Financial Report No 4 — Ordered to be published	Kilmore and District Hospital — Report 2017–18
Reports from the Minister for Agriculture that she had received the reports 2017–18 of the:	Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner — Report 2017–18
Phytogene Pty Ltd	Legal Practitioners’ Liability Committee — Report 2017–18
Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria	Library Board of Victoria — Report 2017–18
	Lower Murray Urban and Rural Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
	Mallee Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18

Maryborough District Health Service — Report 2017–18	Premier and Cabinet, Department of — Report 2017–18
Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust — Report 2017–18	PrimeSafe — Report 2017–18
Melbourne Health — Report 2017–18	Public Interest Monitor — Report 2017–18
Melbourne Port Lessor Pty Ltd — Report 2017–18	Public Record Office Victoria — Report 2017–18
Melbourne Recital Centre — Report 2017–18	Public Transport Development Authority — Report 2017–18
Melbourne Water Corporation — Report 2017–18	Racing Integrity Commissioner — Report 2017–18
<i>Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978</i> — Summary of Returns June 2018 and Summary of Variations Notified between 10 July 2018 and 14 September 2018 — Ordered to be published	Radiation Advisory Committee — Report 2017–18
Mental Health Tribunal — Report 2017–18	<i>Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017</i> — Victorian Renewable Energy Target 2017–18 Progress Report
Mercy Hospitals Victoria Ltd — Report 2017–18	Residential Tenancies Bond Authority — Report 2017–18
Mildura Cemeteries Trust — Report 2017–18	Road Safety Camera Commissioner — Report 2017–18
Monash Health — Report 2017–18	Roads Corporation — Report 2017–18
Museums Board of Victoria — Report 2017–18	Robinvale District Health Services — Report 2017–18
National Gallery of Victoria — Report 2017–18	Rolling Stock Holdings (Victoria) Pty Ltd — Report 2017–18
<i>National Parks Act 1975</i> — Report 2017–18 on the working of the Act	Rolling Stock (Victoria-VL) Pty Ltd — Report 2017–18
National Parks Advisory Council — Report 2017–18	Rolling Stock (VL-1) Pty Ltd — Report 2017–18
North Central Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18	Rolling Stock (VL-2) Pty Ltd — Report 2017–18
North East Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18	Rolling Stock (VL-3) Pty Ltd — Report 2017–18
North East Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18	Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria — Report 2017–18
Northeast Health Wangaratta — Report 2017–18	Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital — Report 2017–18
Northern Health — Report 2017–18	Royal Women's Hospital — Report 2017–18
Numurkah District Health Service — Report 2017–18	Seymour Health — Report 2017–18
Orbost Regional Health — Report 2017–18	Shrine of Remembrance Trustees — Report 2017–18
Otway Health — Report 2017–18	South East Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
<i>Parliamentary Committees Act 2003</i> — Government response to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's Report on the 2016–17 Financial and Performance Outcomes	South Gippsland Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
Peninsula Health — Report 2017–18	South West Healthcare — Report 2017–18
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre — Report 2017–18	Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust — Report 2017–18
Phillip Island Nature Parks — Report 2017–18	St Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne) Ltd — Report 2017–18
Police Registration and Services Board — Report 2017–18	State Electricity Commission of Victoria — Report 2017–18
Port of Hastings Development Authority — Report 2017–18	Statutory Rules under the following Acts:
Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18	<i>County Court Act 1958</i> — SR 134
Portland District Health — Report 2017–18	<i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> — SR 122
	<i>Forests Act 1958</i> — SRs 123, 124
	<i>National Parks Act 1975</i> — SRs 125, 126
	<i>Subordinate Legislation Act 1994</i> — SR 121
	<i>Supreme Court Act 1986</i> — SRs 131, 132, 133

- Transport Superannuation Act 1988* — SR 130
- Water Industry Act 1994* — SR 127
- Wildlife Act 1975* — SRs 128, 129
- Stawell Regional Health — Report 2017–18
- Subordinate Legislation Act 1994* — Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 121, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 137
- Surveillance Devices Act 1999* — Reports 2017–18 under s 30L (three reports)
- Swan Hill District Health — Report 2017–18
- Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003* — Report 2017–18 under s 13ZR
- Timboon and District Healthcare Service — Report 2017–18
- Transport Accident Commission — Report 2017–18
- Treasury and Finance, Department of — Report 2017–18
- Treasury Corporation of Victoria — Report 2017–18
- Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal — Report 2017–18
- Victims of Crime Commissioner — Report 2017–18
- Victoria Grants Commission — Report 2017–18
- Victoria Police — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Arts Centre Trust — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Broiler Industry Negotiation Committee — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Catchment Management Council — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Coastal Council — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Electoral Commission — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Environmental Water Holder — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Funds Management Corporation — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Government Purchasing Board — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Industry Participation Policy — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Information Commissioner, Office of — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Inspectorate — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Institute of Teaching — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Legal Services Board and the Victorian Legal Services Commissioner — Report 2017–18 — Ordered to be published
- Victorian Managed Insurance Authority — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Pharmacy Authority — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Planning Authority — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Ports Corporation (Melbourne) — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Public Sector Commission — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Rail Track — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Regional Channels Authority — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation — Report 2017–18
- Victorian Small Business Commission — Report 2017–18 — Ordered to be published
- Victorian Veterans Council — Report 2017–18
- Victorian WorkCover Authority — Report 2017–18
- Wannon Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
- West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18
- West Wimmera Health Service — Report 2017–18
- Western Health — Report 2017–18
- Western Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
- Westport Region Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
- Wimmera Catchment Management Authority — Report 2017–18
- Wimmera Health Care Group — Report 2017–18
- Yarra Valley Water Corporation — Report 2017–18
- Youth Parole Board — Report 2017–18

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (09:40) — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until a day and hour to be fixed by the Speaker, which time of meeting shall be notified in writing to each member of the house.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Multicultural Festivals and Events Program

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) (09:41) — I rise to pay tribute to some of the fantastic multicultural organisations in my district. I was delighted last week to be able to advise many of my multicultural groups about support of \$36 630 through the multicultural festivals and events grants. In speaking to many of my multicultural organisations I was very heartened to hear how sometimes small amounts of funding can make an important difference for community-based organisations in getting cultural organisations to support their festivals as well. It particularly helps them improve their capacity.

When we have got newer community organisations delivering events, it can be quite a challenging and confronting experience for them when they are dealing with all of those issues around insurance matters and trying to ensure that they are supported with their corporate overheads. Congratulations to those organisations, particularly to Myly Nguyen, who runs the Moon Festival Feast and the Hobsons Bay Tet festival. They are two excellent events that our whole community enjoy. An important part of running those events is also trying to build greater inclusion in very diverse communities, so a very big thanks to all those organisations.

Felicitations

Ms HENNESSY — I would also like to place on the record my thanks to my staff for their support over the past four years at both an electorate and ministerial level. They have endured much and they have my long-term appreciation.

Fruit fly

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (09:42) — I want to raise the concerns of the fruitgrowers in my electorate who live and run businesses in the Gannawarra shire, and those concerns are around fruit fly. Mildura Rural City Council and Swan Hill Rural City Council do very good work with the fruitgrowers in their areas, but Gannawarra shire, I believe, has been dragging the chain. That is what the fruitgrowers have explained to me. I raise their concerns in this place and urge the minister to have a word with Gannawarra council to improve their program around fruit fly management, particularly for those fruitgrowers close to Kangaroo Lake.

Trevaskis–Hawdon roads, Wyuna

Mr WALSH — I would also like to raise the concerns of constituents of mine around the lack of VicRoads signage at Trevaskis and Hawdon roads at Wyuna. One of my constituent's family members suffered a serious injury at that intersection because it is poorly signed. There is a channel there and vegetation around the intersection, and it cannot be seen clearly. My constituent believes it should have better signage. They have actually approached VicRoads. VicRoads staff said that it was not a high-priority intersection and that at least six people needed to be killed at that intersection before they would actually take any action. My constituent finds that abhorrent. I find it abhorrent that VicRoads would believe there has to be a fatality at an intersection like that before they can actually do something about putting increased signage there. I would urge VicRoads to put additional signage there so there are no fatalities there in the future.

Purnell Road Integrated Child and Family Centre

Mr EREN (Minister for Sport) (09:44) — Last Friday I was honoured to turn the sod on the new Purnell Road Integrated Child and Family Centre. This project is a great example of what can be achieved in education when people work together with a common purpose. There are economic benefits from the state government and the City of Greater Geelong pooling their resources to jointly fund this integrated hub. Together we have achieved incredible value for our \$1.6 million investment and the \$11.72 million contribution from the council. There are education benefits from the construction of a new early learning facility. More children from the Corio community will be able to learn and develop in modern facilities, providing them the best start in their learning life.

As well as providing a modern 21st-century learning environment for these children, the new integrated hub will have facilities to provide health services. There is also a multipurpose space which can be used for parent groups, playgroups and other community events. Bringing all these elements together will make the new Purnell Road Child and Family Centre a one-stop shop for developing the potential of local children, supporting their families and building community bonds. Congratulations to one and all on this project, and I look forward to seeing the completed product hopefully mid-next year.

Carbon Revolution

Mr EREN — The same day, I was proud to join the Premier and the Minister for Industry and Employment at Carbon Revolution in Waurin Ponds to announce the company's \$100 million expansion. This expansion will create 500 jobs, will almost triple Carbon Revolution's existing workforce and will increase production capacity from 10 000 to more than 150 000 wheels each —

The SPEAKER — The member's time has expired.

Crime statistics

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) (09:45) — I would like to put on the record my condemnation of the Andrews government. Since they were elected in 2014, common assaults are up 38 per cent, rape is up 20.82 per cent, sexual offences against children are up 56 per cent, aggravated robbery is up 24 per cent, non-aggravated robbery is up 85 per cent and aggravated burglary is up 43 per cent.

Ms Neville interjected.

Mr BURGESS — And we are getting, unbelievably, heckled by the Minister for Police, who is under investigation. That is just incredible.

Government performance

Mr BURGESS — Over the past four years I have visited the majority of electorates across Victoria, many of them numerous times, to meet and talk to many hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses. Often it is not what they say that you learn from; it is what they do not say. Numbers of these businesses described how they had met with their local MP and a few had even met the minister, but the feeling they were given was that they were expected to sit there and listen while the MP and/or minister spoke.

There are basically two types of MP: ones who believe they were elected by their community to represent their needs in government and others who believe they were elected by their party to do their job and run their government's line with their community. From observing them in here and talking to people in their electorates, it is clear that the majority of Labor MPs are of the second type, and I have no doubt that comes from their union upbringing.

Bayside Christian College

Mr BURGESS — I want to acknowledge Bayside Christian College, Langwarrin. On 12 September I was

pleased to be invited to address year 9 Bayside Christian College students, which was great fun because it was about the role and responsibilities of a member of Parliament. I get a real buzz out of meeting with students and telling them about the role of an MP —

The SPEAKER — The member's time has expired.

Airport West Football Club

Mr CARROLL (Minister for Industry and Employment) (09:47) — 'Extraordinary. Remarkable. Unthinkable' — that is how the *Moonee Valley Leader* newspaper described the Airport West Football Club's premiership win over Tullamarine in the Essendon District Football League division 1 grand final on Saturday, 8 September. It was a game for the history books. After trailing by 46 points at half-time, Tullamarine made a comeback during the third quarter, booting 9 goals, 5 while holding Airport West scoreless to grab a six-point lead at three-quarter time. But coach Geoff Maddern's men responded with the determination the club is known for, defeating Tullamarine 107 points to 94. It capped off a historic day at Windy Hill with the division 1 reserves also beating Taylors Lakes. Taking home one flag is wonderful; two flags is brilliant.

The celebrations continued back at the club and were a great prelude for the gala celebration night. I had the pleasure of attending and presenting Bior Malual with his best and fairest medal. Congratulations to Graeme Marr, awarded Best Club Person, and also congratulations to Rob Smith. I am proudly wearing the Airport West club tie today, Speaker, in the Parliament. Thank you, Rob, for your wonderful job as a football administrator.

Jesse McVeigh was elevated to life membership, richly deserved, joining his brother Ricky, who gave an outstanding speech on what the club means to him and his family. From president Pauline McShanag down, to the mums and dads in the junior teams, to Nick Murphy on social media and all the volunteers, this is a wonderful club that should be very proud. They should also be very proud, though, of what they do in NAIDOC Week every year. They are a leader in the community, a leader in the Essendon District Football League. They recognise our Indigenous Australians and the club helps make our local community even better.

Surf Coast Secondary College

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) (09:48) — On Thursday, 13 September, I was pleased to attend the Surf Coast Secondary College school production of *The*

25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, a lighthearted and humorous look into the world of spelling bees, which was done to great success. It comprised various year levels and the school should be very proud of an excellent production. Well done to the entire school community, especially principal Scott Diamond, director Adelaide Gray, the band and the extensive crew. I would also like to congratulate the main actors Maya Supple, Levi Watson, Meg Bauerle, George Oakley, Max Neal, Charlotte Polwarth, Isabel Pekin, Hayley Isaacs and Finn Henderson, as well as the entire ensemble for a terrific show.

Modewarre Football and Netball Club

Mr KATOS — I would like to also congratulate Modewarre Football Club on their maiden premiership win over Barwon Heads, 93 to 46, in the Bellarine Football League. Not content with just winning the football, the Modewarre A-grade netball team also took out the premiership against Geelong Amateurs, 34 to 30. It was another great performance by both teams. Unfortunately the senior men's reserves lost by one point in a very thrilling game. Congratulations to the entire club — players, friends and supporters.

Recreational water users

Mr KATOS — Last week I was pleased to stand with the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal candidate for Bellarine, Brian McKiterick, and members of the Torquay Angling Club as we discussed the positive impacts that the Liberal-Nationals Blue Infrastructure Fund will have on the local community and Victoria. The fund will see first-class infrastructure and services for recreational water users, like more boat ramps, jetties and navigational lighting, as well as onshore facilities such as bigger car parks and cleaning tables being built and maintained. All the proceeds collected from boating fees will be put into improving facilities for the boating community.

Education State

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (09:50) — The slogan is on the car numberplates for everyone to see: Victoria the Education State. It means every student at every school, irrespective of their postcode, background, ethnicity, gender or sexuality, will receive a quality education. It is all about equity and excellence, and the Andrews Labor government is achieving that with record investment across the sectors — Catholic Education Office take note.

Labor has invested \$3.8 billion in Victoria's school infrastructure since being elected. More than

1300 school upgrades and 70 new school projects are being rolled out across the state, and I must mention the 10 new tech schools — state-of-the-art facilities for world-class learning. An array of innovative curriculum and student wellbeing programs is up and going, including the primary mathematics and science specialists initiative; Respectful Relationships, the Victorian anti-bullying and mental health initiative; and a favourite of mine, the Victorian Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution. And we have got the best NAPLAN results ever.

I would like to take the opportunity to commend the Minister for Education, a very determined leader. I say a big thankyou to the true believers on Team Merlino. I admire you as amazing young people, and it has been a pleasure to work with you, Ilsa Coulson, Beth Poulter, Libby Buckingham, Paul Frayne, Chris Carpenter, Ash Munoz and Sinead Mildenhall. Your commitment to our young people in our schools means they will have happier, healthier and more successful lives. Again, a big thankyou.

Ron Philpott

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (09:51) — Ron Philpott passed away in Yea surrounded by loved ones on 8 September. A large group of Murrindindi locals attended his funeral service at the Murrindindi-Woodbourne Community Hub, which included a Country Fire Authority (CFA) guard of honour. A passionate CFA volunteer since 1986, Ron was a member of the Highlands, Glenburn and Murrindindi-Woodbourne brigades, becoming captain of Murrindindi in 2002.

Living hundreds of metres from where the Marysville fire started on Black Saturday, he was first to call in the blaze over the radio. But despite evidence of electrical faults, within a week of the fire, police claimed that arson was the cause and began investigating Ronnie. Political leaders were shamefully quick to latch onto the investigation, with Kevin Rudd speaking of 'mass murder' and John Brumby and Mike Rann declaring arsonists to be terrorists. For two and a half years Victoria Police doggedly pursued their theory, which they dumped in 2011.

A small statement exonerating Ron was issued years later, but no public apology on behalf of the government was ever forthcoming. In 2014 Ron was awarded a National Emergency Medal for his service during Black Saturday. Fittingly, at his funeral he requested donations to the CFA in lieu of flowers.

Government performance

Ms McLEISH — The behaviour of the Victorian Parliamentary Labor Party, whilst astonishing, is believable because time and time again their actions reveal their true colours. On one hand they try to hide behind the veil of secrecy and privacy, such as during the red shirts rorts, while on the other hand they show little regard for the privacy of others. We saw them reveal private details of staff employed in the former Napthine government and then again try to embarrass the Leader of the Opposition.

Diabetes at School

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (09:53) — On 12 September I attended the celebration of the launch of the new guidelines, policy and development of training tools for schools to support students with type I diabetes. This was initiated by a number of parents who have children with type I diabetes who had difficulties while at school. Many parents have been raising these problems for many years and originally met with then Department of Education representatives during the Liberal-National coalition's time in state government. They got nowhere.

I am so proud of these parents, who have never given up in their efforts to change the system. A number of the children are now at university or have left school and are working full-time. However, these parents have continued to fight to ensure things are better for children in future, and now I believe they most definitely will be. I want to thank Julie Merritt, Kerrie Treveitt, Kerry Allen, Lisa Oro, Shannon MacPherson and Andrea Smith for their perseverance, determination and invaluable suggestions and comments to formulate and achieve the new Diabetes in Schools guidelines and policy. Their hard work and effort will now ensure students with diabetes have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of school life, whether it is school camps, school excursions or sport. The Labor Minister for Education has made this happen together with great support from Libby Buckingham in his office.

The finalisation of this policy and these guidelines does not mean we can do nothing; we have got to continue to —

The SPEAKER — The member for Gippsland South.

Gippsland South electorate football

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (09:54) — Spring means footy finals time, and clubs in the Gippsland South electorate have been dominant over the past two weeks. I wish to congratulate Yarram Football Netball Club on its maiden North Gippsland Football Netball League senior premierships last weekend. The Demons have been strongly competitive since entering the league from the Alberton league in 2014 and, after losing last year's grand final, made amends this year with a strong win over Churchill. Yarram also won the reserves, while Rosedale won the A-grade netball. Congratulations to all clubs.

In the Ellinbank league Nyora was the stand-out team all season but looked in trouble in the low-scoring grand final against Longwarry before steadying the ship to record a 4-point win. Well done to all at the Saints on a fantastic season.

This weekend is the culmination of the Gippsland League, and my team, Leongatha, will meet the member for Gippsland East's Maffra in the big dance for the third successive year. The score is one-all, so good luck to the Parrots this weekend.

Drought assistance

Mr D. O'BRIEN — Drought is tightening its grip in central and East Gippsland, and it was good to have the Leader of The Nationals, the member for Murray Plains, in the region last week to sit with farmers and hear their concerns firsthand. A number of issues were raised with us, including the need to speed up the approval process for authority to control wildlife permits, as kangaroo numbers get out of hand and eat precious grass, as well as the need for flexibility with groundwater licences to allow farmers to get the water to where it is needed. I again call on the Premier to visit our region to see the issues firsthand and to ensure government is responsive to the moderate requests our farmers are making.

Newcomb Secondary College

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) (09:56) — On Tuesday, 11 September, I had the pleasure of announcing that a re-elected Andrews government would deliver a \$6 million upgrade of Newcomb Secondary College. Joining me was the highly respected principal, Phil Honeywell, and student representatives Zoe Bell, Luka Binks and Presley Johannesen. This funding would completely upgrade the school's maths, music and technology wings.

Newcomb is the zoned school for students living in Leopold. Currently these students make up about a third of the school population. The school has the capacity for 1370 students, and with 431 now attending there is significant scope for the school to meet the future needs of Leopold. In recent months I have discussed these needs with a number of active Leopold parents, led by Joshua Robins. Although they were initially hesitant about Newcomb, having met with the school leaders to discuss their concerns, view firsthand the school in operation and learn of the great programs on offer, it is accurate to say these parents are now very much in support of Newcomb Secondary College. I commend the work of Joshua and the other parents for the open and positive steps they have taken in addressing their concerns.

Of course we have the great Leopold Primary School as well, which we completely rebuilt back in 2002 and are now also upgrading with a further \$3.2 million upgrade. So the community of Leopold have access to some of the best education, and this \$6 million will ensure Newcomb Secondary College is at the standard that it needs to be.

Drysdale bypass

Ms NEVILLE — Also on Monday I was very pleased to turn the first sod on the Drysdale bypass, which will be an extraordinary outcome for the local community down there, freeing up High Street through Drysdale and creating better connections to Portarlington.

Prahran electorate

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (09:57) — I love living in the Prahran electorate. It has been my home for a decade now. Our shared commitment to values like diversity and equality is what makes it such a special place. When I was elected as one of the first Greens MPs in the lower house I had three local priorities: to make sure the new Prahran High School went ahead, and that is opening next year; to upgrade South Yarra station, which we finally got funding for this year, and we are still fighting for that connection with Melbourne Metro; and to care for people most in need, and our public housing tenants have now had their kinder upgraded and security doors installed on their homes.

In Parliament my Greens colleagues and I have fought and won on dying with dignity laws, a renewable energy target, a ban on fracking and better rights for renters. As a community we have achieved so much together, but there is still more to do: developing a long-term plan to transform public transport by

investing in trains and trams rather than tollways; increasing renewable energy and cutting bills by putting solar and batteries on homes and schools; improving housing affordability by building more public housing, not selling it off; protecting our environment for future generations by ending logging of our native forests; and reducing waste. With your support we can do all this together, so I look forward to continuing to keep Prahran livable, holding the other parties to account and fighting for a future for all of us. Let's keep it going.

Could I just put on the record my sincere thanks to all my electorate staff in my office. They work really hard. They do a great job, and I want to put on the record my sincere thanks to them.

Northern Football Netball League

Ms WARD (Eltham) (09:59) — Congratulations to the Lower Plenty Bears on winning the Northern Football Netball League division 2 grand final this weekend. The Panthers led the Bears on this blustery day for three quarters; however, Lower Plenty put in a strong fourth quarter and secured the winning goal as the siren sounded. A shout-out to captain and best on ground, Patrick Flynn, coach Ben Turner and the rest of the successful team.

The Eltham reserves resoundingly won the division 2 premiership against Diamond Creek on Saturday. Congratulations to all at this terrific club, including best on ground, Thomas Burns, and Luke Russell and Matthew Lillie for their exceptional efforts. The member for Yan Yean owes me 20 bucks, thanks to our bet on the game.

This Saturday I wish the Montmorency under-19s all the best in their grand-final encounter against Macleod — go Mont!

Country Fire Authority Eltham brigade

Ms WARD — Saturday was a lovely, friendly and informal night at the Eltham Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigade 2018 awards presentation, a great evening acknowledging the outstanding work of the Eltham CFA volunteers and honouring the achievements of individuals within the brigade. Congratulations to the firefighter of the year award winner, James Morrison, and fellow nominees Andrew Heath, Matt Thomas, Andrew Stein and Brian Dalton. I congratulate the following brigade members on their achievements: recruit of the year, Andy Gammon; operational member of the year, Brian Dalton; and encouragement award winner, Nick Collinson. Thank you to the following for their service: Cam McCormick

and Jackson Riley for five years; Anthony Owen for 10 years; Rhett Hoyne for 15 years; and Guy Bishop and Brian Dalton for 20 years. It was a wonderful effort by Evan Thomas for the 40-year class and Greg Heaven for his brigade life membership. I wish all my CFAs the best for the upcoming fire season.

Stillbirth Foundation Australia

Ms WARD — Congratulations to Simon and Sally Heppleston of Montmorency for their tireless — some would say marathon — efforts in fundraising for the Stillbirth Foundation Australia over the weekend. Over the weekend Simon ran the Berlin marathon, completing it in the remarkable time of 3 hours, 21 minutes and 8 seconds. This effort has raised more than \$23 000 for the Stillbirth Foundation Australia. I commend their dedication to this important cause and thank the Montmorency community for their support of this lovely family.

Felicitations

Ms WARD — Thank you to my staff for their support and friendship over the last four years, and I thank everyone in this place.

Essex Heights Primary School

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) (10:00) — I rise in the Parliament to congratulate Essex Heights Primary School for their continued participation in communicating with the International Space Station (ISS) through the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program. Through this program students learn about life on board the ISS and explore Earth from space through science and mathematics activities. The experience is invaluable in developing knowledge and encouraging student participation in these areas. When I attended Essex Heights Primary School I could see the community was so excited to have that opportunity. I thank and acknowledge Essex Heights Primary School principal, George Perini, and Jenny Austin, who has been so committed and dedicated to this project.

I also want to acknowledge and thank ARISS, which provides these opportunities for our school communities to become more aware of the substantial benefits of human space flight and the exploration and discovery that occurs during these journeys, along with learning about radio technologies. Those involved with ARISS are volunteers and commit their valuable time and resources for the benefit of school communities.

Mount Waverley electorate planning

Mr GIDLEY — Today in the Parliament I again call on the Andrews Labor government to reverse its terrible planning changes that are causing massive overdevelopment in quiet residential streets in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley. Over the last 12 months the Andrews Labor government has changed state planning laws to increase the maximum building height of residential buildings to 11 meters and remove any limit on the number of dwellings that can be built on a property. These and other changes to residential planning zones introduced by the state Labor government are delivering significant overdevelopment in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley. I have campaigned against these changes, as so many quiet residential streets in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley were simply not designed to have so many houses crammed into them as these are under these laws. I am pleased that the Victorian Liberal-Nationals have committed to reversing these horrible planning changes if we are given the privilege of being elected to government at the November 2018 state election.

Melbourne Airport rail link

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (10:02) — Last week I joined the Premier and the Minister for Public Transport in Sunshine in my electorate to announce the opening of expressions of interest to build the airport rail link. We will build a super-hub station at Sunshine. This is a game changer for the west, connecting Sunshine and the west to Victoria and the world.

Labor has a proven track record when it comes to building infrastructure in my electorate of St Albans. We have removed the level crossings at Main Road and Furlong Road in St Albans, we are building the new \$200 million Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital, we are investing \$29.3 million directly towards building a new emergency department at Sunshine and of course we are investing a record amount into education, upgrading and building new schools in my electorate. But we are also building the Metro Tunnel, unlocking the city loop so we can have more services, and if re-elected, we will build the Suburban Rail Loop so you can jump on the train from Sunshine and go all the way to Cheltenham.

The Labor government is making things happen, and there is much more work to be done.

Turkish Museum of Australia

Ms SULEYMAN — On another matter I would like to congratulate Mr Kemal Benli of the Turkish

Museum of Australia. He is the chairman and founder of this fantastic collection, from which an incredible exhibition is being held in Queen's Hall this week. It has a number of items, historical and cultural artefacts, dating back to the 10th and 11th centuries — 900 years worth of pieces. I thank him for his collection.

Government performance

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) (10:03) — On 24 November Victorians will have a choice between a Greens-Labor coalition and the Liberal-Nationals coalition. There are massive risks for all Victorians if the outcome is a Greens-Labor coalition. Over the last four years the Andrews government may not have been in formal coalition with the Greens, but many of the decisions they have made have been in response to the ultra-left ideology of the Greens and the risk they pose to preference deals Labor need and the seats they hold.

Putting it simply, the Premier has tried to out-green the Greens in his desperate bid to stay in power. Premier Andrews has sold out the very people who elected him — hardworking Victorians and their families. And guess where most of them reside and work? That is right: country Victoria, in the main the Latrobe Valley. Hazelwood closed as the ageing plant was priced out of the market by massive increases in coal royalties — 4000 direct and indirect jobs trashed. And why? To please inner-city Melbourne voters — voters who will never feel the pain of the decisions they have imposed on country communities.

But wait, there is more to come if a Greens-Labor coalition is elected to govern in November. The Yallourn power station will close within five years — another 4000 direct and indirect jobs trashed — bringing to 50 per cent the reduction in baseload power at the hands of Premier Andrews. Now plans to shut down the Victorian native forest timber industry will shed another 20 000 jobs in country Victoria. It is a disgrace that this Premier, with such close links to the union movement, is prepared to sacrifice the financial and social wellbeing of country communities for his own political gain.

Every Opportunity initiative

Mr LIM (Clarinda) (10:05) — It is estimated that nearly 100 000 Victorians are blind or have low vision and that this number will continue to rise as our population ages. It is well known that people with a disability still remain significantly underrepresented in Australian workforces. Forty-five per cent of Australians with a disability live at or below the poverty line. This is unacceptable and largely due to

people with disability facing multiple barriers to employment, which restricts economic participation and independence. I am proud of our government's Every Opportunity initiative. We have set a target of 6 per cent employment of people with disability across all Victorian government departments by 2020, increasing to 12 per cent by 2025. We are taking action through public sector employment and government procurement and through strong partnerships with Victoria's community and private sectors.

I hope that we can build on our work in procurement to mandate AS EN 301 549 — the standard that exists to guide the procurement of accessible information and communications technology within the Victorian public sector. I also hope that we can work to ensure that Victorians with a disability are not disadvantaged by the growing challenges of the national disability insurance scheme and can investigate maintaining and expanding the multipurpose taxi program card, introducing audio announcements on buses and the quality of audio announcements on trains.

Shepparton bypass

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (10:06) — It was great to have the opportunity to host a deputation from the Shepparton district yesterday to meet with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety at Parliament House. I was joined by Greater Shepparton City Council mayor Kim O'Keefe, CEO Peter Harriot, chair of the Shepparton Bypass Action Group Peter Johnson, general manager of Kreskas Bros Transport Peter Hill and Committee for Greater Shepparton CEO Sam Birrell to continue our advocacy for the much-needed first stage of the Shepparton bypass.

This is a huge project that will require federal funding on what is part of the Melbourne to Brisbane national highway. Stage 1 alone is expected to cost \$260 million, but the value to the region is immeasurable. The Shepparton district is a powerhouse of agricultural production across dairy, horticulture and mixed farming. It is also a major centre for transport logistics and has one of the highest concentrations of food processing industries in this country within its boundaries.

Felicitations

Ms SHEED — I arrived in this place four years ago knowing very little about the operations of Parliament, and all my staff were in the same position. We have learned so much and achieved so much. I would like to thank them for their incredible support to me in my electorate office, out in the community and here at Parliament. It has been a great privilege to serve on the

crossbench here and be able to work with the government of the day to achieve amazing outcomes for the Shepparton district.

Lord's Prayer

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) (10:08) — In 1966, 88 per cent of Australian people identified as being Christian. By 2016 this had fallen to 52 per cent. Over the same period people with no religion have grown from 0.8 per cent to 30.1 per cent. Today the most popular form of identification is no religion, well ahead of those who are Catholic. In Victoria only 53 per cent have declared their religion as Christian. In 2014, 31 members of the Victorian Legislative Assembly took the affirmation — that is, 35 per cent.

The mantra here in the Parliament is multiculturalism is bipartisan and all parties support multiculturalism. Religious diversity is linked to multiculturalism; nobody can dispute that. Parliament should reflect the diversity of the Victorian community — the diversity of faith and spirituality — and also should recognise non-believers. Therefore, in my view, reciting the Lord's Prayer every sitting day is very hypocritical of all those who stand tall as supporters and defenders of diversity. First and foremost, Australia is a secular society. Our parliaments are secular parliaments. Since the European civilisation of Australia our country has been run as a secular society. We have no state religion, and the founders of the country planned it that way. This practice should never have existed at any time in history. Members of Parliament should wake up to reality and recite a prayer that reflects their duties as representatives of the Victorian community.

South-West Coast electorate

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (10:09) — Since joining this place three years ago I have been blown away by what can be achieved when a community gets together and advocates strongly to get things done. In South-West Coast we have seen time and time again what happens when we band together and have a strong and active local member. We had \$15 million committed to our cancer centre, a project the now Premier said would never happen. We banded together and shamed this government into fast-tracking the brand-new special development school in Warrnambool. That money arrived six months early because of the pressure applied, and the build is well advanced. We fought hard and saved Portland Aluminium from closing with the assistance of the federal government, and we have made plenty of noise to ensure our roads are properly funded.

There is more work to do, but there has been a start, and it was only because the community said, 'Enough is enough'. It is the same with the Warrnambool rail service — the worst in the state at one point, completely ignored by those on that side of the house. But once again we started making noise and rattled the cage, and we have a planned upgrade for the line, and the federal government's money is contributing to the majority of this.

From Nelson to Warrnambool, and up to MacArthur and Caramut, I have worked one on one with my constituents to achieve life-changing results for them. Many times it took persistence and determination, but I do not give up and do not rest until it is done. It has been an absolute honour to stand up in this place for the people of South-West Coast during the 58th Parliament, but I am not done yet.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES COMMISSION (GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed from 19 September; motion of Mr SCOTT (Minister for Finance).

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) (10:11) — I am pleased to speak on the Essential Services Commission (Governance, Procedural and Administrative Improvements) Amendment Bill 2018. I think the Minister for Women, formerly the Minister for Local Government, last night said that it was probably one of the longest names of a bill that we have had for a while. It is such important legislation though, because it improves the governance framework and the strength of the independent regulator, effectively the regulator that deals with Victorians' essential services. This government, as other speakers have said, completed a review of the Essential Services Commission Act 2001 in December 2016. The government's response was tabled in the Parliament in the first half of 2017. The review looked at improving governance arrangements and other procedural and administrative arrangements.

Probably the biggest change the bill is proposing is to replace appeals panels that are currently provided for under the act with a review jurisdiction conferred on the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, which is consistent with many other appeals processes in the Victorian jurisdiction. The bill will enable the minister to nominate a person to act as acting chairperson in the absence of the chairperson or a vacancy in the office,

which makes absolute sense and probably should have been put in the initial bill. The bill clarifies that the Essential Services Commission (ESC) has a function of reporting on the market structure and performance of regulated industries. This is required under enabling legislation. It also provides for a further review of the act to be completed by the end of 2026.

The bill contains a range of technical changes, but they are really important ones, because the ESC is an organisation, I would hazard a guess, which has very little visibility in the community, but the industries it seeks to provide regulation for have high visibility in the Victorian community, whether they be the energy power companies or commercial passenger vehicles. Last night I think the Minister for Women also talked about the Fair Go Rates system. Both industry sectors and regulatory bodies provide an important service to Victorians. The ESC has coverage of all those and it has a mandate to develop reports on how markets operate; deliver price determinations, as we saw with the feed-in tariff decision earlier this year; produce compliance assessments and audits; and take enforcement actions. It is a really important authority in the state apparatus.

I want to focus on a couple of examples of the importance of it. Last night the minister talked about the Fair Go Rates system. I was in the chair and I was very pleased to be there to listen to the minister's contribution because it is a prime example of the importance of this regulator and explains why strengthening the regulator through this bill is important. The Fair Go Rates policy effectively — in my words, not those of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, a former Minister for Local Government — sought to put a downward pressure on rates. It was an issue that was screaming out for attention for a long, long time, as there was such a difference in the rates applied by different councils. I think you, Acting Speaker Carbines, when you were speaking on this bill, referenced your experience as a local government councillor and spoke of how easy it really is when you are finding it a pressure in dealing with a whole bunch of demands in local government to just increase the rates. It probably is a default option for some councils and we saw that with extreme rate rises. I remember that there were rate rises in some councils in excess of 9 per cent in one year alone. They then stepped down to 7 per cent or 6 per cent but over the four-year cycle there were rate increases of over 20 per cent — way beyond the CPI.

Mr Gidley interjected.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — I will pick up the interjection by the member for Mount Waverley who says that Monash increased them. That is right; Monash did. In fact, the minister yesterday referenced Monash as the only council that applied for an exemption because of the waste issues that were confronting the local government sector generally. Monash never had what many other councils had, which was a differentiation in the rates notice between the rates and the levy charge. They were all bundled into one. Monash, as the minister said, put up a compelling case, had done community consultation and, through an Essential Services Commission review, it got an approval. I think that proves the point. Only one council did that but nonetheless that council had a good case and it went forward.

The rates bill is probably the biggest single bill that many families will receive in the course of the year, so having a regulatory body that oversights or puts downward pressure on that is important. I think it is a successful policy in relation to rates.

The other bill that is obviously a big impost on families generally and has been for the best part of a decade really, as the member for Essendon said, is the power bill. I am really pleased that we are not only strengthening the regulator that has some coverage and a role to play with energy prices but that we have done a lot more than that as a government. Other than strengthening the regulator, we sought the John Thwaites review. Three people were involved in that review, but in shorthand it is known as the Thwaites review. That review showed that, amongst other things, the retail part of the energy system was in effect the price-gouging part of the system. The rest of the system seems to be operating well but the retail arm has a fair bit of work to do, and that is where this government has already taken some action and will continue to take action.

The action we have already taken is to provide a greater sense of market knowledge. You cannot make choices as a consumer if you do not have the knowledge. We have set up our independent government website, the Victorian Energy Compare website, which effectively does not favour any energy provider. You cannot get to the top on the search engine because you pay extra money to the government. The energy providers are all equal and are benchmarked on the search parameters input by the customer. I have used the Energy Compare website both for my parents and for myself and my partner and it has been extraordinarily beneficial.

So we have done that. We are also deepening supply in the energy market. We were the first government in Victoria's history, and one of the leading governments around the world, to actually invest in policy terms through the first-ever climate change act and carbon emission targets and to actually invest in the clean energy market through the reverse auction scheme that was referenced in question time in the last couple of days. We are supporting good, innovative projects in my electorate; for example, one of many will be the Monash University microgrid program where Monash University, across its entire campus, will try to capture energy information to better utilise that for building efficiency.

We do things like that, but the most profound change in the last few weeks — I think the member for Bentleigh said it was a game changer — was the 650 000 houses that are potentially eligible for the solar panel scheme. That is a profound change in the energy mix in this state, and I cannot wait until next July, I think it is, when consumers will be able to go into solar panels without an up-front cost.

They are some of the big initiatives this government has been involved with, with an essential service being power prices and power provision, but we are also strengthening the regulator, that is, the Essential Services Commission. It does a whole range of other work, the Essential Services Commission, not just with the energy market but also with commercial passenger vehicles and the fares they charge and a whole range of other things — the essential services that every Victorian relies on. In a sense it is a bit of a circuit-breaker between the excesses of the market and the needs of the consumer and the taxpayer. I am pleased that we are supporting this commission. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (10:22) — I am also pleased to speak on the Essential Services Commission (Governance, Procedural and Administrative Improvements) Amendment Bill 2018. I echo the sentiments of by the member for Oakleigh that this is a fantastic opportunity for us to regulate and further empower the Essential Services Commission (ESC). This follows from a review conducted by the Andrews Labor government. The review was conducted with a number of consultations with various stakeholders. The review concluded that the Essential Services Commission was working very well as an economic regulator but found there were some areas that needed to be strengthened, including the improvement of governance, procedural and administrative arrangements.

The bill proposes to replace the appeals panel established under the act with a review jurisdiction conferred on VCAT. The bill also enables the minister to nominate a person to act as acting chairperson in the absence of a chairperson or a vacancy in the office. It streamlines the process to clarify that the Essential Services Commission has the function of reporting on the market structure and performance of regulated industries.

We have heard about the very important responsibility of the ESC, from energy, water and power companies to local government and of course administering rate capping. We have heard about, as the member for Oakleigh has just said, the Fair Go Rates system for Victorians. In particular in my electorate of Brimbank, where we do have everyday pressures, whether it is your rates or your bills, we need the Fair Go Rates system. I commend the Andrews Labor government for introducing this system because there were unfortunately some councils that were going beyond the means of their ratepayers and there were a number of ratepayers and constituents that were not able to keep up with the rate increases. But now with the essential services commissioner there is an absolute, responsible cap which allows ratepayers to understand what kinds of rates they are paying, and that they are in line with the CPI and day-to-day living costs.

This bill will make sure that the cost-of-living pressures that I know exist in my electorate of St Albans are eased, that rates are fair and that there are options and effective policies in place for local government so that councils do understand when it comes to spending and forecasting expenditure that that needs to be within their means and within community expectations as well. We cannot have councils — and unfortunately there have been some in the past — going beyond their means; we have seen some councils operating for over a decade without any form of capping or any form of a border on spending and raising rates in their municipalities.

As previous speakers have said, the Essential Services Commission is unseen, but it is critical and plays a very vital role in areas ranging from electricity energy to local government and in making sure that the appropriate procedures and administrations are in place.

I also note the recent announcement by the Andrews Labor government of the solar panel scheme. What a fantastic announcement that has been. I know that many residents in my electorate have taken up the scheme. Not everybody can afford an upfront payment, and this Labor scheme gives people, including those in

my community, the opportunity to access the scheme. The government pays 50 per cent of the cost, and people can pay the other 50 per cent in instalments over time. It is really important to note that among my constituents in St Albans this has been extremely warmly welcomed, and I am looking forward to the continuing rollout of this important scheme to the rest of St Albans and Victoria.

Mr Dimopoulos interjected.

Ms SULEYMAN — Absolutely. As my colleague the member for Oakleigh has just said, it does apply to hot-water systems as well. This is the only government that has done this. When you look at the Andrews Labor government and the schemes, incentives, programs and support that it has introduced, it cannot be matched by any other state across Australia. We are leading the way when it comes to providing the appropriate support mechanisms to our communities not only in metropolitan Melbourne but also in regional Victoria.

I just want to reiterate, as previous speakers have said, that this bill deals with an essential part of the lives of everyday Victorians, but it is also making sure that the governance, the procedures and administrative arrangements are in place. It is strengthening the regulator, promoting long-term interests of course, making sure that we have respectful prices and that quality and reliable essential services are available to all Victorians. This bill will also regulate the Victorian energy efficiency target scheme, which aims to reduce greenhouse gases by making energy efficiency improvements much more affordable to consumers.

As I said previously, the review undertook pretty specific consultations with key stakeholders. It included the industry, government departments and agencies, and consumer agencies and organisations. This was really an opportunity to seek opinions and make sure that we have the right structures in place. This was also broadly supported by government, and all recommendations were accepted. There has been broad-based support and consultation to improve the Essential Services Commission, the regulator of Victoria's energy, water and transport sectors, including local government and other agencies, and more importantly to provide good structural outcomes for all.

To conclude, I commend the minister for introducing this bill and making sure that the regulator has the appropriate mechanisms to keep the balances and checks for our essential services throughout Victoria. It will also ensure that the Fair Go Rates cap is monitored and assessed each year so that rates in our municipalities

are not over the top but remain within the CPI and that local governments operate within their means and keep the rates down so that they are affordable for residents in the City of Brimbank, keeping in mind the cost-of-living pressures on families in my electorate. I commend the bill to the house and commend the work of the Essential Services Commission.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (10:31) — It is my pleasure to rise this morning to speak on the Essential Services Commission (Governance, Procedural and Administrative Improvements) Amendment Bill 2018. The proposed changes aim to improve the operation of the Essential Services Commission Act 2001 and the Essential Services Commission (ESC) and implement the government's response to the review of the act.

In 2016 a review of the Essential Services Commission Act was conducted in accordance with the requirements of section 66 of that act. The bill implements several of the recommendations of the review, including replacing appeal panels established under the act with a review jurisdiction conferred on the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal; enabling the minister to nominate a person to act as chairperson in the absence of the chairperson, or in the event of a vacancy in the office; clarifying that the Essential Services Commission has the function of reporting on the market structure and performance of regulated industries if this is required under enabling legislation; and providing for a further review of the act to be completed by the end of 2026. The bill also makes a range of statute law revision amendments to the act.

The Essential Services Commission is of course an independent regulator that promotes the long-term interests of Victorian consumers with respect to the price, quality and reliability of essential services. The ESC regulates Victoria's energy, water and transport sectors and administers the Andrews Labor government's very successful Fair Go Rates system for the local government sector.

The ESC also regulates the Victorian energy efficiency target, now known as the Victorian Energy Upgrades scheme, which aims to reduce greenhouse gases by making energy efficiency improvements more affordable for consumers. It is important to note that no government ever in the history of this nation has done more to positively reform energy markets than the Andrews Labor government. We have been resolute since we came to power in 2014 in our commitment to both transform the energy market away from emissions-intensive brown coal — the dirtiest coal you can find — to a vibrant, thriving renewable energy

sector, and at the same time working to drive down prices.

We have had a comprehensive energy plan the likes of which have never been seen in this nation, and I might say it is opportune to reflect on the paucity of policy from the current Morrison government. What a disgrace it is in Canberra. The upcoming Council of Australian Governments meeting has been cancelled. Do we have a national energy policy? No, we do not. The National Energy Guarantee, which the Andrews Labor government opposed for a range of very good and solid reasons, was opposed by those in Canberra who had nothing in mind other than to roll an incumbent Prime Minister. That is what their opposition to the National Energy Guarantee was about. So here we are in 2018 and we do not have an energy policy in this nation, and the forum at which an energy policy could be agreed to has been cancelled by the illegitimate Prime Minister, Scott Morrison.

In contrast, this government has been working very, very hard. We introduced ambitious renewable energy targets: 25 per cent of our electricity generation will come from renewables by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025. Let the record reflect in this, the last contribution that I will make in the 58th Parliament, that the Liberal-National opposition intend to ditch those targets. It is vitally important that the people of my electorate understand this very, very clearly because the Macedon Ranges is one of four or five shires that has the highest take-up of solar panels anywhere in Victoria. My community loves renewables. They are right behind this government. They are right behind our commitment to those targets for renewable energy. It is important that they understand that a Liberal government would ditch those renewable energy targets. They have nothing in its place. They have no energy plan. We have a plan to grow renewables and to drive down prices. We have got our renewable energy targets.

We have also just seen the hugely successful reverse auction. I congratulate the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change because, as I said, she is leading policy development in this state. I might not have this quote absolutely correct, but I did see — I think it was even in one of the Murdoch papers, or perhaps it was the *Australian Financial Review* — they said about our minister for energy that she might have been ‘the smallest person in the room’ at the ministers’ council meeting but she had the biggest ideas. She had the biggest ideas and made the biggest impact. Absolutely. So I congratulate our minister for energy on all of the work that she has done and continues to do.

We have had the hugely successful reverse auction. That reform of ours was initially expected to deliver 650 megawatts of renewable energy but that goal has been smashed, and the auction is instead going to deliver 928 megawatts of renewables — almost 45 per cent more power than originally anticipated. Those projects will generate \$1.1 billion of economic investment in regional Victoria. Can you believe that in the face of this fantastic news that those on the other side of the house condemn this process? They have not got one single policy idea in this space. They are opposed to renewables. They will get rid of our energy targets. We all know what happened under the Baillieu-Napthine governments: the wind industry in this state was smashed and destroyed. Whereas our \$1.1 billion economic investment is going to create more than 900 jobs, including 270 apprenticeships and traineeships.

So I for one am very, very pleased with the results of our innovative reverse auction scheme, and I can tell you this: so are the members of my community in Macedon. Indeed the more those on the other side want to talk about how they want to ditch our renewable energy targets, the better, because they are totally out of step with the Victorian community and the aspirations of people across this state and particularly in my electorate. I did want to let you know that the Hepburn shire, again in my electorate, is the first shire to sign up to be a shire of zero net emissions through our government’s TAKE2 initiative. Hepburn Shire Council, the Coalition for Community Energy, Hepburn Wind and Sustainability Victoria have partnered together. We have invested \$81 000 in this pilot. I have got to tell you the results are fantastic. When you invest in communities and you give communities the tools to make their own decisions about how to best drive down emissions, so much innovation flourishes, and that is what we are seeing in Hepburn. I anticipate continuing to support everything that the Hepburn shire is doing to achieve zero net emissions. Indeed the Macedon Ranges Shire Council are keen to follow in their footsteps.

In conclusion, it is probably also important to mention the Victorian Energy Compare website. That has been a hugely successful initiative of this government. It has been my pleasure to host a couple of sessions in my community, including with pensioners, to help them access the best energy deals for themselves, using our easy-to-use Energy Compare website, and they are getting their \$50 bonus for going online. We are working to drive down prices in the energy market and put some competition back into the privatised retail energy market — privatised of course by those on the

other side of the house. This is a good bill. I commend it to the house.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) (10:41) — I rise to make a contribution on the Essential Services Commission (Governance, Procedural and Administrative Improvements) Amendment Bill 2018. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Essential Services Commission Act 2001 to achieve outcomes outlined in the provisions of the bill and to make consequential amendments to VCAT, the Accident Towing Services Act 2007, the Electricity Industry Act 2000, the Grain Handling and Storage Act 1995, the National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005, the National Gas (Victoria) Act 2008, the Port Management Act 1995 and the Rail Management Act 1996. There are so many things one could talk about.

The bill repeals the provisions for panels specific to the Essential Services Commission (ESC) to hear appeals in relation to requirements, decisions or determinations made under the principal act and confers jurisdiction on VCAT to replace the appeals panels; allows the minister rather than the Governor in Council to appoint the chair of the commission; further provides for the commission to report on the market structure and performance of regulated industries; and provides that the act will be reviewed by the end of 2026.

Certainly the ESC has a large number of roles in our community. They perform quite a number of functions. They are responsible in my area for water rates and reviewing those. They have a role in the local government rates. The Fair Go Rates system is also a creature of the ESC, though indirectly. Rates in local government have certainly become a big issue in recent times in my electorate. The Victorian Farmers Federation are fighting strongly for a better deal for farmers on farm rates. We then also have the fire services levy, which pays in part for the Country Fire Authority (CFA). As part of that CFA budget, there is an aerial response process, which is managed through Emergency Management Victoria.

Certainly we look to this year being one of the driest years, and in the latest briefing our rainfall and soil moisture conditions were at the lowest 10 per cent of records. Traditionally the Mallee is the first to go into the fire season with restrictions. This year East Gippsland has gone first because they have been in drought longer, but the Mallee will have its challenges. Experience shows that in years after you have had a great deal of rain and there are large fuel loads on the ground, you can have fires, but equally you can have them in very dry years because of the low humidity

rates, particularly in the Mallee where we do not really have an understorey or an overstorey; it is really a single storey. There is, I think, considerable risk.

To help manage that risk, Mildura Airport has installed a fantastic system there to reload the tankers, and I will read from their recent release to me, which says:

I would like to ... pass it on to the relevant parties, that Mildura Airport now has a refilling point for the large aerial fire bombers ...

They are the Hercules and BAe 146 aircraft, as well as the Elvis category of helicopters. The release continues:

From now on you can bring a fire bomber up to Boeing 737 size and have immediate capability to refill directly from the hydrant point adjacent to taxiway B.

Aircraft refuelling is also available. No advance notification is required, nor is ground tanker support because it is just a matter of plugging in.

This makes Mildura the most capable aerial firefighting refilling airport in Victoria, NSW and SA ...

It means that you can deploy a large aircraft to a location proximate to Mildura and not have to worry about logistics ...

Previously there were delays in refuelling the aerial fleet, as I understand, and one of the things that was discussed in January this year when the aerial point was completed was that there would be consideration this fire season by Emergency Management Victoria to in fact place a tanker on standby in Mildura. What they can supply, from a high-pressure volume pipeline, is a hydrant that can directly load a tanker located on taxiway Delta: 20 000 litres can be moved into the aircraft in 10 minutes, and that is without any other ground support. This is truly an excellent facility provided by Mildura Airport.

All that remains I think is for those in fire management to realise that now we are in fire season we need a tanker located in Mildura at the airport, that such a tanker can service a wide area from that airport and that should a fire break out, Mildura is in a very strong position to support a large number of aerial appliances that may well be dealing with a fire. Also, Mildura does have all the other services necessary to support such deployment. In the meantime it would I think give the Mallee great comfort to know that there is a large tanker sitting at Mildura Airport ready to deal with any fires that break out in the electorate of Mildura. The proximity of a large airport in being able to deliver that service quickly to those CFA volunteers on the ground could well make a significant difference in the spread of a fire and thus the damage that is caused by the fire

and the need to deploy large numbers of ground staff. Having something located in Mildura offers that very early attack on the fire, strong support for our volunteers and certainly the knowledge that any fire will be contained quickly. With those words, The Nationals in coalition are not opposing this bill.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (10:48) — It is a pleasure to rise this morning to speak on the Essential Services Commission (Governance, Procedural and Administrative Improvements) Amendment Bill 2018. I would like to commend the member for Mildura for being the second Nationals member to speak on this bill and for turning up and making a contribution, because we have only had one member of the Liberal Party come in here to talk about what is a very important bill. I will give credit to the member for Mornington who did turn up and took his full half-hour to explore this bill, but, as he said, he was effectively keeping up appearances — keeping up appearances for a whole lot of people over there in the opposition who have barely shown their faces in this chamber this week. I do not know what they are up to, but it is not fulfilling their duties as parliamentary participants and representing their local community, and I would suggest —

Mr Nardella interjected.

Ms GRALEY — Yes, maybe they are having a look at that whiteboard, member for Melton, but one of our important roles is to debate legislation.

Apart from the contributions from the member for Mildura, the member for Ovens Valley and the member for Mornington, we have heard nothing about this from members opposite, and the reason for that is this bill actually creeps into an interesting space for us. We want to talk about these things because we are very proud of being a government that has really committed to a strong energy policy. Yes, we have committed to try to support the renewable power industry so that we make sure we have good supplies of energy for the future, that we protect our environment and that we support businesses. Most of all, you do not have to support the environment at the expense of the economy; you can support them both at the same time. They are not mutually exclusive, and in the case of our energy policy you see that happening because our energy policy and our climate policy will create thousands of jobs for Victorians and some of them I hope will be in Mildura.

To return to the bill, the bill is a very important one, and as a person that does believe in the role of government and does believe in making sure that government decisions are open and transparent and also as a

participant in civic life, I am a strong believer in the independent umpire — places like the Ombudsman and, in this case, the Essential Services Commission (ESC) that people can go to and that organisations can access if they sometimes have got disputes or sometimes are looking for some better advice.

The Essential Services Commission is a very, very good institution. It has served us very well in Victoria. It is, as I said, an independent regulator that promotes the long-term interests of Victorian consumers, and consumers need protecting. We have a very volatile energy market. We know that people are doing it tough with all their household bills. So to have such an independent and good, working regulator that looks at the price, quality and reliability of essential services is a very important part of our government's governance infrastructure. They do regulate Victoria's energy, water and transport sectors and administer the rate capping system for the local government sector, and they also regulate the Victorian energy efficiency target, the VEET scheme, which aims to reduce, as I said earlier, greenhouse gases by making energy efficiency improvements more affordable for consumers.

I do want to spend what time I have left on talking about why it is very important that we have the ESC monitoring rates in this state. At the last election the Andrews Labor government committed to rate capping of sorts in that local governments could only increase their rates by a certain amount. That was, I have got to say, very, very warmly welcomed by people in the Narre Warren South electorate. One of the issues that constantly has come through my door in the 12 years I have been a member of Parliament is the issue of, frankly: 'What is the City of Casey up to a lot of the time?'. Secondly, 'What are they spending money on?', and thirdly, 'I am a bit unhappy about the level of my rates bill'.

Get the picture we have here: mostly people in the City of Casey have invested enormously in building their first home or their dream home, and they do experience — many of them — high energy bills, high mortgage rates and all the other things that come with looking after a family. So when they get their rates bill, they often get very, very upset. They do not get much of a hearing from the City of Casey, so what do they do? They toddle on down to my office and we sit down with them and have a chat.

It was only in 2016, not that long ago, that the City of Casey decided — I think it was one of only two councils in the whole state that decided they could not

live within their means — they could not live within the rate cap. The council could not look outside their Taj Mahal and see what was happening in the homes of ordinary Narre Warren South residents. They decided they wanted to put the rates up by, I think, 3.47 per cent. Thank goodness for the Essential Services Commission. The council had to go to that organisation, and I have got to say the ESC was completely on to them. It was a great relief that the independent regulator had a really thorough look at the City of Casey's books. They realised that Casey's overall financial position was strong and that they were actually forecasting an underlying surplus of — can you believe it — \$33.9 million. Casey had also, the ESC discovered, been receiving state government funds at the same time as they were saying they did not have enough money for capital build projects.

Local government never, ever says thank you to the state government for the interface fund, the Growing Suburbs Fund, and all the extra support we have provided to them, especially in the last four years, which has enabled them to build infrastructure in the local area that would have still been in the never-never if we had not been, I have got to say, generous but also very targeted in making sure that the facilities that the community needed were being provided as a result of the partnership between state and local government.

I am a big fan of the ESC. They do a very good job, and this new legislation will allow them to do an even better job. The government completed a review of the Essential Services Commission Act 2001 in December 2016, and now this bill before the house proposes a number of changes which will make the ESC much more efficient. It will set up a very good clear, transparent review process that will enable people to take their case to VCAT on appeal. Anybody who has been to VCAT, as I have, knows it is a good court in which to air your disputes and get on with the job after the decision has been made.

Without further ado, it is a pleasure to commend the work of the Minister for Finance, who brought this bill to the house, and wish it a speedy passage through to the next Parliament, which I will not be here to see. I have no reservations in saying that those on this side of the house — and I do thank the opposition for not opposing this bill at this stage — should be back on this side of the house again, and they will make sure that this bill gets the wind in its sails and becomes law in the future.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (10:58) — It is a pleasure to rise this morning to speak on the Essential Services Commission (Governance, Procedural and

Administrative Improvements) Amendment Bill 2018. I will just take this chance to speak about the member who spoke prior to me, the member for Narre Warren South, and say what an incredible contribution she has made to this house over the many years she has been involved in public life.

As a fairly junior member of Parliament I learned much from the member for Narre Warren South, and I just want to put in *Hansard* that she has been a friend to many, many Labor colleagues and given some very sound and sage advice to some of us in the house. It is a very sad day to see her go, along with many other members of the Labor caucus who have made magnificent contributions to their communities and to policy in Victoria as well.

I come back to the bill. Some members opposite have actually come in now to listen to the bill, surprisingly. We have had, I think, two Nationals members speak on the bill. It is something that I love, seeing people come in to hear me speak about bills that are so good for my community. As I said, I am really pleased to make a contribution on the Essential Services Commission bill. This bill arises from a review that was initiated and completed by the Andrews government in December 2016. The review and the response were tabled in this place on 7 March 2017. The review and the response, which we see reflected in this bill, made some really important changes to the Essential Services Commission. The commission itself, as many members of this house —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — The member for Frankston will have the opportunity to continue when debate on the bill resumes. The time has come for me to interrupt business under sessional orders for questions without notice and ministers statements.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Government performance

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:01) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, over the last four years your government has faced investigation by the Ombudsman for theft, the Parliament for robbing, Victoria Police for fraud, WorkSafe for bullying, IBAC for printing deception and the Victorian Electoral Commission for electoral deceit. You have got six ministers under investigation by the fraud and extortion squad. No wonder there is a crime wave in Victoria

when some of the biggest law-breakers in the state are the crooked rorters of the Victorian Labor Party.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — I ask the Leader of the Opposition to resume his seat. I am not going to allow that level of shouting across the chamber. I remind members that at 12 o'clock today I am required to interrupt business for valedictory speeches. I am sure many members would like to be in the chamber to hear some of their colleagues' speeches. Please do not put me in a position where you are asked to leave the chamber for an hour and you are not there to see people make those speeches.

Mr GUY — No wonder there is a crime wave in Victoria when some of the biggest law-breakers in the state are the Victorian Labor Party. Premier, can you tell Victorians exactly how many investigative bodies you and your government are being investigated by at this moment?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The Minister for Roads and Road Safety and the member for Euroa! I warn members they will be removed from the chamber without warning.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:03) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I am pretty sure the Ombudsman is having a look at the Leader of the Opposition at the moment, a very close look at you and your convicted criminal mate, Damien Mantach — a very close look. The Leader of the Opposition made reference to, as he put it, a crime wave. I might just remind him that statistics released by the independent Crime Statistics Agency Victoria today show the criminal incident rate down by 7.8 per cent, the offence rate down by 7 per cent, the alleged offender incident rate down by 1.3 per cent, the unique alleged offender rate —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — The victim report rate down by 9.5 per cent, the unique victim rate down by 9.2 per cent, the family incident rate down by 2.7 per cent —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — The facts are no good. We don't want any of those.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:04) — Order! The Premier will resume his seat. The member for Ripon can leave the chamber for the period of 45 minutes.

Honourable member for Ripon withdrew from chamber.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the Ombudsman, the Parliament, the police, WorkSafe, IBAC, the electoral commission — the question was about the Premier and his government. How many investigative bodies are looking into this sordid government at this point in time?

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier is being responsive to the question.

Mr ANDREWS — I do thank the Leader of the Opposition for shouting at us all. That is always good. On this, the last day, still shouting and screaming, as per usual. I am asked about a crime wave, and I am quoting statistics released by the independent Crime Statistics Agency this very day. I could not be more relevant to the question asked. The reason that those numbers are occurring — that that trend is being delivered — is that this government does not cut police numbers or resources. We instead invest in them.

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, the question was very clear about how many government agencies were investigating the Andrews government. If the Premier wants to quote statistics, I believe the statistics for ministers being investigated by the police is through the roof.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of The Nationals knows that is not a point of order.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:05) — Premier, speaking of crimes, your government is the first in Australian history to have so many members and ministers under active police investigation. Premier, can you guarantee to Victorians that between now and the election none of your ministers will be arrested?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:06) — I am invited to appoint the Leader of the Opposition now as the official keeper of Australian history, apparently. Not likely. He cannot get his own story straight, let alone be the writer of Australian history. I do not think so, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R. Smith interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — And to be told by the member for Warrandyte that I don't know what I am talking about. Imagine the wound I have sustained! How might we go on? You haven't got to 10 past the hour yet, so we will wait and see. The Leader of the Opposition is ridiculous, and so are his questions.

Ministers statements: education

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) (11:07) — It is my absolute pleasure to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is making Victoria the Education State. On Monday I toured Mount Clear College with the member for Buninyong, where the new trade wing is almost complete. But there is more to do, and that is why a re-elected Labor government will invest a further \$5.5 million into that great school.

That is just one of the regional schools that we have invested in. This government has doubled the investment in regional schools compared to those opposite — across the state, 70 new schools and 1300 upgrades. It is about priorities, and we know where others stand. We know that there are others opposite who talk about investment in school infrastructure as a distraction. When we came to government education was in crisis — \$1 billion of cuts. Our most disadvantaged students had the education maintenance allowance ripped away from them, but what a difference four years makes. Now all students can go on camps and excursions. Kids are fed in the morning through our school breakfast program. Our kids have uniforms on their backs and shoes on their feet through State Schools Relief.

Four years ago those opposite were at war with our teachers and support staff. We have respected and rewarded their work, including moving 10 000 from contract work to permanent employment. Four years ago results were stagnating. This year we have delivered Victoria's best ever NAPLAN results. Those opposite cut education; on this side of the house we deliver the Education State.

Election commitments

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (11:09) — My question is to the Premier. As the Premier for Melbourne you have repeatedly short-changed country Victoria. You spent country roads money on Mulgrave. You have broken your promise to spend 10 per cent of the port lease money in country Victoria on new transport infrastructure. You have allowed the gap between city and country education standards to widen. You will not help when the country is in drought, and

you have botched the once-in-a-generation project, the Murray Basin rail project.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the Leader of The Nationals to resume his seat. There is too much shouting across the chamber and from the table. I warn members again: people will be asked to leave the chamber.

Mr WALSH — As the Premier for places with only tram tracks, why have you broken your election night commitment to govern for all Victorians and made it clear you just do not give a stuff about country Victoria?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:10) — Order! The member for South-West Coast and the member for Macedon can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable members for South-West Coast and Macedon withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:10) — I do thank the Leader of The Nationals for his question. If only his fixation —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Gembrook!

Mr ANDREWS — It is great being lectured on the country by the member for Gembrook, isn't it? It is great. The Leader of the National Party has asked a nonsense question. I suppose you could double the amount of investment in country schools, but that would apparently be a bad thing for regional Victoria. You could have a job growth rate that is more than double the rate delivered by those opposite, you could be investing in hospitals the length and breadth of regional Victoria and you could rebuild TAFE essentially from the ground up because of the cuts of those opposite, and apparently all of that would be a bad thing for regional Victoria. If only the Leader of the National Party's record matched his rhetoric, and if only his work rate for regional Victoria matched his work rate to get a white car, maybe this question would have some credibility. Much like the party that he represents, it has no credibility whatsoever.

Supplementary question

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (11:12) — Premier, you have let down country Victoria for four long years.

Their energy bills are higher than ever, their roads are crumbling, the drug problem across rural and regional Victoria is the worst it has ever been and you are still trying to destroy the Country Fire Authority. Will you finally admit that you care more about Greens preferences in inner-city seats than you care about the welfare and the wellbeing of country Victorians?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:13) — I do not actually know that there was a question in there. The Leader of the National Party thinks he can come in here and just read from his latest leaflet and that passes as a question. More jobs, more investment in health, more investment in schools, more investment in roads, every single passenger train line in regional Victoria being upgraded —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:13) — Order! The member for Polwarth can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Polwarth withdrew from chamber.

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, there was a very clear question there which I would ask you to bring the Premier back to answering, and that is: does he care more about Greens preferences for inner-city seats than he does about country Victoria? That is a very clear, simple question, and I ask the Premier to address that question.

The SPEAKER — It is a very broad question, but I ask the Premier to come back to answering the question.

Mr ANDREWS — The answer to the question is no, but I do wait to get the call from the National Party about Labor Party preferences in a few three-cornered contests, member for Murray Plains. I will wait for the phone call. I have received them before, and no doubt I will receive them again. There are a number of tight three-cornered contests, so we will see who wants Labor Party preferences.

Speaking of which, let me take the leader to the Morwell electorate — a \$51.27 million education funding boost under our government. Under the government he was a member of, \$292 000.

Ministers statements: government achievements

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) (11:15) — I rise to update the house on our government's

achievements in the health portfolio. I am very hopeful that this afternoon in the other place the Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2018 will be debated, and if that passes that will be the 18th piece of reforming health legislation that has been passed in the health portfolio since coming to term.

I am exceptionally proud of the reforms and achievements of our government in the health portfolio. We absolutely are committed to improving and protecting the health and wellbeing of Victorians. Examples of this include safe access zones around termination clinics to stop women being harassed when they are accessing lawful health care; no jab, no play laws to protect our youngest and our most vulnerable from disease and the quacks that peddle antivaccination science; a new health complaints commissioner to crack down on dodgy practitioners and those that peddle horrific abuse, whether that is fake cancer cures or gay conversion therapy; the first laws to give access to medicinal cannabis to some of our sickest children; and, one of my proudest achievements, we were the first state in the nation to successfully pass voluntary assisted dying laws.

The contrast with the other side is very, very stark. On the one side we invest, we empower and we protect.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:16) — Order! The member for Hawthorn will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Hawthorn withdrew from chamber.

Ms HENNESSY — Those opposite cut \$1 billion out of the health system. They went to war with the health workforce. They disrespected our nurses and our paramedics. They delivered the worst elective surgery results on record.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is now proceeding to debate issues rather than make a ministers statement. I ask you to bring her back to compliance with sessional orders.

The SPEAKER — I uphold the point of order. I ask the minister to come back to making a statement.

Ms HENNESSY — Of course that sits in stark contrast with having delivered the best ambulance response times on record, the lowest elective surgery wait lists, extraordinary investment — the highest level of investment in health capital across the state — the

best vaccination rates across the state and the highest number of nurses and doctors employed in this state, all because Labor governments invest in health.

Fire services

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:17) — My question is to the Premier. More than three years ago you said that the Country Fire Authority (CFA) dispute had to be ended and ‘I ended it’. Three years on and our fire services remain a mess. We face one of the highest fire risks since 2009. Because of you, hundreds of years of firefighting experience have been lost and Victoria now has 3000 fewer volunteers than when you came to government. Premier, after all the turmoil, after all the fire services careers you trashed, after all the people you bullied, abused and disrespected in order to do the bidding of the United Firefighters Union, has it all been worth it? Has it all been worth trashing our proud CFA?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:18) — Here I was, thinking that the Leader of the Opposition might get some new material for today; it would seem not. A question littered with errors, littered with inaccurate and, quite frankly, shameful statements as we head into what will be a long, hot, dry and dangerous summer. Rather than reflecting so very poorly on our firefighters, I will put on record on behalf of every member of this government that we are proud of our firefighters, career and volunteer, and that is why we have not cut \$66 million from their budget as others did. We have instead invested more than \$100 million in additional equipment and resources so that those dedicated and brave men and women of our career and volunteer firefighting services can protect life and property in the coming fire season, just as they do every fire season. The Leader of the Opposition has put to me a whole range of completely inaccurate statements. There is one statement that is wholly accurate, and that is that we invest in our fire services and those opposite cut them.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:19) — Lucinda Nolan, the CFA CEO; Joe Buffone, the CFA chief officer; Peter Rau, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) chief officer; the MFB assistant chief officer; the MFB deputy chief officer; the CFA deputy chief officer; Paul Stacchino, the MFB acting chief officer; Jim Higgins, the MFB CEO; Andi Diamond; the entire board of the CFA; and your own minister — Premier, with all these people, all this lost experience, how can you sit there with that smug look on your face and explain to Victorians and justify that this was actually the right thing to do — to smash up the CFA — all for nothing?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:20) — Again, I am not sure there was a question there, but I have really only got two words for the Leader of the Opposition: Good Friday!

Ministers statements: employment initiatives

Mr CARROLL (Minister for Industry and Employment) (11:21) — I rise to update the house on the number of strategic projects and jobs started under the Andrews Labor government — 93 strategic projects are underway under our government versus those opposite’s eight. Seventy-five thousand new jobs are being created in our record infrastructure programs. The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, I know, is particularly proud of what we are doing with the Phillip Island Visitor Information Centre. Can anyone tell me where the new visitor centre is located? Can the Leader of the Opposition tell me? If he will not, I will. Ventnor Road is where the new Phillip Island visitor centre is going to be located.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Ringwood will resume her seat.

Mr CARROLL — I do not know how the penguins would have gone when he tried to turn the Bass Coast into the Gold Coast, but under our government we are actually mandating local content, in fact 93 per cent.

In four years 3500 apprentices are not only shaping our city but shaping their own lives as well. Manufacturing has grown for 17 consecutive months, the best record in two decades. But our Jobs Victoria program is all about putting people facing barriers to employment into work, just like the women in the Liberal Party. Jobs Victoria is about looking after everyone. The Leader of the Opposition has been out spruiking population growth today while he is having a fire sale of 104 Exhibition Street. Whether you want to call it Kroger’s Castle or Mantach’s Museum given the number of skeletons in the closet there, we know his —

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Speaker: Minister, are you okay?

The SPEAKER — The minister to continue.

Mr CARROLL — An interjection from one of the four Davids! You have got to be a David to get on the front bench there, Speaker.

Mr Foley — On a point of order, Speaker, in the last few weeks we have had R U OK? Day. It is a serious mental health movement, and I would ask the

honourable member to consider very carefully the degeneration of language he has used there to belittle people with mental health issues and through it add to the stigma and discrimination that one in five people in our society suffer through mental health illnesses. The honourable member should know better than that, and I would ask him to withdraw his comments.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to withdraw.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — I apologise. There is no point of order.

Mr CARROLL — Whether it is supporting Alcoa workers or my good friend the member for Williamstown who should be congratulated on the support he gave to the auto industry, under the Andrews Labor government we will not leave anyone behind. We put people to work, and we will continue to do so.

Suicide prevention

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) (11:24) — My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Minister, as you would be aware, Lifeline Gippsland recently celebrated its 50 years of existence, and over that time an army of volunteers and staff have helped save lives right across the country through its telephone crisis support centre and the programs it runs in various communities. Unfortunately and despite the best efforts of many service providers, including Lifeline, our community has had a horrendous couple of weeks with multiple suicides, including that of 19-year-old Jack Strong, whom I paid tribute to in Parliament on Tuesday. Minister, can you please advise what measures your government is taking in the Morwell electorate to reduce the incidence of suicide in my community?

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Mental Health) (11:25) — Can I thank the member for Morwell for raising one of the most serious mental health issues, not just in the state but in Australia. Certainly, when it comes to regional and rural Victoria, the issues that the honourable member raises are of, literally, life-and-death significance to hundreds of communities right around the state. In terms of the support for Lifeline, Lifeline as a national organisation receives support from all levels of government, including from this government, and there have been increases in that support over the term of this government. Of course that is as part of this government's record \$325 million investment in new mental health, alcohol and drug services, which captures the work involved there. In

terms of this government's plan to halve the suicide rate — the suicide rate that in this state sees twice as many people die through their own hands than do on our roads — that strategy to halve that rate over the next period between now and 2025 is already being rolled out through a series of arrangements, including in partnership with the public health networks with the commonwealth right across the state, including in areas of Gippsland.

I would add to that the complex relationship between alcohol and drug addiction and mental health and sadly suicide, and point out indeed, as the honourable member would know and certainly as the honourable member for East Gippsland would know, this government is doubling residential rehabilitation beds right across the state from 205 to over 420 during the term of this government's investment cycle. As a part of that, over 50 per cent of those new beds are in regional and rural Victoria, including in Bairnsdale — yes, not in the honourable member's electorate but in the honourable member for East Gippsland's electorate — through the Hope consortium, which again I stress is one in partnership with the federal government, providing much-needed support and capital there, the community providing access and this government providing the recurrent funding and support.

In terms of further measures, whether it be in the acute area of Morwell hospital and Latrobe hospital more broadly, the recent investments we have made in that community about the outreach support programs that deal with this area are very, very pertinent to the issues that the honourable member raises. I know that there is more to be done in this space, and I know that all honourable members, regardless of which community they come from, take this issue very seriously because, as the honourable member for Morwell has indicated, this is a life-and-death issue that touches nearly every family and every community right across our state.

Supplementary question

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) (11:28) — Minister, in July 2016 the government announced some suicide prevention initiatives by way of a media release that was titled, as you just mentioned, 'Halving the Rate of Suicide in Victoria'. I applaud you for having set such an ambitious target. In the said media release you say that you would invest in local solutions in seeking to halve the suicide rate by 2025. Minister, for the sake of an extra \$135 000 in state government funding, Lifeline Gippsland could make a real difference in our community by providing additional training to increase the number of crisis support volunteers, enhancing and expanding the Connect Call Back service, and

implementing local face-to-face peer support groups for people at risk. So, Minister, will you commit to providing Lifeline Gippsland with this extra \$135 000 a year so they can deliver these critical services and programs and help to prevent and reduce suicide in our community?

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Mental Health) (11:28) — Again I thank the honourable member for his question, and refer him to the content of my answer to the substantive question that he asked. In those terms, again I restate the Lifeline organisation nationally and indeed at local community levels deliver fantastic frontline crisis support and have saved many, many lives. In terms of the advocacy the honourable member has made in this regard for this particular organisation, like many members make for these particularly localised embedded organisations in their own community, there continues to be increased funding from this government as part of that record investment of over \$300 million in new money invested in this space. I would continue to urge the honourable member, as I would any member, to work with my department and to work with their local communities to make sure that this available increased pipeline of support, which is dealt with in a competitive way, is dealt with in the way that most impacts on that issue of halving the suicide rate over the next few years. And I would more than happily sit down with the honourable member and through that process assist him in making sure that we land that goal.

Ms Knight — On a point of order, Speaker, just with your indulgence, can I let everyone in the chamber — the visitors, the media — know that if they are feeling distressed that the number is 13 11 14.

Ministers statements: public transport infrastructure

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (11:30) — There was a period of time between 2010 and 2014 when not a single major public transport project was started and we saw every single public transport commitment that was given was indeed broken. Contrast that with the last four years under the Andrews Labor government: the contrast could not be more stark. There is more than \$30 billion of investment being spent on getting rid of 29 dangerous and congested level crossings and delivering the Metro Tunnel ahead of schedule, which means we can run more trains more often across the city. There is a train line to Mernda with three new stations along the line, and we have duplicated part of the Hurstbridge line as part of our stage 1 project. Every single regional passenger line is also being upgraded with the

\$1.75 billion of investment. There are 65 new high-capacity trains on order. There are 40 new E-class trams and 87 V/Line VLocity carriages, and they are all being built right here in Victoria. There is \$200 million that has been allocated for around 500 new and improved bus routes. Ten thousand new train station car parks are being created. And of course this has created tens of thousands of jobs for Victorians right across the state.

We have achieved a lot. We have turned around the investment in public transport, but we know there is so much more to be done: 21 more level crossings to go, the next stage of the Hurstbridge line works, an airport rail link that is going to provide more connections for the suburbs and the regions, high-speed rail to Geelong, the Cranbourne line duplication, 11 000 new train station car parks, and we will get started on the Suburban Rail Loop — the rail loop that the city needs for the future. Victorians know that it is only the Andrews Labor government that delivers what it commits to. We have got more work to do, and we are determined to get that done.

Government performance

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:32) — My question is to the Premier. You lost your Speaker and Deputy Speaker for rorting the second residence allowance, your Deputy President went for rorting his printing allowance, your TAFE minister resigned for chauffeuring his dogs in his ministerial limo, your emergency services minister was bullied out for daring to stand up to you, and your small business minister was dispatched in a factional hit. We have witnessed Labor members abusing each other, knives wielded in the parliamentary dining room and sordid text messages by your health minister against the Deputy Premier, and you distrust your own cabinet so much you even tried to audit their mobile phones. Premier, a fish rots from the head.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr GUY — A fish rots from the head. Will you finally accept responsibility for the sordid, corrupt mess of a government that you lead?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:33) — I have got to say, it is pretty gutsy, talking about seafood, I would have thought. A pretty gutsy effort there. Good on you. What a hero you are. Where does a lobster rot from, I wonder? And surely even a rotting lobster would taste okay if you washed it down with Grange?

Mr Burgess interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — You were there.

Mr Burgess — On a point of order, Speaker, perhaps the Premier would like to tell the house where he got his free fruit from every week. Where did you get your free boxes of fruit, Premier, every week? Who was it? Are you prepared to answer that question?

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hastings will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Mr ANDREWS — I do thank the member for Hastings for that stunning interjection to protect his leader, having asked on the last day about seafood.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — No, I won't move past it. I will say it again: he just asked me a question about seafood. Apparently what I put in my kids' lunchboxes is on par with what this one puts in his pocket — Mafia money.

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, the Premier has clearly said numerous times that he will take responsibility for whatever happens on his watch. The question very clearly says: will he take responsibility for the stinking, corrupt government that he has led? I ask you to bring him back to answering that question, please.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! It was a very broad, long question. I do ask the Premier to come back to addressing the question.

Mr ANDREWS — They can take 50 points of order, but it will not change the fact that the tactical genius over here asked me about seafood on the last day of Parliament. And that is my answer to your very, very helpful question. We probably could not have written it better ourselves.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:36) — Victoria is going into this fire season at risk because you trashed the Country Fire Authority. We risk blackouts this summer because you closed Hazelwood, and Victorians are living in fear because of your soft-on-crime policies. Bushfires, blackouts and bashings — and all the while, six of your ministers remain under police investigation. Premier, don't Victorians deserve better than your rorting, cheating, corrupt and incompetent government?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:36) — And here I was, thinking he would want to send them home happy. Talk about the Bs from the B team over here. I have had the great honour of being here for a while, a few years, and you know what? In my judgement, I reckon the member for Malvern would have asked a much better question than that. And you know what? I think an increasing number of his colleagues think the same — and I reckon he might just get the chance to ask a lot of questions in a few months time.

Ministers statements: government achievements

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:37) — Four years ago we said that we would remove deadly and congested level crossings, and we have. Four years ago we said we would fix the ambulance crisis and end the war on our ambos, and we have. Four years ago we said that we would repair the shameful damage done to our TAFEs by this miserable lot opposite, and we have. Four years ago we said we would make Victoria the jobs engine room of our national economy, and we have — 370 000 extra jobs, more apprenticeships and using the powers of the government's purchase to embed skills in our economy and to make sure that we look after those retrenched workers, those who are doing it tough, those who had been long-term unemployed. That is why we are the jobs engine room of our national economy.

We said we would upgrade schools, and we have: 1300 upgrades across the state and 70 brand-new schools. We said we would upgrade local roads, and we have, whether it be in the west or in the south-east.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Burwood, in silence.

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier —

Ms Allan interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House!

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier speaks about upgrading local roads — he could try and fix Warrigal Road. Nine months ago there was a landslide on Warrigal Road —

The SPEAKER — Order! Is there a point of order?

Mr Watt — That is a local road in my electorate. If the Premier wants to talk about fixing local roads, maybe he could just invest a bit of time and money into fixing Warrigal Road. Nine months! It is a bit of a joke —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Burwood will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Mr ANDREWS — Four years ago we said we would have Australia's first royal commission into family violence, and we did. We are investing \$2.5 billion to keep Victorian women and children safe. Do you know what else we did? When Rosie Batty stood here, everyone on this side of the house stood up, and we are proud of it.

It tells a powerful story of delivering on your commitments, getting things done, putting people first and making sure that we lead our nation in jobs, in road and rail infrastructure, in hospitals and schools, and in reform and improvements. That is Victoria at its best with a government that is not simply content to occupy the office but a government that gets things done.

Ms Sandell — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I have three unanswered questions which I would like to draw your attention to: numbers 14 778, 14 776 and 14 671.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — I will refer them to the Speaker to follow up.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Rowville electorate

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (11:41) — (15 025) My question is again to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Minister, what reasonable precautions do you recommend businesses take to mitigate against 'risk of loss or damage to their equipment, premises or business' from electricity supply interruptions, as stated in section 16(c) of the *Electricity Distribution Code*? Minister, 69 businesses in my Rowville electorate were asking themselves this question when for the second time in August they had less than 2 hours notice that Ausnet Services had again cancelled the planned maintenance to their power supply due to weather. Ausnet Services, in their denials of compensation to business owners, did not even once acknowledge the impact of two cancellations for businesses who lost wages and interrupted their manufacturing processes and supply chains for nothing.

Bentleigh electorate

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (11:42) — (15 026) My constituency question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I ask: how will Bentleigh residents benefit from the fantastic new solar policies recently announced by the Andrews Labor government? With the federal Liberal-National government so dysfunctional that they have abandoned trying to develop an energy policy, I certainly welcome the leadership demonstrated by this government through these new initiatives. Solar systems are increasingly popular among households in my electorate not just for their environmental benefits but also because they put power back in the hands of consumers. There has been strong interest in this announcement from Bentleigh residents, and I am sure they would welcome any information that the minister can provide to me on their behalf.

Gippsland East electorate

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) (11:43) — (15 027) My constituency question is to the Minister for Health on behalf of the Bairnsdale Ambulance Auxiliary. The information I seek is why funding has been withdrawn from the second Bairnsdale ambulance afternoon shift, which will be forced to cease operations on 24 September, and what consideration has been given to the impact of this decision to abandon the shift. This second afternoon shift was initiated as a trial to improve ambulance response times in Bairnsdale and the surrounding districts, and from all reports it has been very successful. The Bairnsdale hospital routinely transfers large numbers of patients by ambulance to other facilities to access intensive care, orthopaedic, mental health, advanced obstetric and paediatric care. Previously evening patient transfers to Latrobe Regional Hospital in Traralgon were delayed and people needing an ambulance were forced to wait for the off-duty paramedic from Paynesville to respond or they waited for the ambulance to travel from Lakes Entrance. For the past 16 months there has been a second ambulance available, and the community wants to know why this has been cut.

Carrum electorate

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (11:44) — (15 028) My question is for the Minister for Education. When will the school community of Bonbeach Primary School in my electorate find out if their school's application for funding through the Andrews government's Inclusive Schools Fund has been successful? Bonbeach Primary School is a wonderful local school which this government is proudly investing in, with \$6.3 million

for a major rebuild funded out of this year's budget. The school has applied for funding to build an inclusive space for students, including a sensory room, a shade pergola, large climbing rocks, balance beam and play equipment. The Andrews Labor government is building the Education State so every student in my electorate can get a great education and access to a great local school. We look forward to hearing from the minister.

Eildon electorate

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (11:44) — (15 029) My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The minister will be familiar with the beautiful section of the Maroondah Highway between Healesville and Narbethong known as the Black Spur. I would like to know when the white lines both on the sides of the road and in the middle of the road were last painted. As you can appreciate, this section of road poses a number of risks to motorists as it is steep and winding. Motorists rely on the white lines to assist with driving safely, especially in foggy or misty conditions, which are not uncommon on this road. I have been informed that currently the white lines in some sections of the road have good clarity and others do not; I drove this road recently to confirm this. I understand that this section of road has two different VicRoads regions involved, so that might complicate things a little. Those VicRoads regions change in line with the change to council boundaries. It might complicate it a little, but it should still be sortable.

Dandenong electorate

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) (11:45) — (15 030) My question is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, and I ask the minister: how will the new assertive outreach homeless team in Dandenong work to support local members of our community experiencing homelessness? Local residents have raised concerns about the wellbeing of those people in our community who are doing it tough and sleeping rough. I am proud to be part of a government that has committed \$1 billion in additional homeless and housing supports, which is the largest response to homelessness in the past decade. These commitments include the recently announced assertive outreach homeless team that will be working in Dandenong. Early intervention and tailored supports are the key to helping those at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The announcement of the new outreach team was very well received locally, and Dandenong constituents would now like to know more about how the new team will work and assist our local residents.

Melbourne electorate

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) (11:46) — (15 031) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport and is in regard to South Kensington railway station. I received a distressing email this morning from a man named Michael who informed me that a young woman collapsed on the train at South Kensington station this morning. I still do not know if she is ok; I sincerely hope so. I also want to thank Michael for his quick thinking in providing assistance to her. Michael told me that the emergency intercom and cameras in the carriages were not working and that the lack of emergency buttons or staff at South Kensington station and the woeful, run-down infrastructure at that station further delayed the emergency response. In his words: the condition of South Kensington station is a disgrace.

Minister, I have been campaigning for years for an upgrade of South Kensington station, including for these very safety reasons, so my question is: given how clearly dangerous this station is, will the government now commit to an upgrade of South Kensington station before more lives are put at risk?

Essendon electorate

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (11:47) — (15 032) I direct my constituency question to the Minister for Sport, and I ask: what is the latest information about providing funding for the Chris Lane memorial Little League field at Boeing Reserve in Strathmore?

Bass electorate

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) (11:47) — (15 033) My question is for the Minister for Planning. Minister, residents of Ryan Road are seeking your answer in regard to the proposed residential development at Pakenham East. The current plans give vehicles access to and from the new estate onto the Princes Highway via Ryan Road. I have a petition with 115 signatures from residents living on or around Ryan Road asking the minister to prevent Ryan Road being used as a way for traffic to enter and exit the proposed Pakenham East precinct development.

Currently Ryan Road is a relatively small dead-end country lane used by the local residents living on larger style blocks. Adding a large volume of vehicular traffic to Ryan Road would have a significant and detrimental impact on the lifestyle and amenity of those currently living along the road and the surrounding smaller style courts and drives. The current residents certainly did not anticipate a significant increase in traffic volumes when they purchased in the area, some, many years

ago. The petitioners and other residents would like an answer to their question.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) (11:48) — (15 034) My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the question I ask is: will the minister consider upgrading the intersection of Sussex Street and Gaffney Street in Coburg/Coburg North? This intersection has a big roundabout in it, and with the development of the homemaker precinct and the Coles precinct this has become a particularly busy intersection. It was never actually built to carry the amount of traffic that is going through it. It has become particularly difficult for the buses that are stopping at the precinct and the passengers who are disembarking from the buses, and it has become particularly difficult for cyclists and pedestrians as well. I ask the minister if he would consider upgrading this intersection and putting traffic lights there.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) (11:49) — I would like to acknowledge former Frankston MP Andrea McCall in the gallery today.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES COMMISSION (GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (11:49) — As I was saying before question time, the review and the response which we see in this bill make some very, very important changes to the Essential Services Commission (ESC), including replacing the current appeals panel which was established under the act with a capacity for appeals to be referred to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. It also enables the minister to nominate a person to act as a chairperson where there is a vacancy or the chairperson is in fact absent, and it clarifies that the Essential Services Commission has the function of actually reporting on the market structure and performance of regulated industries if so required under enabling legislation.

The bill also, quite wisely in my mind, provides for a further review of the act to be completed some years hence. There are a range of technical statute law

revision amendments to the act as well. I think this would be a good stage right now to reflect on what the ESC actually does. I think there has been some confusion on the opposition benches —

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr EDBROOKE — We can tell from the interjections that there is some confusion there about what the ESC actually does. I would like to focus in my contribution —

Mr Watt interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — Member for Burwood, there is no need to interject across the chamber.

Mr EDBROOKE — If we can get past the interruption from the member for Burwood, I would like to focus some of my contribution on the role that the ESC plays in monitoring our energy services.

The Andrews Labor government of course understands that Victoria is growing at a huge rate, roughly 140 000 people per year, that this in turn places a greater demand on all of our infrastructure and services and that there is a greater need to build more roads, more schools and better health services and of course to continue to upgrade the infrastructure that services our local communities. I would say that nothing at this stage is more important than energy for the people of Victoria. It is a subject people talk about quite often. It is a hot topic.

This government understands that whether it be gas, water or electricity, paying the bills for these services is often very challenging for some people in our communities, and I know that from talking to my constituents in Frankston. Of course that is why we are working so hard to increase supply, with the single biggest investment in renewable energy in the state's history. These are genuinely exciting announcements, and people in my community are very, very excited about them. The announcements over the last few months regarding solar and wind energy and hot-water units have been received with open arms in my community.

I would like to say, though, that one thing my community found quite amusing — and I would say some Liberal Party members that I know in my community found this very concerning — was that the shadow environment minister was down in Frankston when he had his little sojourn from Parliament a few weeks ago and he was campaigning down there on the

cost of energy and what this government is apparently doing so wrong, even though we are making these record-breaking announcements. He was down there with no alternative. He was not telling them what the opposition would do in government. And some of these people actually came to me and asked, 'Does it worry you that you have a shadow minister coming down' —

Mr Watt — Is he shadow minister for environment?

Mr EDBROOKE — energy — 'into your seat and going around telling people all these stories but he's actually bringing nothing to the table?'. My response, I think, was quite measured. I just said, 'Well, it does not surprise me. If you want to get out there and campaign like a 19-year-old, that is fine, but if you want to actually do your job, get back to your desk and make some actual policy on the renewable industry, which is blossoming and providing cheap energy, that would be fine too'. These people who are Liberal members in my community of Frankston walked away shaking their heads.

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr EDBROOKE — They are so disillusioned by you lot that they are actually thinking of quitting the party. So just take that into consideration. They do not know who that guy is, member for Burwood.

Back on the bill, as members before me have said —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the honourable member has strayed a long way from the subject matter of the bill and is proceeding to debate matters and make imputations. I ask you to bring him back to debating the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — I ask the member to come back to the bill, but I also ask the member for Burwood to stop interjecting across the chamber. He might not be interested in listening, but I am.

Mr EDBROOKE — In my electorate of Frankston we have the Environment Victoria #Repower campaign happening just a few doors up from my office. We speak regularly about some of the responsibilities that the ESC would be looking after. They had an opening recently, and it was really interesting to note that the only political party that was not represented at that opening, which was full of community members, was the Liberal Party. They are absolutely dormant, vacant and hopeless in this space, and it is not just at the state level. We know that at the federal level they are fighting amongst themselves.

There is now no national energy policy. At the moment I am seeing pictures of the Prime Minister in a truck looking like he is excited about driving the truck when he probably should be at the table at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), a meeting of which they just cancelled, because it is the forum and instrument to make sure that we can get national energy guarantees up across the states.

I think for my community it is a huge responsibility of this government to ensure that our communities can actually pay their bills and that they have on-demand power when they need it. The ESC is an independent regulator that promotes the long-term interests of the Victorian community and consumers with respect to the price of this energy and the quality and reliability of other essential services as well. They regulate Victoria's energy, water and transport sectors and administer the rate capping system for the local government sector. On rate capping, I congratulate the minister, who is at the table, on that piece of legislation. That has gone down so well in my community of Frankston.

We did have a local journalist ask me a question the other day. There had been some statements from the local council complaining about the rate capping policy, and he asked, 'Would you like to tell me something? Would you like to give me a line?'. I said, 'Yes, sure. Let me think about it. I would say that if local councils, especially those like Frankston with the likes of \$28 million surpluses, can't afford the basic essential needs of their community, the essential services, then maybe they need to reprioritise what they do and how they spend their money and maybe they need to talk to some more community members about where they want that money spent'.

The ESC have a fair bit to do with that as well. But, as I said, they also regulate the Victorian energy efficiency target scheme, which reduces greenhouse emissions by making energy-efficient improvements in our community and affordable power for consumers.

In Frankston, which is on the beach, the community is very in tune with our environment. It is the best place in Victoria — and there are no arguments from those opposite. I can tell the member for Brighton that Frankston is the best place in Victoria. We know that our youth in particular are very vocal when it comes to ensuring that the representatives of government are looking at all the possible policy options to make sure that our globe is clean and it is green for their kids and their grandkids, and to make sure that people actually embrace the future, which is renewables. I commend this bill to the house.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) (11:58) — In the very short amount of time available to me I would like to speak in support of the Essential Services Commission (Governance, Procedural and Administrative Improvements) Amendment Bill 2018. As we have heard, the Essential Services Commission (ESC) is a vital body in the operation of essential services in Victoria. We know that they regulate Victoria's energy, water and transport sectors, that they administer the rate capping system for the local government sector and regulate the Victorian energy efficiency target scheme — all incredibly important in the day-to-day lives of so many Victorians.

We have also heard from previous speakers that the Andrews government completed a review of the Essential Services Commission Act 2001 in December 2016, and the review and government response was tabled in Parliament on 7 March last year. That review concluded that the Essential Services Commission was working well as an economic regulator but found scope to clarify its role and to improve governance, procedural and administrative arrangements.

The bill before the house today proposes a number of changes, including replacing the appeals panel established under the act with a review jurisdiction conferred on VCAT. It enables the minister to nominate a person to act as acting chairperson in the absence of the chairperson or if there is a vacancy in the office. It also clarifies that the Essential Services Commission has the function of reporting on the market structure and performance of regulated industries if this is required under enabling legislation. It provides for a further review of the act to be completed by the end of 2026. The bill also includes a range of technical statute law revision amendments to the act. It is a sensible act, as we have heard. It strengthens the ESC, and I commend the bill to the house.

Business interrupted in accordance with resolution of house.

VALEDICTORY STATEMENTS

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) (12:00) — It is very difficult to think what to talk about after 19 years in this house. Walking into the chamber this morning I said to the member for Williamstown, who is also retiring, 'What do we talk about?' and 'How much does it matter?'. He really put the pressure on me when he said, 'It's the only speech they read when you die'. With all that pressure I have now got copious notes. When we first came in here we were allowed to read our whole speech. On this occasion I have copious notes. I have them because I am worried I might get emotional, but the member for

Gembrook, who is very young and a little bit ageist, will say, 'It's probably because she thinks she is going to forget what she is going to talk about'.

Mr Battin interjected.

Mrs FYFFE — You will too.

Well, what a journey it has been. When I came here in 1967 as a ten-pound Pom my first home was a metal hut called a Nissen hut at a migrant hostel at Nunawading. I came from a tiny village, actually a hamlet. My dad on occasion was a coalminer who hated the Tories, and he frequently told me, 'You're getting above your station, my girl'. It was a very typical old-fashioned working-class area.

I met David in 1975, and we established a vineyard, winery and restaurant. We became very involved in the community, a community we have really loved in the Upper Yarra. In 1994 I was appointed a commissioner for the amalgamation of the four councils in the area in which we lived, the Yarra Ranges. The two-plus years that I was a commissioner was good training for coming in here. There was lots of heckling, posters defaced, rubbish dumped on the council steps and animosity from many. In 1999 I was approached to stand for preselection for the Liberal Party after Jim Plowman announced he was going to retire. I was elected with a good majority for the same area in which I was a commissioner, so they probably did not dislike me as much as I thought they did sometimes.

The last 19 years have had highs and lows. Like a book, some chapters have been sad, some happy, some exciting and some downright boring. A number of times I have wanted to put the book down or even throw it away. There is the part you know, and if you do not keep turning the pages, you will never know what the next chapter will bring. Today this chapter ends, and it is time to reflect and flick back through the pages.

If asked how I would describe myself as a politician I guess I would say I am a grassroots politician. I have enjoyed being the member for Evelyn — my community, my home. I had 5 minutes of fame as Speaker, a position I valued and respected. It is after all the third-highest political position in the state. It was very satisfying to calm down a fractious, bitter Parliament, to make it calmer, to make it smoother and to work better. Or perhaps members were so exhausted by then that it was not due to my skills or abilities at all that the house became a little calmer.

Going back to my preselection in 1999, I was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, as I think we all are in the

beginning, and I campaigned hard. I doorknocked most of the electorate, attended street corner meetings, put brochures into letterboxes. I went to Powelltown, which is a lovely little timber town in the Upper Yarra. I doorknocked and met a few people I knew. I went to this house, knocked on the door and a little child came to the door. I said, 'Hello, is Mummy home?'. 'No, Mummy's not home'. 'Is Daddy home?'. 'Yes'. 'Can I talk to Daddy?'. She said, 'He's round the back'. I went striding around the back, all bright, with my brochure in my hand. It was the neatest backyard. There were rows and rows of black pots with very healthy looking plants. I said, 'Good morning, sir, I'm Christine Fyffe, what wonderful tomato plants you've got'. The gentleman told me to go in very strong language, called his dog, and I think I was so surprised that I actually jumped the fence. There was a little old gate and I jumped over it; I do not think they were tomato plants at all.

I doorknocked the part of Mooroolbark in the Evelyn electorate quite extensively. We were going down one street — I had three other helpers working with me — and I knocked on a door. I had not quite finished knocking when the door was thrown wide open and this man, wearing a beaming smile, opened the door. That was the only thing he was wearing. It was Saturday afternoon and he thought I was his girlfriend who he was expecting at any time. I tried to keep my eyes focused on his face as I said, 'I'm terribly sorry, sir, I'm Christine Fyffe', blah, blah, 'I'll go', and I left.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs FYFFE — I cannot remember if he was tall or fat or anything. All I remember was this exposure of flesh. As members of Parliament we certainly do experience many things.

It is fascinating that when I came in here I thought I was going to be part of the Kennett team — led by a man whom I deeply admire and who truly believes in service before self. He transformed Victoria from being a rust bucket into an economic powerhouse, and he is still serving this state. The first term in Parliament I worked at forming relationships: working out how Parliament works, on committees and also in the electorate. I lost my seat in the 2002 election by 220 votes. I curled up in the foetal position and sucked my thumb for a couple of days, and then I thought, 'Blow this, I'm getting out. I'm going to win this one back'. I must have driven Heather McTaggart mad because I went to everything that was happening, wrote letters to the editor and made comments all over the place, and I won the seat back in 2006. I came back wiser and more sure of the type of local member I wanted to be.

Like all members I got involved in committees. I was on the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, an all-party committee, and we had very divergent views on many things. One of the references we had was to look at the 2006–07 bushfires that destroyed over 1 million acres of public land. By the end of our meetings, by the end of that committee's research, we were unanimous in our recommendations of what should happen with the management of public land in preparing for bushfires. Those recommendations were accepted by the government and were included in the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission report into Black Saturday.

The last committee inquiry I have been on has been looking at career support and advice to young people. It was a self-reference by the committee, because we were all concerned about the fact that young people are going to university, with many dropping out. They do not know what direction to take, and are being encouraged to go into training that does not suit the jobs that are there at the end. The recommendations, again, were unanimous, and I hope that any future government will look at them seriously and take them on board.

I also chaired a committee of experts on how sufferers of eating disorders and their families could better access services and how services can be improved. I have been for a long time deeply concerned about the increasing prevalence of eating disorders. They have the highest morbidity rates of any mental illness. It was a very distinguished committee of highly qualified experts, who came down with recommendations that were excepted by the then Minister for Health, Mary Wooldridge, and, thankfully, the Minister for Mental Health, Martin Foley, has kept those and is following them through. It was an excellent committee. I was daunted by the fact that I had very learned professors and very high-quality people.

At the first meeting that we had they were talking about FBT, and in my world FBT is fringe benefits tax. I did have to interrupt in the end and stop them. They were talking about family-based therapy, which shows that we come in here with expertise from certain areas, with knowledge that we bring in, and then we have to work in areas that we have no knowledge about. We really have to learn to stop and ask questions to make sure we understand what is going on. With the eating disorders, it seems to be getting more prevalent, with as many boys as girls now being involved and the age is getting younger. So the work must continue.

Being in this place is important but the electorate has been far more fulfilling for me: guiding people through red tape; advocating for schools, roads, better health

care, including for mental health issues, through the Department of Health and Human Services. There is a myriad of other personal issues that come up as a member of Parliament: meeting and assisting businesses, visiting schools — how I adore going to the schools, particularly the primary schools when the preps sit in the front row and they look at you so big-eyed. It is so important that you give the right impression to those children. I have been involved in my RSLs with their Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and Veterans Day ceremonies. They are all very special to me. The citizenship ceremonies have meant a lot. It is a very emotional time when people take the oath to become an Australian, and what I have enjoyed over the last few years is the diversity of backgrounds that we are now getting in the Yarra Ranges. It has been a very narrow Anglo-Saxon, Dutch, Italian-type of area, but now we are getting people from many more different nationalities coming in.

Reflecting back through the pages of the book of my time in here, I have been deeply saddened by the increasing lack of respect now being shown in this place. The personalising of attacks on individual members is increasing and is to be deplored, and I have been bitterly disappointed by the roting of allowances by the previous Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. This deliberate fraud, with the red shirts saga, is going to leave a stain and actually will reflect on all members forever in this house. There will always be questions.

As I come to the end of this, and ironically it is from the same seat — this was my first seat when I first came in in 1999, and I do not know if David Hodgett planned that when he gave me this seat —

Mr Katos — Probably not.

Mrs FYFFE — Probably not. He would not have known, would he?

Mr Hodgett — Absolutely.

Mrs FYFFE — Oh absolutely, yes. I really have a lot of people to thank: all the staff who look after us here from catering, cleaning, security, the backroom administration, Hansard — and I have much appreciated your assistance when you have made my speeches into something readable. You have really made silk purses out of sows' ears to get them through. I have mispronounced words, I have mangled words. The member is not here, but he is continually correcting my pronunciation of certain words, but Hansard always knew what it was that I meant.

I especially want to thank the former Clerk, Ray Purdey, and the Acting Clerk, Bridget Noonan. Their help and

guidance when I was thrust into the role of Speaker was immeasurable. Also I thank Peter Lochert, Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services, who advised and guided me through all the issues a Speaker has to deal with outside of this house. There is so much the Speaker has to do that people are not aware of. I want to congratulate Peter and his staff on the building of the new offices. I have enjoyed my short time over there. It is great to have a window. It is great not to have to go over the dome and fear breaking your leg. It is great not having to come down those horrible stairs when the lifts are not working. I have really enjoyed it.

I want to thank the Liberal Party for preselecting me, the Liberal Party whose values I treasure and have been part of my life for so long now; my electorate chairs over the years, June Delbridge, Dot Hill, Bryan McCarthy and Aaron Violi; all the wonderful branch members who turned out in all weathers to hand out for me; Maria McCarthy, who slaved over hot stoves as we held fundraising dinners; and so many, many more in my community.

I would like to thank Matthew Guy for his support and friendship. You are going to make a great Premier, Matthew, and I look forward to watching you from outside. I will of course give you lots of unasked for advice, but you would expect that from me. You would not expect less. To all my colleagues, I will miss you — well, almost all of you. Yes, some of the young ones you have got to keep in check, and some of those on the opposite side that I have had a good relationship with.

I would like to thank my older brother, Clive Barningham, who has come out for every election except in 2002, and he said that is why I lost. He worked tirelessly on my signs, repairing them when my opponents damaged them, handing out how-to-vote cards. In fact in the 2006 election somebody said to him, 'Why should I vote for her?'. He said, 'She's my sister. Why wouldn't you?', and they said, 'All right, I'll go in and vote'. I would like to thank friends, like Andrea McCall, who has always been there for me, and my family who have gone on the booths. Even my little grandchildren when they were small went on the booths at every election.

Last but not least I thank David, who has always been there — now, this is when I get emotional — putting up with meetings, and dinners that I know he did not want to be at. He would much rather have been at the football or drinking wine with his friends. He has grounded me. He has supported me at all times, and he is now probably panicking at the thought that he is going to have me at home all the time.

I would like to leave you all with a thought. As you get caught up in the hurly-burly of this place and all the intrigue and so on that goes on, never forget that what you do in here, each piece of legislation that comes in, affects some, if not all, Victorians. It has an impact on their lives. Be careful of unintended consequences. Respect the positions that you are fortunate enough to have, and, to those of you who come back, try and respect each other more in this house. It really has not been a nice place to be in on so many days. It started half-way through the last Parliament. It has now been six years, and it is time for it to stop and for people to be more polite and more caring to each other. Thank you, Speaker; it has been a great journey.

Honourable members applauded.

Mr LANGUILLER (Tarnet) (12:16) — I acknowledge the traditional custodians and owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to them, their culture, their elders past, present and future and elders from other communities who may be here today.

Speaker, congratulations to you personally. Allow me to do the acknowledgement to country, if I may, in my mother tongue, with your indulgence, that of the house and particularly that of the member for Northcote: reconozco a los pueblos originarios de esta tierra, a sus ancianos pasados y presentes. También me gustaría reconocer mi lengua y mi patrimonio Latino Americano.

The Honourable the Speaker, the Honourable the Premier, the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition, parliamentary colleagues and friends, more than anything I have always been a political activist. At 13, I joined the student and trade union movements and fought for workers' rights, student rights and human rights. I grew up in Uruguay, a military dictatorship where police brutality was rife — I experienced this personally. I was forced to flee as a refugee to Argentina and then Australia. I will always be grateful to both nations and peoples for giving me and my family safe haven.

Like all migrants and refugees, when I came to Australia I worked long hours in hard jobs, including factories, abattoirs and farms. Hard work was and is important, but education changed my life. I have always drawn much inspiration from Nelson Mandela, who said that education is the most powerful weapon which you can give to a young man or woman to transform their lives and that of their families, their community and indeed their nation. Australia provided me and my family shelter, access to affordable housing,

employment and, importantly, access to formal education. For that my family and I are grateful.

As I reach the end of my parliamentary career my convictions, vocation and passion remain as vibrant as in my youth. That is why I stand with people with disabilities, injured workers, multicultural communities, Indigenous communities, the LGBTI community, people fighting for gender equality and indeed older Australians. That is why I am so proud of the Disability Act 2006. That is why I remain strongly committed to working with the International Federation on Ageing to continue to argue the case in the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in the United Nations in order to establish a convention to protect the human rights of older persons. Much has been improved in those areas over the last decades, but much more must be done.

I also stand with the government and this Parliament in fighting the scourge of domestic violence. As my friend the late Fiona Richardson said:

We don't just want to reduce family violence — we want to stop it before it starts. That requires dedicated, long-term action.

I commend her work. I commend the work of the Premier.

I first joined the labour movement and the Australian Labor Party because they are the story of working men and women. It is the story of migrants. It is the story of refugees. It is indeed the story of women and social justice. And it is the story of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is about celebrating diversity of cultures, language and faith. I also believe the best way to practice multiculturalism is through the empowerment of diverse communities through education. This government's strong commitment to education, especially in the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne, in rebuilding the TAFE system and in the low-income earners of Victoria is a great expression of that, because multiculturalism goes hand in hand with social justice.

At this point I wish to note and thank the only university in Melbourne's west, Victoria University, then the Footscray Institute of Technology, which provided me the opportunity to acquire a tertiary education underpinned by the policies of the former Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. That is the Labor story, that is my story — the story of migrants, refugees and solidarity.

Immigration and multiculturalism will continue to be challenged. There are people in this country, but I am

proud to say not many in Victoria, that would want to turn back the clock. We need to be mindful and vigilant against such regressive divisiveness. Australia has legislated for the respect of all Australians from all backgrounds through acts of Parliament such as the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. We must all continue to stand up for human rights. Despite some of the regressive rhetoric coming from some voices in Canberra, I believe that for most of the 43 years of the Racial Discrimination Act the act has done its job. It is an effective expression of fair dinkum multiculturalism. As the former race discrimination commissioner said of the act:

... it has proven to be a powerful instrument of justice. It has become an important part of Australia's human rights architecture.

Multiculturalism works in Victoria not because it is something we do but because it is who we are.

Multicultural communities have underpinned our commercial engagement with China, India and indeed now Latin America. I commend the Premier of Victoria for his vision and the Victorian Minister for Trade and Investment for his vision and their outstanding work in launching *Globally Connected: Victoria's Latin America Trade and Investment Strategy*. As the Premier stated:

This ambitious blueprint for Victorian engagement with Latin America will see our trade double in value in the next decade.

I believe we must continue to change the paradigm that used to define our relationship with Latin America from one of competition to one of collaboration and complementarity. I quote my friend the Minister for Trade and Investment, who said:

Our Latin America strategy will help Victorian companies deliver our products and services to new markets while expanding and creating more jobs here at home.

The Victorian government is also committed to working with Aboriginal Victorians towards Australia's first treaty. May I repeat this: towards Australia's first treaty. The Andrews Labor government has provided more than \$37 million to support the treaty process and promote self-determination among Victorian Aboriginal communities. I am proud to have been Speaker at the time when Parliament first flew permanently the Aboriginal flag alongside the Australian and Victorian flags. I was also proud to have had the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags permanently placed in my Speaker's office. I was also proud to be the Chair of the house that proposed the motion that Parliament give acknowledgement to country at the start of every sitting week. I commend

the Premier and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on their stewardship of this issue, and I commend all members of this house who affirmed that motion unanimously. This is indeed a historical legacy for this great Parliament.

I am honoured to be the first Uruguayan to be elected to a Parliament outside Uruguay and to have represented the Latin American and Spanish communities of Victoria in Parliament. I was first elected as the member for Sunshine, then Derrimut and now Tarneit. I have enjoyed working in local communities, making a difference in schools and education, and being involved in the development of the Sunshine Hospital, which was to look after my mother, providing her with quality of care, dignity and much affection. I thank the government and I particularly extend my recognition to the Minister for Health.

For almost 15 years of my parliamentary career, along with hundreds of residents, I enjoyed campaigning — sometimes, not often — for the St Albans and Ginifer railway stations to be put underground, and to finally see it done by this government gives me enormous pleasure. Let me put this in a practical context: this great initiative cut 25 minutes travel time each way, allowing my father to spend more quality time with my mother whilst she was at Sunshine Hospital. I commend the minister on her great work. I commend and thank the ministers for public transport, health and education for their outstanding work in the west of Melbourne in seeing this done.

As the member for Tarneit, it has been my privilege to be involved with the Minister for Education in record funding investments in the electorate of Tarneit, in capital funding for Tarneit West primary school, Tarneit P-9 College and Tarneit Senior College, just to name a few, because every family in every community should have access to a good school close to home. In fact this government has committed greatly to Melbourne's west in health, education, roads and infrastructure. A new ambulance station has been built in Hoppers Crossing, giving paramedics the facilities they need to respond to emergencies. The Tarneit railway station was opened to cater to the needs of the growing community. The West Gate tunnel project has also started. Once complete it will provide a vital second river crossing and greater access to Melbourne's west. Just last week I was with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to commence the works on Leakes Road, which is the latest road to be upgraded from the Western Roads \$1.8 billion budget package. This is good for families, and it is indeed good for business.

Dear friends and colleagues, at the risk of leaving some people out, I would like to make a few personal thanks and acknowledgements. To my staff over my parliamentary life, thank you. There have been many — they have moved on to better things. I want to name especially some of those people: Nick, Sonia, Walter, Valeria, Carlos, Huezo, Mali, Gladys and Gerson. I am grateful. I could not have done it without you. I could not have gotten to this point without you.

Thank you also to my 2014 campaign manager, Jasvinder, and to my former parliamentary staff: the great Ray Purdey, Santhi Sinniah, Jeremy Walsh and Peter Lochert — outstanding servants of this Parliament. I welcome the first woman Clerk of this Parliament, Bridget Noonan. To the staff in the Parliament who make our work look so good — the Assembly, Hansard, maintenance, catering, finance, gardening and IT — you are second to none in this nation and indeed comparable to the best in the world.

To my longstanding friends over and above politics: Carlos, Asuncion, Patricia, Oscar, Henry, Marcia, John, Ruben, Jenny, Alejandro, Fabio, Alexis, Victor, Angel, Gabriel, Ariel, George, Jacqui, Trent, Jimmy, Anthony and indeed the Melbourne Victory family, thank you.

Thank you to my federal colleagues and friends who are ready to govern this great nation: Richard Marles, Tim Watts, Joanne Ryan, Peter Khalil and many others.

To my very special Labor friends in the state caucus who stood by me in good and tough times. I do not want to get emotional. There are too many to mention, but you know who you are. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Indeed I thank you on behalf of my family.

To Stephen Conroy and Theo Theophanous, we three amigos have done it all together. It has been a tough ride but an enjoyable one. I would do it all again except one or two preselections. I think we could have done them a little bit better.

Thank you to the Victorian Parliament, to the Victorian multicultural community, to the Latin American and Spanish diplomatic and consular corps.

To my children and their mother, Natasha, Sebastian, Liam and Simon, I thank you all for your patience, understanding and support. I love you all dearly. You are amazing human beings. Now I am coming home. To my granddaughter, Antonia and her father, Esteban, to my brother Julio and to Karen and extended family, I look forward. To my mother and father — outstanding, bulletproof, decent, courageous. Everything you need from parents, I had it, particularly

in difficult times in Uruguay. To my partner, Tatiana, and her family, I could not have gotten here without you, and you know it.

And finally to this great nation and its people, thank you. Thank you so much. Allow me to say this in my mother tongue: a esta gran nación y a este gran pueblo, le digo salud! Gracias!

Honourable members applauded.

Mr DIXON (Nepean) (12:33) — I was just reminiscing with the Premier. On 5 March 1996 the member for Dromana, Tony Hyams, rang me up and said, ‘I’d like to speak to you about the campaign’. I was his campaign manager. I went in to see him, and he told me he was not actually going to continue with the campaign — this was three weeks out from the election. Three days after that, after a fair bit of work and some pushing and shoving, I became the candidate for the seat of Dromana, and three weeks later I was a member of Parliament. It was quite an amazing start.

I remember about three months into my term the class of ’96 were having a lunch with Jeff Kennett. There were 16 of us in the coalition who came in in ’96. We were all feeling pretty good about ourselves, and Jeff deflated our balloons very quickly by saying, ‘You do realise that only a couple of you will end up being ministers and most of you won’t last two or three terms.’ I thought, ‘Well, there goes my career, but I will make the most of it’. As it turned out, I was one of only two who became a minister, and I am the second-last survivor, so I did not think it would work out that way.

I would like to start with a few thank-yous. Of course thank you to all the parliamentary staff for making us all look so good through the work you do. I have made friends amongst the parliamentary staff, and I thank them for all their support. To the committee staff: I think our parliamentary committees are great. I have been on about seven or eight of those committees. The staff do an incredible amount of work while putting up with all our political nuances, but I think between us all we have done fantastic work. Thank you to my ministerial staff who supported me, and I know there are a lot of them here. In fact we all still stick together and get together, including some of the department staff. We were actually described once by the Premier’s office as being recalcitrant and a bit like the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, so we took that as a badge of honour. From then on I was known as ‘Dear Leader’ by my staff.

Thank you to my electorate staff. I have not had a lot of electorate staff. Either I have treated them well or the

work was pretty easy, because they have tended to stick around. I would like to pay particular tribute to Barbara Walker, who was with me for 16 years in the electorate and also in my ministerial office, and Meredith Cassidy, who has been with me for 18 years and is going to pull up stumps with me in November.

I thank the Liberal Party and especially the local branch members. I would not be a member of Parliament without being a member of that party. For their fundraising, their support, all the hard work that comes with campaigning and just the maintenance of the party, and for looking after me and keeping me on the straight and narrow, I really do sincerely thank them for what they have done.

To my local community and those who voted for me, I hope I have not let you down. It certainly has been an honour to represent you all. It is just a tremendous community on the Mornington Peninsula. I lived there for many years before I became the local member, and I will continue to live there. They nearly let me down. I was elected by only 114 votes in 2002, and whenever my children want to get a rise out of me they just say, 'Hey Dad, 114', and I assume the foetal position on the floor every single time.

I thank my broader family, especially my brother and my two sisters, who have taken a great interest in my career. They come from different political aspects, but they have certainly been very interested in my career and have been thoroughly supportive of me. To all my many friends who have supported me and helped me and taken a great interest in my career, I thank you very much. To a dear friend Stacey, thank you for your great support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my late wife, Chris, who deserves all the credit — so much credit — for being by my side for 20 years. Chris was not into politics. She did not really like politics, but she supported me; she was by my side. Whatever I wanted to do she just said, 'Yes, you go for it', and it brought us as a family great joy. In fact Chris was a long-time teacher, and I remember when I was shadow Minister for Education and then Minister for Education I would be very excited and tell her about some great new policy I had thought of or something we were doing. She would say, 'Yes, yes, that's nice, dear, but in my classroom today X, Y or Z happened' and she always brought me back to reality.

Julia and Marty, my children: what can I say? Julia and Marty are in the family business; they are both in politics as well. They were aged eight and 12 when I was elected, so they have grown with me right through

politics. They really like politics — they get it — but because of that their love and support and understanding of me has just been extraordinary. It is something that binds us together, and I just cannot thank them enough for the support that they have given me through this wonderful career.

With this job we are just so lucky. There is not a job around where you can help so many people and help a community in small ways or really large ways and make a massive difference. We are very, very lucky to have this job. One of the great aspects of this job is that we get to know our beautiful state of Victoria. I have been all over Victoria many, many times. The communities, the geography of it, the people — every single aspect of getting to know a state is a real honour and a privilege.

We all have to know a lot about a lot of things, and I think that is what has kept me young, kept me enthused and kept me interested in the job. You just have to know so much about so many things. I think that is a great challenge, but it is one of the great aspects and endearing qualities of this wonderful role that we actually perform.

You meet a lot of people along the way — a local hero who has done a tremendous thing in their community right up to world leaders. I have been going to a regular conference in Rome for a small group of Catholic legislators from around the world, and last year I had a meeting with Pope Francis. But one of the other participants at the conference was Sean Spicer — late of the White House, for those who do not know, but I think you do. Sean and I actually had a couple of bottles of red one night, which was very, very interesting, as you can imagine. When I came back to tell people, 'I've been to Rome and I met the Pope and I met Sean Spicer', all the politicians said, 'That's nice about the Pope, but tell us about Sean Spicer'.

I will just put my humility aside for a moment. One of the interesting things about being especially the education minister is you end up unveiling a lot of plaques around the countryside in all sorts of places. I do have suspicions that some of them actually come down when you leave, but I like to think that they are still there. My favourite plaque is the one at Kyneton Secondary College. I was invited to go up for the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the school. There was this massive granite block there — beautiful polished granite, very central Victoria, lovely gold lettering on it. I was to unveil the plaque. When I saw the plaque with my name on it, the lettering was all the same size. The plaque is massive. It is all granite and gold lettering. Sometimes I make some of my family

members go up and have a look at it. In fact I said to them, 'I won't need a headstone. This will do me fine', which will save the taxpayer a lot of money for my state funeral, I am sure. I am always thinking of the taxpayer.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve this Parliament, and it has been an honour and a privilege to work with so many — obviously my colleagues around me, those opposite and those who have gone before us in this place. That was an unexpected highlight. We are all here because we are passionate about our communities, we have got incredible life experiences and we are ambitious, but it is an incredible mix. I never thought it would be as good as this with the people that I have worked with.

One group I have to mention is the country members. The Liberal Party have a country members group. We have a meal together on the Monday before any sitting day. It took me a while to break into this group, because they said I was not a country boy, but I pointed out that I did fulfil five criteria: one was I received the second residence allowance — legitimately; two, I had a Victorian Farmers Federation branch in my electorate; three, the Country Fire Authority served my electorate; four, I could see livestock from my house; and five, I had been audited by the Australian Taxation Office. They are a great group, and I appreciate their friendship.

I have made a lot of friends, people I will always keep in touch with. Two of my closest friends have been involved in politics. One is Nick Kotsiras, the former member for Bulleen. Nick and I used to hold prayers — 'Thank God it's Tuesday. Thank God it's Wednesday' — in the room just next door, and single-malt Scotch was the go there. Nick was a consummate politician and made sure that anybody who came in signed the visitors book. We had members from the Labor Party, the media and the leadership. Everybody came along. Their names are there for posterity. No-one ever complained about our prayers.

There is a rumour that Kim Wells, the member for Rowville, and I actually sleep together, and I want to take this opportunity on this last occasion to actually mention that rumour. It is true. Kim and I have slept in a hiking tent all over the world, all over this country and all over this great state. But, as Kim said, there was always one rule: Catholics on one side, Protestants on the other, and never the twain shall meet — and that has never happened. Thank you, Kim, for your great support and friendship.

My message to you all is please do not devalue this great institution and its great traditions. The committee

work and the work we do with our conscience votes and in debates is just first class, and the fact that we can really work together is wonderful. The Westminster system may have its faults, but it is certainly the best system and something we should be very, very proud of and always work to uphold.

It is just great to see that this building is actually being looked after for those who work in it, because I think if you devalue the building you devalue the tradition and the institution. On our salaries and conditions and travel and all of those sorts of things, my message to you all is do not devalue yourselves by devaluing that. Every time you give something away, no-one says thanks for it. We have got to be proud of what we do and respect the importance of what we do. We should always hold fast to that tradition and the great position and honour that we have and not devalue it in a single way.

To my fellow retirees: congratulations on all your great service. I wish you good health and good luck in your future. And for those of you who are going on, good luck — not too much good luck over there. What am I going to do in my retirement? Well, I am going to enjoy my cars. I am going to buy a boat. I am going to take up the guitar again. I am going to travel. I am looking for a couple of board positions if anybody wants to come and talk to me later. More importantly, what I hope to be is a better friend, a better Poppy to Ella and Sienna and a better dad to Julia and Marty, because I think it is now time for me to give back to those I love and who have loved me and supported me all the way through. I really cannot believe it is all over. It has been a fantastic opportunity. It has been a fantastic journey. Thank you, and goodbye.

Honourable members applauded.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) (12:49) — In 1971 I was a year 10 student at Geelong High School. In those days schools brought in careers counsellors to talk to year 10 students about their potential futures so that they could plan their subjects ahead of years 11 and 12. When I was asked what career I was considering, I said I planned to become a leader in the government, whereupon they said to me, 'You can't tell us things like that. Politics is something you might be interested in, but you can't plan your future around it'. I said I understood that, so I might study agriculture at university and possibly become a teacher.

Through my upbringing, though, I developed a strong desire to stand up for justice and to support people, particularly people who were not confident to stand up for themselves, and I believed that I could make a difference. This passion for wanting to make a

difference came about through the mentors in my life, most prominently my parents and my grandparents. My grandfather was a Methodist minister, who gave me a strong sense of social justice, of compassion and of the importance of standing up and speaking out. My mother and father provided me with great inspiration. Although we lost mum about six years ago, my father, who just turned 92 last week, is in the gallery and I thank him for his very important support over the years.

By 1980 I had finished my agriculture degree and my teacher training and found myself teaching at Kaniva High School. The vision of going into politics still had not left me, and I knew that if I was going to progress as a potential Labor member of Parliament, Kaniva was not necessarily the place to be, because I did offer to hand out how-to-vote cards in Kaniva on election day and between the three of us we did a very good job. But that was it. In 1983 I moved on to Ballarat and that proved to be a great choice for me. I found myself enjoying teaching at Sacred Heart College, playing tennis with Eureka tennis club and becoming a member of Lydiard Street Uniting Church, Ballarat Light Opera Company and a number of other organisations, including the Labor Party.

In 1989 I was encouraged to stand for Ballarat City Council in the coming elections. I decided that I would stand and, as twists of fate go, half an hour before nominations were due to close in Eureka ward nobody had nominated. I came in to nominate at that time, along with a Liberal-supported candidate. Fifteen minutes later a second Liberal-supported candidate came in to nominate, but she did not have cash and she did not have a bank cheque to pay her bond so she ran out of time to nominate before the closing of nominations. It became a two-horse race and that twist of fate saw me elected to the Ballarat City Council and start my involvement in leadership.

Three years later I was re-elected to the City of Ballarat Council, and the following year I was elected as mayor of the City of Ballarat, in 1994. Nine months later, however, I was swept out of office by Jeff Kennett in the local government restructure of 1995. Oddly enough that was one of the few things I agreed with Jeff Kennett about because we did need local government rationalisation at that time. In that year I took the opportunity to take four months out of my teaching career and I travelled to India. I found myself working as a volunteer teacher for three months in a multinational community based on the teachings of a fellow called Sri Aurobindo, whose central philosophy was that we really live in one world and we should, as people of all nations, work together, sharing our knowledge and skills for the benefit of all. While I was

there I reflected on whether I still wanted to pursue, when I came back to Australia, a life in politics or whether, knowing how fickle politics can be, I would rather go into the good life, enjoy my time on my farm in Waubra and take it easy in that sense.

But when I did come back to Australia, as you have guessed, I did decide I would continue. I stood again for the newly established City of Ballarat and was elected. At the end of that term, though, I decided it was time to turn my energy directly towards the Jeff Kennett government. In 1997 I left teaching, stood for preselection for the Ballarat East seat, which was then the state's most marginal seat, as people might remember, held by Barry Traynor on a margin of just 27 votes. I was preselected, unopposed, as a Labor Party member not attached to any faction. It was a remarkably smooth preselection experience, so just imagine that!

An honourable member interjected.

Mr HOWARD — And your side, too. One of my first challenges after preselection was to choose a slogan for my campaign. It could not be 'Give Geoff the Job' because of course Jeff happened to be the opposing Premier. It could not be 'It has to be Howard' for other obvious reasons. We chose instead 'Geoff Howard. Listens, Cares, Gets Things Done'.

I remember on election eve 1999 being anxious about whether I had made the right decision. I was confident that I would be elected the following day, but the prospect of being one of only a few new Labor MPs that would then come into Parliament as part of a Labor opposition against the Kennett government team was a concern. I thought I would be carved up when I first walked into Parliament and I asked myself, 'What am I in for?'. But as we know, the 1999 election was a remarkable election when Labor won many more seats than we expected and, due to Peter McLellan's death on election day, we had to wait a further month before we knew who was going to be in government. It was clearly an exciting surprise for me to find myself as part of the new Bracks Labor government; and it is a surprise to me that 19 years later I am still here and able to leave on my own terms. It has clearly been a great honour and a pleasure for me to be part of the Bracks, Brumby and now Andrews governments through 15 of my 19 years in this place.

I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank family members, electorate office staff, friends and supporters who have supported me through those many years. I want in particular to note Julieanne Giles, who has been an electorate officer since day one with

me, so for 19 years. But I also want to acknowledge two other important people, the most important people in my life, my two children, Chris and Sarah, who have never known me not to be an MP.

It is time to reflect on whether my time here has been worthwhile. I read over the first speech I made in this place recently, and among other things I talked of the importance of coming to this place with a dream of what we could do. I referred to Martin Luther King and of course his famous speech. I said that my dream was of a compassionate society in which people across all social sectors develop a greater understanding and appreciation of each other, and in which all community members feel included and valued. Sadly, I say I have not completed that dream. There is still work to be done there. But on the ground, however, as I have travelled around my electorate between Malmsbury and Lethbridge, between Bacchus Marsh and Linton, I am reminded of the many, many new facilities and upgrades which I have helped to advocate for. All 45 state schools across the former electorate of Ballarat East, now the Buninyong electorate, have been substantially upgraded. The new and upgraded preschools, childcare centres, fire stations, ambulance stations and police stations, substantial hospital upgrades and our train system are unrecognisable from the neglected tracks, running sprinter trains and diesel-drawn carriages and lines closed beyond Ballarat that we inherited. There is complete change there.

There are upgraded roads, noting the additional passing loops on the Ballarat-Geelong Road, which has just been completed, with improved pedestrian crossings at Ballan, Buninyong and Napoleons; and improved tourism infrastructure, sporting facilities, community halls, men's sheds and so much more.

Achievements also include important environmental gains, with the creation of Woookarung Regional Park this term, and earlier on, the protection of Wombat Forest and the creation of the Hepburn community wind farm.

Clearly much has changed across the Ballarat East and Buninyong electorates over my 19 years, and it would not have been done without the support and foresight of Steve Bracks, John Brumby and Daniel Andrews leading great Labor governments, with approachable and supportive ministers who understood the need to get on with the job of listening and acting.

On a broader level, in my roles as parliamentary secretary and parliamentary committee chair, I have been able to contribute to policy development in areas ranging from Landcare support to support for organic

agriculture and alternative energy projects to drug law reform, with the establishment of the medically supervised injecting centre in Richmond being another highlight. While I have influenced many of these projects and have appreciated the support of Labor governments, I have also enjoyed working with so many passionate and enthusiastic individuals out in my electorate and elsewhere to achieve these visible outcomes.

However, I reckon my greatest satisfaction has come from the many individuals I have assisted — with housing, with health problems, with schooling and parenting issues — sometimes council-related matters, sometimes issues we have not really been able to influence in a major way. But I have enjoyed taking the time with these constituents. I have listened to them and have advocated on their behalf, or sometimes I have just listened to them and advised them. It is always a pleasure for me when I am travelling around my electorate, possibly shopping at the supermarket or doing something else around the electorate, to have people periodically coming up to me, approaching me warmly, to remind me that they came to see me one time and then thank me for my help. There is nothing more satisfying than that.

For me a key part of the role of political representation is about leadership, and leadership to me involves keeping your feet on the ground, listening to people but not reacting always to the noisy voices or to the advice of pollsters. We know that our community is looking for their elected representatives to show leadership, but unfortunately many times we know that they do not believe that we are. Our role has to be about acting always in the public interest, being honest with the public and being prepared to take the time to explain why our plans for action are in the public interest. Too often oppositions particularly can attempt to win government through political opportunism at the expense of leadership. I have to add that I believe that Tony Abbott brought this political opportunism to maybe the lowest standard. As a result of that, we saw the loss of the price on carbon, among other things. And on that subject I have to say I was shocked when in Queens Hall recently a school boy visiting with his school group passed me as he was with his group, looked at me and excitedly told the boy next to him, 'That's Tony Abbott'. How hurtful was that!

In this state I am particularly concerned about the politics of law and order, where tabloid media and some politicians have promoted the sensational and have attempted to focus on crimes committed by individuals from particular cultural groups to present crime as a simple issue, focusing on penal outcomes.

The reality of course is that in order to improve our community's sense of safety we need to be honest in presenting facts and recognise that the best outcomes come from addressing causation.

I believe that a good government should aim to develop a healthy connected society, promoting cohesion not division. We still see too many people becoming disconnected from the community around them — young people and adults falling through the cracks, where they cannot fit in at school, cannot move onto employment and need support to address their challenges. These challenges may include mental health and drug and alcohol problems, and of course may lead to crime. But I believe that while Labor governments have been more aware of this and are focused on addressing support for people in need, we know that still more needs to be done. The alternatives only see more lives wasted and more crime as a result, as people lose connection with a healthy society.

Good leadership will focus on issues such as this, identifying how we can make our communities better while delivering the infrastructure and human services which can support us to a better future. This includes taking on board the advice of scientists and recognising that we need to act to protect our environment. That especially includes taking action to slow climate change. Again we need to be honest with the public and acknowledge the potentially devastating effects that climate change will bring if we do not take real action to provide a better future for the generations to come. It is only through good leadership at all levels that we can overcome the worst that global warming will otherwise bring.

For the years to come I will remain passionate in my community about many issues, including the need to develop a comprehensive system of supporting young people through to seeing positive futures. I will also continue to advocate for the environment. I look forward to continuing to engage with people in a more relaxed way though than I have over recent years and to becoming more involved in community life. After chairing the parliamentary inquiry into drug law reform, I have been invited back to the Rainbow Serpent Festival next year and I look forward to that. I also look forward to spending more time with my children, and supporting them more through their secondary school years.

In stepping aside I am confident that Labor has found a great replacement in Michaela Settle as candidate for Buninyong. I will continue to support Michaela to become the member for Buninyong, who I know is going to be a great member. I will continue to want to

see the Andrews Labor government supported and returned because I think it can be a great government in another term. While being the representative in the great seat of Buninyong has been great for me, I am sure I will find plenty of things to do to enjoy life in the future.

I wish you all well in the future, especially those who are re-elected into the new Parliament. May your efforts make the lives of those you represent better. The future of this state clearly depends upon the actions of those who remain here.

Honourable members applauded.

Sitting suspended 1.05 p.m. until 2.06 p.m.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) (14:06) — Charles La Trobe, Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, once caricatured some fellow travellers on a paddle-steamer whilst travelling in the United States. He noted that the pilot was found to be a drunk, the engineer an ignoramus, the steward an economist, the captain a gambler, the firemen insurgent and the passengers riotous. Welcome to Spring Street!

It has been an honour to serve in the Parliament of Victoria, representing the Sandringham electorate, over the past 26 years. I often reflect upon the history of our nation and the presence of many reminders of our post-settlement and Judeo-Christian heritage and the contributions of many faithful men and women. I outline a few examples. Victoria's motto is 'Peace and prosperity', words found at the front of 1 Treasury Place and in the Old Testament. In the parliamentary vestibule are words taken from the Old Testament:

Where no counsel is the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

The German words 'Ich dien', which mean 'I serve', are embedded in the front foyer tiles, an allusion to the master-servant.

At the 2007 unveiling of the statue of Indigenous heroes Sir Doug Nicholls and his wife Lady Gladys Nicholls, some 200 metres from where we are gathered, the *Age* newspaper, in reporting the event, noted that Sir Doug Nicholls's favourite biblical passage was quoted on the day, and it was:

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

To the east of Parliament in Burston Reserve on Macarthur Street is a plaque honouring the memory of Caroline Chisholm, who worked tirelessly to support the women of colonial Australia. In the same gardens, adjacent to Tasma Terrace, there is the *Great Petition*

sculpture honouring the women of the suffragette movement. The first signatory was Margaret McLean, a long-serving president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and a feminist. Both Chisholm and McLean were empowered women drawn by their Christian faith to the service of others.

The Bible and the Christ of its narrative have been the cornerstone of our state. The preamble to the Australian constitution includes the words: 'Humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God'. The Australian House of Representatives convened in this very chamber between 1901 and 1927. The Lord's Prayer is recited in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council before each sitting day. In a commonwealth address the Queen stated:

Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities.

Another theme of the Queen's addresses is her references to Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan. The injunction from this wonderful story is: 'Go thou and do likewise'.

Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe's family were active in the slave trade abolition movement, as were the family of Victoria's first education minister, James Wilberforce Stephen, an 1866 state election candidate for part of the area now covered by the Sandringham electorate. His step-grandmother was the sister of William Wilberforce.

When La Trobe arrived in Melbourne in 1839, his address included the following words:

... I pray God, to whom I look for strength and power ... that I may be enabled through his grace to know my duty, and to do my duty, diligently, temperately and fearlessly.

...

It will not be by individual aggrandisement, by the possession of numerous flocks and herds ... that we shall secure for the country enduring prosperity and happiness, but by the acquisition and maintenance of sound religious and moral institutions, without which no country can become truly great.

In 1838 La Trobe wrote in a report to the House of Commons that the 'gift of education' should be:

... not merely based upon worldly morality, but built upon the Holy Scriptures.

In 1835, from Tasmania, Henry Reed financed the early settlement of Melbourne. He led the first lay church service in Melbourne in the spring of that year. Reed later helped fund the Salvation Army in England from his Tasmanian wealth. His grandsons founded Qantas

Airways and the Heide art gallery. A granddaughter went to China with the China Inland Mission. Reed believed in engaging people in the commercial life of the community, protecting the vulnerable and addressing social structures which created victims. In Tasmania, Reed spent the last night in the cell of six men condemned to be executed and walked with them to the gallows.

Today legislators confront the challenge of whether pluralism will become society's new truth: are everyone's ideas true at the same time? A former Australian Prime Minister noted that we live in a society where children do not know who they are, they do not know where they belong and they do not know what they are here for.

This existential malaise is often compounded by a loss of hope and ever greater levels of addiction, poverty, domestic violence and homelessness. When we have lost the cultural moorings that once gave our community strength and purpose, how can children realise their potential?

There is a portrait of the late Sir Isaac Isaacs some 15 metres away from the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, in the Premiers Corridor. Over the course of a distinguished career across all three arms of government, Isaacs served as solicitor-general of Victoria, Attorney-General of Australia, Chief Justice of the High Court and Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. Writing in 1934, Isaacs observed that:

The Bible ... reminds humanity, if it will but listen, that it is not in the stormy wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, that salvation is to be found, but in the 'still small voice' that the sacred volume carries as its message of righteousness, mercy and peace through the ages. This, I believe, is the only real hope, the only firm anchorage of a drifting and struggling world.

When I entered politics the issues confronting the Sandringham community were economic: unemployment running at 11.3 per cent, company receiverships, personal bankruptcies and high levels of personal debt. Victoria had lost the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, the State Bank of Victoria and its AAA credit rating. I had the privilege of serving as a member of a reforming government which built infrastructure, transformed a broken economy, created jobs and branded Melbourne and Victoria to global markets. Out of these foundations grew a Victorian community that punched above its weight and took on the world.

Between 2010 and 2014 the coalition government had a strategic focus on maintaining a budget surplus,

increasing productivity, improving service delivery, assisting industries in transition, expanding export markets in the Middle East, Indonesia, South-East Asia, the USA and Chile, and sending trade missions of unprecedented significance into China, India and Japan.

In 1998 I met in Melbourne with Leonid Kravchuk, one of the three people who signed the dissolution of the Soviet Union and later became President of Ukraine, the food bowl of Europe. I asked him why, as a former minister for propaganda in the Soviet Union, he signed the dissolution. He replied to me, 'I saw that people valued their freedom'. *Time* Man of the Year Lech Wałęsa, the shipyard worker who took on the Soviet regime, argued during a visit to Melbourne in 2003 that communism had cost the lives of 200 million people during the course of the 20th century. In the philosophical contest between communism and capitalism, the cause of freedom triumphed. Wałęsa also further argued that Poland needed more generals — General Electric and General Motors.

The ability of nations to develop industries can be hampered by the approach of the left:

If it moves, tax it, if it keeps moving, regulate it, and if it stops moving, subsidise it —

as noted by Reagan. Margaret Thatcher stated:

Socialism is a good idea, until of course they run out of other people's money.

Sir Charles Carter, a British scientist, stated:

Unfortunately in our society in recent years there has been a tendency for bias against wealth creation in favour of so-called socially significant activities, but which, ironically, depend for their support in the first place upon wealth creation.

As a member of Parliament I have seen the realisation of legislative amendments which were first raised in my Sandringham office being written into the statute books of Victoria, including the Crimes (Questioning of Suspects) Act 2000, the National Parks (Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries) Bill 2002, the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2017 and the Legal Practice Act 1996.

I have had the opportunity to oversee the development of major community infrastructure, initiatives and services within the Sandringham electorate, including in the areas of health, education, law and order, planning, sport, public transport, the environment, coastal management and disability support. I have endeavoured in every way to give voice to those who have had no voice in the pursuit of just outcomes.

As the Liberal spokesperson for multicultural affairs, veterans affairs and citizenship, and as shadow minister for housing and Aboriginal affairs, I learned much from these responsibilities and sought to keenly advance policy initiatives. I acknowledge many keen-minded and purposeful Indigenous Victorians with whom I had the privilege of working. I also had the extraordinary privilege of working with many Australians who came to this country as migrants: fleeing tyranny, seeking opportunity or working to provide a better future for their children. One migrant noted that Australia gave him the chance to start a new life. It goes without saying that we live in a wonderful country; let us not take it for granted. Another immigrant once remarked to me that you only understand the true meaning of freedom when it is taken away from you.

Today I wish to acknowledge the undergirding support and sacrifices made by my family: my dear wife, Theana, and our children, Alex, Alithea and Theo. Without their love, commitment and support I could not have pursued my career in politics. I acknowledge my mother, Joan Thompson, who has supported two careers in the Victorian Parliament spanning almost 54 years, the first of which commenced 63 years ago. My father, when he retired in 1982, was described by the *Age* newspaper as having served the state of Victoria with 'rare decency, dedication and distinction'.

I thank my long-serving full-time staff for their extraordinary dedication to their work and service to the constituents of the Sandringham electorate: Robyn McNaught, Annette Burrowes, Leanne Whitechurch, Rachel Reid, Tim Neve, researcher Jenni Howell, Angie Gledhill, Madeleine Grey and Gaelle Broad.

I pay tribute to Matthew Guy, an outstanding leader of the Liberal Party and the coalition team in the 58th Parliament, and all my parliamentary colleagues. I acknowledge the great work of hundreds of federal and state Liberal Party members who have sought to build a better Australia. I acknowledge electorate chairs Ian Cox, John Foley, Paul Nettelbeck, John Knight, Brad Rowswell and Jennifer O'Brien, whose volunteer efforts were integral to the effective work of the Liberal Party. I further pay tribute to Brad Rowswell, a great young Australian and endorsed candidate for the seat of Sandringham. I thank all parliamentary staff, including the highly skilled parliamentary librarians.

The world is in a constant state of challenge, but I am encouraged by and pay tribute to the thousands of my constituents and other good people who I have met through my parliamentary work across Victoria in every walk of life — change makers, mighty citizens, humble people who have sought to build the economic,

community, family, sporting and spiritual life of our nation and outworked the injunction of John Wesley to do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, to all the people you can, as long as you possibly can. Vale, Spring Street.

Honourable members applauded.

Mr LIM (Clarinda) (14:22) — I did not realise the member for Sandringham had been here longer than I have been — I was just about to claim that title. But still it has been 22 years and eight months. This is indeed a long time in Parliament, but still not long enough to achieve everything I would have liked.

In 1996 I was the first and only Cambodian-Chinese person to be elected to a Parliament anywhere in the English-speaking world. I also was the first Asian to be elected to a lower house Parliament in Australia. As I said in my very first speech at the time, this was something momentous. It is something I am extremely proud of and something I will always be proud of. Back then the Cambodian and Chinese community celebrated my election as the first Cambodian-Chinese person to enter the Victorian Parliament. Given that the Chinese settled in this state more than 160 years ago, it was historically significant for all of them.

It was 161 years ago that the Chinese gold-diggers walked from Robe in South Australia to the Victorian goldfields to avoid the racist £10 poll tax imposed on the Chinese in 1857 in Victoria. Many of the 16 800-plus Chinese who made that terrible more-than-400-kilometre journey by foot died from exhaustion and sickness and suffered race riots and discrimination upon arriving in the goldfields.

Last year I was privileged to represent the government at the commemoration festival in Robe. During the festival there was the parade of lions and dragon dancers, dragon boat races and fireworks and the opening of the friendship gate to mark the commemoration. But most significantly, it included the farewell and send-off of 19 pioneer walkers — three of whom were fourth-generation descendants of the original Chinese walkers. They commenced a 20-day walk retracing the footsteps of the horrible walk from Robe. It was to pay special tribute to the honour, the heroic courage, the tenacity, bravery, sacrifice, suffering and resilience of those who came before them more than 161 years ago.

It was those brave people that cut the path for me and cut the path for the Chinese Victorian community that is such a bright and vibrant part of our state today. I was filled with pride and relief when history was made at the

great walk reception in Parliament House on 25 May. The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition received the walkers and apologised for this discriminatory policy and wrongdoing of the past. That truly was one of the highlights of my 22 years in this place. It was an emblematic moment. It was testament to just how far we have come as a community here in Victoria.

I have been honoured to serve my constituents in Clayton and Clarinda. I have been honoured to serve one of the most multicultural electorates in the country. It would be remiss of me not to say that I take pride in the fact that I have been able to bring more than 600 attendees from more than 100 community organisations from around 20 different ethnic backgrounds to my Clayton annual multicultural banquet to celebrate multiculturalism. I am grateful to the Premier, who has supported and attended this celebration for the past many years.

Our community is truly diverse and truly dynamic. I am proud of what we have been able to achieve as a community. I take pride in having advocated forcefully for the family reunion of refugees and asylum seekers and then securing resources for their successful resettlement, especially the Indochinese community, the Timorese and the Burmese.

I am proud of the infrastructure we have been able to build. The list is very long and includes the Westall overpass; the rebuild of Westall station and rail maintenance depot; the Huntingdale railway station bus terminal and car parks; the Clayton and Centre Road level crossing removals — ensuring that ambulances are no longer delayed; the magnificent new Clayton station, with new bus connections; the soon-to-be-completed Clayton RSL remembrance garden and cenotaph near the elevated rail; the open space between Caulfield and Dandenong which will be completed shortly; the Wat Buddharangsee Cambodian Buddhist temple multipurpose hall in Clarke Road, Springvale South; the Springvale Asian Gateway in Buckingham Avenue, welcoming all to the shopping centre; and the soon-to-be-built first Chinese aged-care centre in the south-east of Melbourne. Our community has come so far over the last 22 years.

And what about the Monash Medical Centre? What can I say? Monash Medical has been ever expanding, full of dedicated doctors, nurses and support staff. I am so proud of the massive increase in dollars we have been able to provide for equipment purchases. I would like to say a huge thank you to the staff that treated me there many times over the years. I am also so very glad that we have legislated for nurse to patient staff ratios.

Then there is the Monash Children's Hospital, with a helipad which was cut from the project by the previous Liberal government, and the new school at Monash Children's to ensure our sick kids keep up with their education, with an extra \$13 million in the past budget. It was such a pleasure to visit the kids there last May together with the member for Oakleigh. There has been funding for the new Monash Children's emergency room, separating it from the main Monash Medical Centre emergency room. The list goes on and on. There is the John Monash Science School, with 640 year 10–12 students — that was \$20 million very well spent; as well as the Australian synchrotron and a myriad of medical research grants in the Monash employment cluster, saving lives every day. It is just amazing.

I have also been extremely proud to be part of a government that believes in the Education State. I remember fondly in 2010 the \$3.8 million for Spring Parks Primary School, a most deserving disadvantaged school. At Cheltenham Secondary College there has been a \$7 million rebuild, with a new arts precinct created, a senior school and careers centre established and a wing of new senior classrooms, library and multipurpose classrooms developed, with the year 7 area also renovated.

I am going out on a good note after the last budget announcement, which included moneys for the Westall education precinct — \$12.3 million for the first stage rebuild of the primary school and commencement of the secondary college to give these kids a greater chance of success in their lives. There is Huntingdale Primary School, with moneys for a new school oval and planning moneys for a master plan. This was done years ago, along with Clayton South Primary School, only to see the Baillieu Liberal government walk away from that commitment. Again I am proud to be part of this government and its investment in education, its efforts to reduce class sizes and increase teacher numbers and support staff numbers. Our children really are in good hands.

Another priority of this government has been community safety. Another proud achievement has been the record investment into new police and proper resources. Several times this year I have spoken about the significant decreases in recorded offences and criminal incidents in my electorate which are a result of more police at the local level. I do not know where some of the honourable members opposite were getting their statistics from yesterday, but as of March this year all of the four cities which make up my electorate saw significant reductions in crime from last year — and those were very significant reductions of between 5.7 per cent and 11.6 per cent across the four cities.

Interestingly, of the four cities it was the City of Greater Dandenong — Australia's most culturally diverse community — which had the greatest decrease in criminal incidents. The level of diversity in Greater Dandenong is the highest in the country. Residents come from 157 different birthplaces and more than half were born overseas. More than 70 per cent speak a language other than English and it is home to almost 2000 new asylum seekers. So it pleases me very much, for the last time, to remind all of those who like to dog-whistle about the supposed criminal activities of migrants and refugees, especially the young people, that in the most multicultural community, not only in this state but in this country, crime is down more than 11 per cent.

At this juncture it would be remiss of me not to mention that we have been there and seen that. During the 1980s and 90s we saw the criminality of the young Indochinese. We saw the Vietnamese gangs. We saw them cutting each other. We saw them fight and we saw them overdose in the public toilets in Springvale. I have been there and I saw that. But we responded to those challenges. We went into the prison system and we educated them and prepared them so that they came out not reoffending. We can do that again and we are doing it now. So all the dog-whistling, especially from those in Canberra, has to stop. They probably have to ask the question, 'What can we do to help?' and take up that challenge so that everyone in the country now is a proud Australian.

To all the community-based organisations in my electorate in the south-east and across the state, your invaluable work in assisting some of the marginalised members of our community and in assisting the newly arrived members of our community — the importance of your work can never be overstated. Again, I salute you all for your spirit and generosity, for the long and unrelenting hours you have provided over so many years. In particular I need to thank the Chinese Community Council of Australia, Victorian chapter; the Cambodian Association of Victoria; the Cambodian Australian Federation; the Teo Chew Chinese Association and all the Khmer temples in the south-east. I am so proud to have worked with all of you. I am proud of the programs and initiatives, the infrastructure, the awards and honours for community groups large and small, and the individuals.

I must thank many individuals, particularly Minister Robin Scott, a friend, supporter and a believer in multiculturalism; Cr Youhorn Chea, the refugee who became a four-time City of Greater Dandenong mayor, who stuck by me through thick and thin; Meng Heang Tak, who is going to be my successor; and my many

past and present 'believers' team of staff and volunteers led by the incredible Peter Davis who cannot be here today.

I would like also to mention specially the venerable head of one of the biggest Buddhist temples in the south-east, who is here in the gallery. I finally take the opportunity to thank my wife, Bopha, who is also in the gallery and my two sons, Jeremy and Geoffrey, for their patience in putting up with me for all these long years and giving me the most enormous support.

I can keep on saying thanks to the many parliamentary colleagues, state and federal, who have supported me, who guided me and who never failed in their belief in what we are doing, in the south-east particularly and also nationally. I thank the staff of the Parliament who have treated me with respect and courtesy and always supported me during the years. I will never forget the first day I came to Parliament, when people addressed me as Mr Lim — and that was the staff inside this building. I am grateful for their support and I am grateful for the time I spent in this place. I am grateful for the opportunity, and I thank you all.

Honourable members applauded.

Ms ASHER (Brighton) (14:38) — In 1976, 42 years ago as a 19-year-old, I joined the Liberal Party. I joined the Liberal Party for three reasons. The first was my reaction to the Whitlam government. The second was my mother. She was a staunch Liberal and an ardent admirer of Sir Robert Menzies, and she wanted me to join the Young Liberals. She made the phone call. On reflection, I think this was because my mother was not happy with the quality of the young men I was bringing home.

For the third reason, I joined the Liberal Party because I was studying political philosophy at university. I had some exposure through my tuition to the world of liberalism and the writings of John Stuart Mill, so I read *On Liberty*. Everyone has read extracts of *On Liberty*; it is a driver for me in terms of the liberalism that I aspire to. I also read a treatise written by John Stuart Mill in 1861 called *The Subjection of Women*.

I want to quote from that because it is relevant now:

... that the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes — the legal subordination of one sex to the other — is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.

That is the reason I joined the Liberal Party. I immediately signed up to the Burwood Young Liberals,

and one young Jeffrey Gibb Kennett was the candidate — not the member — for Burwood. He had just won the preselection, and the Liberal Party had to go back and change the rules after that because he exploited them. One of the first things I ever did as a member of the Liberal Party was hand out how-to-vote cards for Jeff Kennett, and I was involved in many, many of his campaigns after that during the 1980s. Actually, as luck would have it, on the day I was elected Young Liberal President in 1982 — it was by a very narrow margin — Jeffrey was one of the tellers, and he was heard to exclaim very, very loudly, 'Thank God, she's won', until I think it was Dame Margaret Guilfoyle had to point out to Jeffrey that tellers were meant to be neutral. I say this because I have always been a Kennett supporter, obviously given that background, but I also say it because there is a significant degree of luck in a political career, and I reckon I had that by landing in Burwood Young Liberals in 1976.

I entered Parliament in 1992. I was a relatively young woman, and I fear the ravages of 26 years of political life are showing badly, because polite young people now often stand up on the train and offer me their seats. I am one of the lucky ones in that I get to leave on my own terms. I was on the front bench for 18 years — two terms as a minister; 11 years as a shadow, unfortunately — and I was deputy leader of my party for 11½ years. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank my numbers men: Philip Davis, Graeme Stoney and Steve McArthur. So there you have it: they were mainly responsible for my being there the first time, and Philip was responsible for my being there the second time, along with Graeme.

It is a great honour to have served in this party and this Parliament, and I am very, very grateful to the Liberal Party. Some of the things of which I am most proud are the work that I did on the back bench on residential tenancies, which ended up in the Rental Bond Board being established; on domestic violence, with more outreach workers being employed; on disability, with more community housing. I do remember vividly the then corrections minister wanted to close Fairlea Women's Prison and put the women in Jika Jika at Pentridge, a high-security area. I thought this was a trifle unfair given the crimes those women had committed. So I got together this whole heap of Liberal women from the organisation and we went on a bus tour. We visited Fairlea and we visited Pentridge. You will appreciate that in this group of Liberal women none of us had been to Pentridge, none of us had been to a prison, none of us had met a prisoner. We walked through Pentridge in our suits and our high heels and our pantyhose, dripping with jewellery. We had never

seen anything like Pentridge and, if I were to gather by the looks on the faces of those prisoners, they had never seen anything like us! Needless to say, the women did not go to Pentridge, and I made a very large enemy in the then Deputy Premier, but who cares, he did not hand out the ministries.

As a former minister, I am proud of the work I did — twice — to increase international and domestic tourism as Minister for Tourism, our second most important export here. I devised the first tourism campaign into regional Victoria and the first campaign into China, now our number one tourism market. I rewrote retail tenancies legislation and liquor law legislation. Again, for anyone who knows me and my fondness for sauvignon blanc, people were amazed that Jeff Kennett put me in charge of liquor! I am very, very proud of the trade mission program, which I devised. It actually has resulted in nearly \$5 billion of export opportunities for small businesses. I did bring in some legislation to make it easier to produce films. One time a TV production called *Upper Middle Bogan* was being filmed in our street, and I explained to my husband that it was now easier to film, to which he said, ‘Well, what idiot did that?’.

My greatest achievement as a local MP was to reopen the New Street gates. It was not a level crossing removal; it was the reopening of a crossing. If you had faced three meetings of 500 angry people — Brighton residents are normally very polite — you too would have changed your mind and opened those New Street gates. I still get thanked for that, walking down the street today. I was particularly pleased as a member of the opposition to be co-chair of the policy review group, with the Leader of the National Party, and working very, very closely with the member for — what is your seat now, Kim?

Mr Wells — Rowville.

Ms ASHER — Rowville; it was Scoresby — putting together a package of policies for the 2010 election. I found that work particularly stimulating.

I am the longest serving woman in this Parliament. I was the first Liberal woman who was a minister in the Legislative Council, in 1996. I was the first woman Leader of the House — not my favourite job, that one, when I did not have the numbers — and I was the first woman Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. I hope many other women on my side of the house will be able to contribute at this level or indeed higher.

I am looking forward to my new life, but I will miss the meaningful opportunity to contribute. Politics should be

a noble profession, and unfortunately I do not think the public thinks it is. However, I will not miss the parliamentary sitting schedule which dominated my life — dictated my life — for 26 years. I will not miss the abuse that comes, unfortunately, with public office, and I will not miss public meetings. I will not list all of them, but one memorable one was at Prahran town hall. The then member for Malvern, Robert Doyle, and I were sitting at the front, and the meeting was about the Kennett government’s local government amalgamations. A group of residents in East Malvern in something called the Gascoigne estate were particularly perturbed that they had been put with Glen Eira and not with Stonnington, where the rest of Malvern was. There were thousands of them there. I looked around and I said, ‘Isn’t this lovely that so many of my branch members are here to support the Kennett government’s amalgamation proposals’. Anyway, Doyley said to me, ‘What do we do?’, and I said, ‘Oh, it’s really easy. You just say you’ll take it to the minister’. He said, ‘Oh, it’s that easy, is it?’. It is until you are the minister and you are the one sitting out there. Anyway, the Gascoigne estate went into Stonnington, and I will be really happy not to attend a public meeting sitting at the front of the hall ever again in my life.

Political achievements of course are rarely individual. I want to thank the Liberal Party. I want to thank my voters in Monash Province and in Brighton. I want to thank my branch members; my electorate chairs; the Liberal premiers under whom I have served; my staff — Veronica James, who worked for me for 18 years, Julie Baird, Alison Smith and Jenny Amos, who are hovering around the decade mark; and I want to thank the parliamentary staff. Ray Purdey became my closest friend in the last 18 months of the coalition government. I am very grateful to him and I am very grateful that the government survived, or at least it did not fall on my error. I wish the Leader of the Opposition the very, very best for the next election; I think he is an outstanding young man. I wish James Newbury all the best and every success in the hope he follows me in Brighton.

As I said, I have been very grateful for the opportunities I have been given. However, I am concerned about a number of things. I am concerned about the diminution of respect for others in this Parliament — others have touched on it — and lack of respect for the taxpayer. I am concerned about the disintegration of society’s institutions and the public loss of trust in these institutions. Its banks, its insurance companies, its bureaucracies, the Australian Taxation Office, the major political parties and the churches were all part of this loss of faith in society’s existing institutions, or

traditional institutions, and obviously it is behaviour that has driven this.

The people expect us to represent them. I actually think the major parties need to act on this. I do not want to see a Parliament with — let us take it to its logical conclusion — 88 Independent members of Parliament. It will be ungovernable and unworkable, and I do not even like seeing in Parliament the concept of a couple of Independents having disproportionate power over the public purse at minimum. I would like to see both major parties rectify this loss of trust, because if we want to govern in the way in which governments have traditionally governed, I think we need to do so.

I am also deeply concerned about the loss of faith in democracy. I instance Doctor David Zyngier's work at Monash University, and I refer to some evidence he gave to the Electoral Matters Committee. I quote from the report:

In 2014, only 60 percent of Australians believe that 'democracy is preferable to any other kind of government' ... only 42 percent of 18 to 29-year-olds in 2014 view democracy as preferable to any other kind of government ...

I think that is shattering for us as democratic legislators to look at those figures, and again I think we need to do something about it.

I would like to thank Ron. He terminated his career for me, and I could not have done all of this without my fabulous husband. So I thank him so much. I am looking forward to my new life. I think it is going to be fabulous spending more time with Ron and with his beautiful grandchildren.

The joke is we met over there in what people called the red morgue. It was not a morgue, and we were not the only ones. I will not name names, and I also thank those very few of my colleagues who did know that I was doing the unthinkable, what I swore to my friends I would never do, and that was go out with a parliamentary colleague — well, I guess he was not a Lib. I thank so much those people who did know about our relationship and who kept quiet about it and did not tell Jeffrey. I told him after I was appointed to the ministry. Given that the Nats thought that Bill Baxter had lost his spot because of me and given that Pat McNamara, the Deputy Premier at the time, lost tourism because of me, I was very, very pleased that Ron had been so discreet and Ron's friends had been so discreet for so long. I have had a ball, and I thank the house for listening to me.

Honourable members applauded.

Mr NOONAN (Williamstown) (14:57) — Speaker, as fate would have it, you were the guest speaker at my first Labor Party meeting in Greensborough back in May 1997. Two things happened at that meeting. Firstly, you gave an incredibly dry speech about the internals of the Banyule City Council. Secondly, and despite your speech, I did join the party, and I am proud to say we have remained close friends ever since — and I hope in the future too.

In joining the Labor Party I pledged to fight for Labor's values of social justice, fairness and equality and of course to become a strong voice for working people. After making those pledges 21 years ago, I could not have imagined that a working-class kid from a quiet court in Greensborough could ascend to the rowdy halls of the Victorian Parliament, but that is exactly what has happened. I would like to think that I have extracted every last ounce of my ability to serve as the member for Williamstown, including stints as a shadow minister and as a government minister across multiple portfolios in this term of the Andrews Labor government. I have done so without ever losing sight of the fact that the Labor Party put me here to uphold its values and serve working people, and it is my achievements for working people that I am most proud about.

In opposition I stood with our paramedics when they were fighting for fairness and decency and needed a strong voice in Spring Street to defend their integrity. In government I stood with our police to deliver a landmark enterprise agreement in 2015 — the first in 20 years to be resolved without industrial disputation. As industry minister I stood with an entire community in Portland to save Alcoa's aluminium smelter. I also stood with thousands of auto workers and supply chain businesses to help them retrain, re-skill and secure new opportunities. Finally, I stood with Hazelwood power station workers in their hour of need and helped deliver Australia's first-ever worker transfer scheme in the Latrobe Valley. These events were a reminder that Labor's first responsibility will always be to working people.

Not every moment in public life is littered with fulfilment or joy. I want to touch on a few because I think they provide an insight into the challenges of public life but also the depth of the human spirit. Let me start with the ambulance crisis. This crisis gripped my life for two years between 2012 and 2014. When we were in opposition our leader, Daniel Andrews, appointed me to the position of opposition parliamentary secretary for health and mental health. After taking careful advice from former Bracks minister John Thwaites, I systematically worked every day to reveal cases of ambulance ramping at hospitals, patient

waiting times, mismanagement, paramedic stress, health and safety issues and poor staff morale. I travelled to every corner of the state and spoke to every paramedic and local journalist I could about the depth of the crisis. No-one had to be convinced, though, as response times continued to slip to increasingly dangerous levels. I enjoyed a wonderful relationship with paramedics and their union and will always rank Steve McGhie and Danny Hill amongst the best and most respected union leaders of our generation.

During this period I was invited by ABC broadcaster Jon Faine to attend a Southbank studio to discuss the crisis. It was on this morning in August 2013 that I met Julie Wilson and came face to face with a woman so stricken by grief that her on-air account of losing her son Brodie after waiting 27 minutes for an ambulance simply broke my heart. In the months that followed I also met Steve and Jo Gibbs, who lost their gentle giant son Matthew after he collapsed playing indoor soccer and waited 16 minutes for an ambulance to arrive. Their trauma and loss have never left me. Their determination and relentless pursuit of change is something I will never forget, and in my view helped change the government in 2014.

Today almost 84 per cent of code 1 life-threatening ambulance call-outs are arriving within 15 minutes, compared to just 73.7 per cent under the previous Liberal government. This is a truly outstanding achievement. I want to thank the Premier, the health minister and the cabinet for delivering what is arguably the greatest achievement of this government to date. I also want to pay tribute to Steve and Jo Gibbs and Julie Wilson for standing up and fighting for change. Their efforts are helping save lives today.

I now want to turn briefly to two special people who have helped change the way I view my life. I refer to Edith and George McKeon, the parents of Jill Meagher. For privacy reasons I will not reveal the details of our conversations, but I will say that we met and exchanged phone calls and emails during and after my time as Minister for Corrections. They sought my help, and I gave it. During our exchanges Edith and George taught me that regardless of anyone's circumstances, no-one can ever take away a person's spirit. Remarkably Edith and George remained a source of support to me during my brief absence from the Parliament, which tells you everything you need to know about these beautiful people.

My break from Parliament in early 2016 is part of my story, but it does not define me. Poor mental health does not discriminate — in fact it is everywhere. Reading the signs and getting help is the key. So is the

support I received from members in this place, the media, the community, friends, family and even perfect strangers. It all helped. I do want to single out the Premier, Daniel Andrews, for his wonderful personal and professional support. It has been my privilege to serve this great leader in both opposition and government, but his support during my hour of need is something that I will never forget. Through his support and the support of my colleagues I have been able to reach some wonderful heights. I want to place on record some of the more significant achievements because they serve as an important historical record.

In industry and employment I was proud to develop Australia's first social enterprise strategy to help build this exciting sector. Similarly it was a great privilege to implement the Jobs Victoria package, which is providing targeted services and securing jobs for 5000 long-term unemployed Victorians. This program has been a resounding success and given so many vulnerable Victorians their first taste of work.

In a wonderful postscript to my first speech to this Parliament I was enormously proud to announce record funding for the YMCA's Bridge Project, which does outstanding work transitioning young people from incarceration back into the community. Continuing with the theme of helping young people, I was just so proud to be the responsible minister for the implementation of the Major Projects Skills Guarantee, which requires contractors on government projects to employ apprentices, trainees and engineering cadets for at least 10 per cent of their workforce. This wonderful Labor policy has already delivered more than 1000 new opportunities for young people to work on our state-shaping projects.

I was also thrilled to launch a blueprint for the future of manufacturing in Victoria, which I believe has helped inspire new confidence in the sector. This confidence has undoubtedly been assisted by our government's steadfast commitment to mandate local content in each of its major projects. This confidence has, I think, undoubtedly been assisted by our government's commitment in this area. Nothing gave me more satisfaction as industry minister than to set minimum local content requirements for our major projects, knowing that these requirements would translate to new jobs and business opportunities — again, great policy.

I have already mentioned the outstanding work our government has done to support workers in transition, particularly in the Latrobe Valley and the automotive sector. This wonderful work would not have been possible without the outstanding efforts of so many people, including public servants, community leaders,

businesses, unions, industry associations and local government. I am also very proud of my successor and loyal friend Ben Carroll, who has worked tirelessly to continue this important work. I congratulate Ben and the Treasurer, Tim Pallas, for helping to drive down Victoria's unemployment rate to 4.8 per cent — the lowest it has been for seven years.

In the resources portfolio I will never forget when on 30 August 2016 the Premier and I stood in the pristine hills down in South Gippsland and announced that Victoria would ban fracking for good. In a nation first the permanent ban protects our farmers and preserves Victoria's hard-won reputation for producing high-quality food. Our announcement sent Twitter into meltdown, and for a time we were in fact trending, which was pretty exciting, although I had to ask one of my staffers what that actually meant. Community power across Victoria helped win this ban, with extraordinary people like Alison Marchant becoming extraordinary advocates during this campaign.

To the police and corrections areas — two of the more challenging areas of government, as evidenced by that rather large prison riot back in 2015. I have the utmost respect for our police and correctional staff, and I was proud to serve as their minister. During my time as police minister I was able to secure more than 1100 additional police personnel, including new custody offices, public order response, special operations, forensics and protective services officers. We doubled Victoria Police's counterterrorism capability, delivered 10 new drug and booze buses, funded digital radio communication in regional Victoria, cracked down on ice dealers, targeted illegal guns and, importantly, launched a new phone app to promote better mental health awareness among police.

In corrections we strengthened the management of serious sex offenders, made record investments in community corrections and targeted the unacceptably high levels of recidivism by improving education and vocational skills in prison. This is where I met Jeff Kennett — no, not because he was trying to draw me across to the Liberal fold. In fact I met Jeff Kennett as the chair of The Torch. Jeff lobbied me to permit Indigenous prisoners to sell their art whilst incarcerated, which we did. We also significantly increased funding for the Indigenous arts program managed by The Torch. This program is giving new hope to our Indigenous prisoners, and I am grateful to the former corrections commissioner, Jan Shuard, for her leadership in this area.

Before I thank a few people I want to briefly mention a few achievements in my electorate of Williamstown.

My predecessors and in fact good friends, Labor greats Steve Bracks and Joan Kirner, both told me I had the best electorate in the state, and they were not wrong. Following the arrival of my ancestors in Hobsons Bay in the 1840s, I have become the fourth generation of my family to live in the inner west and now the sixth member for Williamstown to serve the electorate for a period greater than 10 years. I love my community and I am proud of Labor's legacies in the inner west. I am proud of our investments in our local schools, including Bayside College, Williamstown High School and Newport Gardens, Newport Lakes and Spotswood primary schools, just to name a few. A special thanks to the retiring member for Footscray for her leadership and vision in developing the Footscray Learning Precinct, which includes a new secondary campus in Seddon.

I am also proud of the magnificent upgrades to the Williamstown football ground, the Yarraville Community Centre, the Newport Substation community arts centre and Seaworks in Williamstown. I am proud that we were able to invest in a new renal dialysis unit at Williamstown Hospital. I am proud that we are building new trains in Newport, where my grandfather, Henry Noonan, worked as a boilermaker back in the 1940s, and I am extremely proud that our government will take thousands of trucks off local roads and provide a much-needed alternative to the West Gate Bridge by building a new road tunnel underneath Yarraville. Only Labor governments invest in the west.

I want to wish Labor's candidate for Williamstown, Melissa Horne, every success. She has certainly earned her opportunity. To the people that made it all possible, I want to sincerely thank you. I want to thank my staff who I individually named in a members statement on 21 August, all of my comrades in the Parliament for their support and friendship, Labor staffers, the many dedicated public servants I have worked with, the parliamentary staff, the countless community and local government representatives and the ordinary people I have met along the way.

Finally, I want to thank my family. When I walked into this place my father said, 'You bring with you your integrity, and the challenge is to keep it to the last day when you walk out', and I have never forgotten that advice. My mother, Colleen, inspired me to read, laugh, travel and enjoy a drink, and I am very grateful for that last point. My sister, Lisa, brother-in-law, Eugene, and their kids, Mackenzie and Archie, have always brought fun and love to my life. Finally, to my beautiful wife, Julie, and our sons, William and Henry, thank you for standing with me regardless of the circumstances and

for always being the loves of my life. I could not have done this job without you.

Thank you sincerely to the entire Parliament for giving me this opportunity. I will certainly treasure it for the rest of my life.

Honourable members applauded.

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) (15:14) — While I do not have as many years under my belt as a lot of the retiring members that we have heard from, there have definitely been a lot of changes that have happened over the almost eight years I have been here. For example, I have gone from fitted skirts to stretchy pants. I have gone from twice-yearly visits to the hairdresser to having to go way more often to get rid of the grey, and I have gone from my naughty 40s to my nifty 50s — and on that note, the most wonderful change is that I have gone from being a single woman with a wandering eye for the fellows to a blissfully happily married woman who only has eyes for Mark O'Brien. I cannot thank the honourable member for Brunswick enough for introducing us and having a hand in putting us together. Mark is my biggest fan and greatest supporter, and I am his, and I cannot wait to see what the next adventure is. Thank you, Mark, from the bottom of my heart.

I am also very lucky to now have five fabulous children: Tom, Will, Alexandra, Lucy and Caroline. What an absolute gift. I am so proud of you all and would like to acknowledge you and thank you so much for your love and support. It was great to have one last dinner with you all here on Tuesday night in the Speaker's dining room — and my apologies for how we left it. It did look a bit like the back room of the Guns N' Roses concert, but that is okay. I also of course want to thank my mum and dad, who gave me such a great start in life, taught me many things and also put up with so much as I was growing up.

I have been really blessed to represent a fantastic community for two terms, and that experience will always hold a special place in my heart. I have also been blessed in the last almost four years to be part of a government that has absolutely embraced the electorate of Wendouree. I firmly believe that Ballarat is in a better place now than it was four years ago, and that is down to the Premier and to all the ministers of this government listening, acting, caring and investing. There are far too many investments to speak of, but I do want to mention just a few: Mars Stadium, C. E. Brown Reserve and Ballarat Basketball — all great investments for Ballarat.

The railway precinct redevelopment will provide a safer and more accessible experience for locals and tourists alike, and the wonderful work that is happening along the line will mean more trains and more services for commuters and tourists. I am amazed at how quickly the \$6 million extension to the Aboriginal cooperative is going up, and of course let us not forget the civic hall redevelopment that will bring 600 brand-new jobs to Ballarat, the cath lab at the hospital and the future plans to completely redevelop the Ballarat Base Hospital. All these projects relate to jobs. They all translate to jobs, and that is what we are about. I would like to thank the Honourable Jaala Pulford, a great minister and an even better friend and neighbour, and Geoff Howard, a great guy and a calming influence, for being part of team Ballarat.

I think the investment that is really close to my heart is the funding for the Mount Rowan secondary college and support in making this college a standalone school. The teaching and support staff are brilliant, and the students are fantastic. They deserve an updated school, and they are getting one. I would like to particularly thank Rick Gervasoni and Seona Murnane for their tireless advocacy at this school and their obvious respect for the students and staff of Mount Rowan secondary college.

Of course a lot of funding has been committed for those issues that sometimes fly under the radar, issues that I think should be front and centre in the minds of everyone. The recommendations from the *Betrayal of Trust* report have been life-changing and life-saving for many of those victims of clergy abuse in my electorate. I have never been prouder of Ballarat than in its support for those victims, and I have never been prouder of those victims of abuse, who bravely and honestly told of their horrific experiences and their feelings of betrayal. I hope they know that they, through their stories, have absolutely made life safer for today's children and for all the children of the future. Those victim survivors have been supported by many people and many agencies, and at the same time let us not forget that the Royal Commission into Family Violence also put pressure on those agencies.

Again the acknowledgement by this government of family violence being the greatest law and order issue that we face has seen the greatest investment into preventing family violence and supporting the many victims of family violence. I know from talking to victims and to those who support them that the injection of funding has been really well received, but perhaps more important than that has been the acknowledgement of the reality of family violence, the link between equality of women and the great value of those who

work in the field. The Honourable Fiona Richardson will go down in history and should forever be celebrated for her groundbreaking work and her commitment to the women and children of Victoria. Fiona became a great friend and mentor, and I miss her terribly.

I have been very lucky to serve as Parliamentary Secretary for Human Services under the Honourable Jenny Mikakos and the Honourable Martin Foley. It has been a great honour to work on the issue of developing sexual health policies for those in residential care and to work on the area of elder abuse. The work of the Department of Health and Human Services and all the staff in relevant agencies needs to be acknowledged. There would be no important outcomes without their work and support. I also very much enjoyed working with Daniel Mulino, a member for Eastern Victoria in the other place, on social impact bonds. It was great to see that becoming a reality. Being part of the Victorian Anzac Centenary Committee has been incredibly rewarding.

When I walked into this place I did not really know anyone, just a couple of people. I have had some amazing moments and met some exceptional people during my time in this absolutely stunning building. I want to thank all those who showed me great kindness and friendship over the last eight years. I was so lucky to have the honourable member for Williamstown as my seat buddy — where is he? He is going to owe me \$10 bucks after this. I really will never forget our chats about our electorates and his advice about Parliament. What you do not know is that he insisted on calling me Lasquisha. I do not really remember the reason, but I think you should all hunt him down and ask him why and tell him he owes me \$10.

My amazing friend and colleague Maree Edwards, member for Bendigo West, has provided a great legacy through her role as chair of the Family and Community Development Committee. The inquiry into services for people with autism spectrum disorder and the inquiry into abuse in disability services have firmly put the safety and value of people who live with disability on the agenda and into legislation. Thank you from every carer and every person with a disability.

Maree has been my partner in crime from the very beginning. Our duets are legendary and I am sure that we would have a real following on the karaoke circuit. We have put on bunny ears and handed out Easter eggs. We have absolutely no shame. From that, like the bachelor presenting a rose, I will hand the bunny ears over to Jane. Jane, you are chosen. She is the Brooke, because Brooke will win *The Bachelor*. Even though he had a single date with Cassie last night, it is going

nowhere. Maree and I, from our first shared office — the bordello — to now, I know will remain the best of friends. We have laughed so much in this place, and we have sworn a fair bit too. Love ya, Mez!

Congratulations on the arrival of your third grandchild, Oliver Max. You can look into the faces of your grandchildren and know that you and Lindsay are looking right back together.

I think the person I admire most — and this will not be a surprise to anyone — is the Honourable Jane Garrett, the member for Brunswick. I have never met anyone with broader shoulders or a tougher spine. Her integrity in the face of immense hostility should be a source of pride. It is to me, it is to your family and it is to all those who love and admire you — and that is a lot of people. I know from the times we have been together that you cannot set foot out of your house without someone coming up and talking to you about that and talking about your integrity. Jane, I know that history will show that you stood on the side of what was right. I wish that for you and for my husband. You two are a great team and I am so glad that it was the two of you that faced up to a really difficult and challenging time together. Your family and my family are linked for life, and I could not be happier about that.

Of course we would be nothing in here, any of us, if it were not for the support staff. I am blown away by how professional and friendly the parliamentary staff are. A huge shout-out to chamber staff; Hansard staff; attendants; hospitality staff, especially Kazza; the maintenance team; the cleaning team; the gardening team, who had to tell me that no, I could not go and pick the flowers to put into my office; the library staff, who are incredibly smart and accommodating; the post office; security; IT; and parliamentary services. Please forgive me if I have missed anyone.

I also want to particularly acknowledge all the journalists. Their role is difficult but it is so important. Like Hansard, journalists record history. They tell the stories and keep us on our toes; and like us, they are also subject to abuse a lot of the time, particularly in this modern age of social media. But they do try to keep us honest, and that is exactly what should happen. For the record, and on the record, I reckon you should have access to the new office building. You are part of the Parliament House team and should be treated as such.

While being in Parliament is an important part of the job, I think it is fair to say that my heart belongs in Ballarat, in the seat of Wendouree. It has been such a privilege to represent the electorate of Ballarat West, and then Wendouree. Of course all good things happen because of a team. I have been so lucky to have the

most amazing staff in my time. We have laughed so much, we have had each other's backs and we have worked really, really hard. It has been an honour to witness their strength, intelligence and compassion, and they have worked above and beyond. I wish all of my staff well in their future endeavours. There is no-one I would rather have gone through this with than Simon, Heidi, Rick, Dan, Jan, the late Cheryl, Michaela, Juliana, Steph, Alison, Keren and our fantastic cleaner, Mick, a good friend as well. I would also like to send a big cheer to all the volunteers who supported me in both campaigns, and to Michaela Settle, who led them and nurtured them all. I appreciate all the calls that they made, all the doors that were knocked on and the hours of support they gave.

I thank the unions who supported me, and I would like to single out Brett Edgington, the secretary of the Ballarat Trades and Labour Council. I also want to take this opportunity to thank unions for the really important work that they do and the incredibly important role they have in our community but also in our economy.

I think what has really blown me away has been the amazing people that I have met, those incredible constituents who give back to their community, who help their neighbours, who volunteer, who quietly and selflessly get on with life and who help others. I have had the great privilege of hearing their stories and celebrating their achievements, of helping them through difficult times and grieving with them. It has been a truly humbling experience.

To everyone in this chamber and everyone in the other place, on all sides of politics, I have tried to be friendly and respectful to everyone regardless of where you sit in this place, knowing that we all have our differences, we all have different priorities, but we are all here for the same reason and that is just to try to make things better. I hope everyone is just a bit more respectful. Be truthful, work hard for your constituents and, above all, be brave. I am going to give you a little gift of a little saying that has got me through life and I hope you will embrace it and take it on:

Ladies and gentleman, take my advice. Pull down your pants, and slide on the ice.

Honourable members applauded.

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) (15:31) — I will start my last speech to this house like I started my inaugural speech on 28 October 1992. Honourable Speaker, honourable members and comrades. Being a parliamentarian is unique and there are only a few people that understand the pressures. There are other parliamentarians, your partner, your wife and your

family. I most sincerely thank Lyn for being there for me from the beginning and for still being there for me now as my friend. Lynny, Lorelle, Shaun, Teagan, Jayden, Kyal and Craig were with me from the beginning and are still there for me now, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

My friends have also been with me through this journey. Janice Munt has been with me on this journey, especially through the hard times, and I sincerely thank her as well. My long-term friend Ian Jones and Gail Tierney have been critical to me as well. Ian and the vehicle builders union (VBU) have helped me from the days of being an ALP organiser to the 1991 preselection and through my time here. We joined the Labor Party out in Melton in 1982 only months apart and worked together to build the party. Ian gave me the last bottle of FGP — frigging good port — that was bottled in my garage and I thank him for this. Thank you to Paul De Felici and the rest of the VBU team.

One of the mortal sins of my inaugural speech on 28 October 1992 was that I omitted my good friend and colleague Peter Mitchell. Peter helped me in the early years and was the reason I transferred from Melbourne North Province to the seat of Melton — so thank you very much, Peter.

My other long-term friend and colleague is Nib, whom I have known since 1985 and has been my electorate officer since 1998. I wish him and his wife Lucy all the best in their retirement. Another long-term friend and colleague is Anna Greco, who is my electoral officer and has also worked her heart out for the residents of Melton. She will be happy not to be battling the envelope insertion machine for the welcome letters and birthday cards. I wish her all the best for the future.

I want to acknowledge my other electoral officers that honourable members know are so important to undertaking their work: Mia Vitue, who also worked for the late Pat Power; the late Frans Timmerman, who is sadly missed; Karen Sherlock; Lorelle Scarlett; Jessie Belcher — and congratulations to Jessie, who was also my parliamentary intern, and her partner, Dan, on the arrival of their baby, Joanna; Tim Vainoras; Gabriella Aitken; my good friend Chris Papas; Alana Greco, who has been with me on and off for 17 years; Sarah De Santis; Melissa De Santis; Anna Galea; Jo Fox; and Teagan Scarlett.

We would not be able to do our job in the Parliament without the people here. Let me start with Bridget and her team in the chamber — thank you — and before her, Ray Purdey, and I wish him all the best for his retirement. Thanks also to Matthew Tricarico from the

other house, and I wish all the best to him and his family; Parliamentary Services and the IT team, especially Chris Prasad; and Karen and her team in Strangers. From the library there is Carolyn Macvean; Jon Breukel, who has done an amazing job with parliamentary interns and also got the Dalai Lama here in the Parliament; Bella and the rest of the library team.

There is the outside team of Joe, Dimic, Fausie and Milad Moussa, Mohammad, Linda and Kamel. There is the Hansard team, who make us read as if we are literate and coherent and eloquent, led by James Scott, with a big shout-out to Maria and Heather, who have been in the place for as long as I have been here. I thank Greg Mills; the late Russell Bowman, who I remember coming into the end-of-the-year staff MP party with a wheelbarrow full of grog; Chris, Michael and Philip from the Council; Jeremy Walsh and Pablo; David Robertson, who is an absolute dynamo here in the Parliament and the rest of the staff here at Parliament.

I also want to thank Sean Coley, Keir Delaney and Natalie-Mai Holmes from the outer suburbs committee, who produced good groundbreaking reports and set the course for government policy to this day.

To the Labor Party members that have helped me over the years, I want to acknowledge their work and dedication to the party, both in Melbourne North Province and in all the iterations of the Melton seat. I especially want to recognise the late Arthur Clegg and his wife Pat and their family; all the Bacchus Marsh branch members; and the late Leo Johnson, AM, who was my campaign chair —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr NARDELLA — Tiger, that's right — and all the other Melton branch members. I also want to thank Russell at the Windsor Hotel.

I want to thank the residents and families in the seat of Melton. At all times my staff and I have worked tirelessly to improve their lives and wellbeing and futures. This was the requirement and principle that Lynny imposed on me for moving from Melbourne North Province to Melton. The district around Melton and Bacchus Marsh township has been transformed by Labor governments, and only Labor governments, since 1999. Much of this has been undertaken by partnerships with federal Labor governments and their parliamentarians like Catherine King, Neil O'Keefe, Julia Gillard and Brendan O'Connor, with initiatives like the Melton business incubator, the Anthony's Cutting realignment, the rail upgrade from Deer Park West to Spencer Street and to Geelong, the Deer Park

bypass, the Western Ring Road, Leakes Road and Hopkins Road overpasses and interchanges, and the BER — Building the Education Revolution — in schools.

These partnerships have also been with the Melton council, with Neville Smith and Kel Tori as CEOs, and all the councillors and mayors, currently led by Bob Turner and Chris Papas, Justin Mammarella, Sophie Ramsey and the officers. There is also the Moorabool council partnership, with Rob Croxford and Robert Dobrzynski before him as the CEOs and the current mayor Paul Tatchell, where we have upgraded Maddingley Park and Darley footy club, just as examples.

In the time that I have had the honour of representing the Melton electorate Labor governments have invested over \$1.5 billion in all aspects of community affairs and infrastructure. Just as a comparison, Melton only received \$1.5 million for a set of traffic lights on Ferris Road from the Liberal government between 2010 and 2014. They did not even pay for it; it came out of the GAIC — the growth areas infrastructure contribution.

The legacy that you leave as a parliamentarian is how you change people's lives and, as Webber defined it, giving people life chances. As Robert Putnam has written, building social capital with people and communities, which has been a priority for me because, with my staff, we have transformed the community but more importantly, individuals have been helped either at a personal level or via programs and infrastructure that have been built. I am very proud to see the changes to the electorate and congratulate all the people who have helped me to implement these changes.

I have worked with some amazing people in my time here. I was mentored by the Honourable David White and, until his retirement, the Honourable Bill Landeryou. The leaders of the parties were amazing, starting with the Honourable Joan Kirner, the Honourable Jim Kennan, the amazing Honourable John Brumby, the exceptional Honourable Steve Bracks and the extraordinary Honourable Daniel Andrews.

When I came into the Parliament the juggernaut that was the Kennett government was elected on 3 October 1992. The day before my inaugural speech on 28 October that year 300 transit police demonstrated on the front steps of Parliament House. They were then all sacked, including my friend John Ballestrino. In November of that year we had hundreds of thousands marching to Parliament House against the Kennett government and their changes to WorkCare and industrial relations. With the community we fought

against the destruction of Victorian civil society and the secrecy, the support and encouragement of elites; the cuts to education and the closing of 326 state schools; the closure of the country rail lines and hospitals; the sacking of the 9000 nurses and 9000 teachers; and the nobbling of the independent watchdogs the Auditor-General and the FOI commissioner, just to name two.

We fought against Kennett and The Nationals who, with the millennial drought in full force, referred to country Victoria as the toenails of Victoria. They treated country Victorians as second-class citizens, imposed compulsory competitive tendering and then, to top it all off, amalgamated their councils. They paid the price because John Brumby took the fight up to Kennett. He had 26 members in the opposition and worked tirelessly and uncompromisingly, and with one of the sharpest minds and his leadership he set us up for the 1999 election win. I personally thank John for his hard work and friendship.

In my inaugural speech I talked about representing ordinary people, protecting people, opposing cuts to services and education, opposing the industrial relations changes and social engineering, opposing getting rid of common-law claims for injured workers, which we have reinstated, opposing privatisation and opposing cuts to training for young people and to women's services. These issues are still relevant today. We have to protect vulnerable and working people in Victoria.

I always enjoyed grievance speeches, especially when having a go at the Liberals and their dysfunction. Just as an example, in my *Star Wars* speech — I know that it is very disorderly — I talked about how Ted Baillieu was being undermined in some blogs and other stuff from Exhibition Street. That dysfunction within the Liberal Party was rife at the time and those issues are still relevant today.

For Labor members with left-of-centre politics, being a parliamentarian is the best and most rewarding job in the world, especially when in government. You leave a legacy physically through implementing social justice policies, building social capital and being able to successfully help someone and/or their family. For Labor members, the caucus and your colleagues are the best part of the job, even with the challenge they present. I thank colleagues for their support. I am going to miss some of the new members in the house, like the honourable member for Essendon. When the honourable member for Essendon came into this house he talked about Captain Risky, so I will just put Captain Risky in there so honourable members know what he

was talking about. I am going to miss his quotations from Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*.

One of the things that I have seen in the house is the development of the new Labor Party MPs who have come into this house over time. I know and I see that they have a bright future. They are the people who are the future leaders in the next parliaments and the next governments. You all deserve the best in the election. Elections are always difficult and hard. I apologise to my parliamentary colleagues on my right about this, but I know that although elections are difficult and hard, we can do it. I know the Labor Party can gain majority government, and the leaders of the future — you know who you are — you can do it. You can propel the next Labor government into the future, carry forward the programs and build on those programs and initiatives to build a better Victoria, to make sure that Victoria is the best place to live, work and raise a family, because we are certainly getting things done.

I want to thank all honourable members on all sides of the house for their work and commitment to Victoria. I thank you, Honourable Speaker, and the house for giving me this opportunity.

Honourable members applauded.

The SPEAKER (15:47) — I acknowledge in the gallery the presence of a former member for Mordialloc, Janice Munt, and a former member for Burwood, Bob Stensholt.

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) (15:47) — I will be focusing more on the future and less on the past. Let me start by saying that it has been an absolute and great privilege to represent the electorate of Cranbourne in the Victorian Parliament for the past 16 years, for four consecutive terms.

Today is the opportunity to thank everybody who has supported me since getting into Parliament in 2002. They are many in number, and I apologise for my inability to thank all of them individually. I would like to begin by thanking the staff of the Department of Parliamentary Services for the support given to me over my 16 years as an MP. I thank you all very much.

I am also very grateful to many members of my electorate office staff who have worked hard with me over this period of time. A big thankyou to all of you. However, a very special thanks goes out to my right-hand man — or, as we on this side of the house say, my left-hand man — Sammy Argiriou. Sammy has been with me for the past 15 years of my 16-year term and together we have survived three tough marginal seat campaigns. Sammy has shown himself to be very

loyal to me and has always supported me and my team with sound advice, guidance and political acumen.

I would also like to thank innumerable people, including those comrades from the Labor Party and the wider labour movement along with supporters and friends from the Indian community for their kind support during many hard-fought campaigns. I thank my constituents for electing me as their representative for four consecutive terms. I would also like to thank all my colleagues from all sides of the Parliament, and their staff, for their support and respect during my tenure here.

Finally, I would like to thank especially my beautiful wife, my beautiful children and their loving families, and many great friends and supporters from the Sri Lankan community who have been right with me throughout this journey. Without their kind support, history would have been written differently.

The highest satisfaction I have derived in my years has been from the work I have done to help out many by going beyond the conventional jurisdictional responsibilities of a state member of Parliament. I have sponsored many people who have been rejected by immigration on their first visitor visa application. These initiatives have been on top of the support I have given to many people in a number of visa categories delivering desirable outcomes for them. Had it not been for these initiatives, many would not have seen the colour of this beautiful country and would not have had the opportunity to spend time together with their family and friends living in Australia and thus make a contribution to the country's economy.

During the past 16 years, during my representation, areas within the past and current electorate of Cranbourne have had a massive infrastructure boost: new schools, new police stations, many new community and family hubs, sporting complexes, modernised health facilities, hundreds of kilometres of road infrastructure enhancements, substantial improvements to the public transport system — the list goes on and on. It is very pleasing to note the Premier's recent announcement of the long-awaited Dandenong to Cranbourne line duplication and the work to extend the Cranbourne line out to Clyde.

I will always look back with pride at my contributions in support of the historic pieces of legislation such as abortion law reform, assisted dying, legalising access to medicinal cannabis, medically supervised injecting rooms and other progressive initiatives. I thank the progressive Labor governments for taking those

initiatives and giving me the opportunity to be an enthusiastic supporter.

I wish to state my observations about some parliamentary activities. In my view there is a culture developing in the Parliament to go all out and spend way too much time on political pointscoreing. This is well below the community's expectation. It certainly makes me wonder whether there is any value to the Victorian community in shouting down people on their feet, heckling, calling unnecessary quorums, making frivolous points of order and disrupting proceedings during question time. While members of all parliaments have engaged in such fun and games, term after term, focusing only on winning elections and self-advancement, our footwear, clothing and textile industries have disappeared to cheaper labour destinations.

Who would have believed that one day the automobile manufacturing industry would depart our shores? Well, that is exactly what has happened. At times, taxpayer dollars have had to be pumped into the coffers of private investors to keep the jobs in Australia. Even with taxpayer money the car manufacturing industry folded up and left. These business decisions have certainly hit hard on employment levels. As they occurred progressively over a period of time in a disjointed fashion, the economy managed to find jobs for the unemployed, at times with bandaid initiatives from the governments of the day.

The rollout of artificial intelligence and automation through the employment of robotic technology will increase business dynamism and economic growth. This is great; however, research undertaken by the McKinsey Global Institute revealed that massive government intervention will be required to hold societies together against the ravages of labour destruction over the next 13 years. The study says that up to 800 million people, including one-third of the workforce in the US and Germany, will be made jobless by about 2030. This is quite scary to say the least. It is not only factory floor and office jobs that are going to disappear but also the industrial robots augmented with artificial intelligence that will facilitate self-driven cars and trucks, resulting in job shedding in the transport industry as well. The new jobs created by the technology will be sophisticated and high paying, and there is no logic to say that the same unemployed numbers could be placed in those new jobs.

The fourth industrial revolution is also digital like the third, but different in speed, scale and complexity. The fourth industrial revolution is happening in the domains of physical, digital as well as biological spheres, and

not only will it help the workers like previous industrial revolutions but it will outright replace them. I know by nature it is hard for the conservative thinkers to accept that things can happen for the first time.

We live in a private investor driven economy where the bottom line is maximisation of profits for the shareholders. Recent figures indicate a 3.1 per cent Australian annual gross domestic product growth; however, figures also indicate that job growth is slowing sharply and there are no real wage gains for the average worker. Private investor companies are not there to provide employment; they are there to employ the most efficient ways of producing goods and services at the lowest cost. It is not rocket science to understand that increasing unemployment in society is directly proportionate to the decreasing buying power of the society. The entrepreneurs who believed that they could increase profits by replacing human beings with machines will now be struggling to sell their own products as a result of increased poverty in society due to unemployment created by their own decisions.

The big tax cuts to all enterprises including the multinationals will definitely lead to employing more technology as opposed to more human beings if and when they decide to allocate a portion of the newfound tax advantage for further investment. There is plenty of evidence that these multinationals who are reluctant to pay their fair share of taxes and the big banks who have exploited their own customers are not there to help out a society.

This is the inevitable crisis situation created by the contradictory nature of the private investor driven economy. This is a global phenomenon, and Australia cannot escape it. In the past 300 years or so the prevailing economic system gave us brutal recessions every four to seven years and the Great Depression. Irrational thinkers, with their antiquated views, believe the private investor driven economy will find its own solutions to these crises as historically every economic downturn was followed by a temporary recovery.

This change is massive and widespread. The private investor driven economy will not be able to handle it at all. This is the beginning of the end of trickle-down economics. The time is fast approaching for the private investor economic systems to follow the same fate as its predecessors, slave and feudal economic arrangements.

Transition to a far more automated society going smoothly rests almost entirely on the choices we make. If the clothing, footwear and textile companies were owned by the workers, they would not have let their jobs be exported to other parts of the world. If the

worker-owned businesses choose to install new technology, they will have a plan to work less hours for the week, sharing the work and income with all fellow workers.

The worker self-driven enterprises (WSDEs), commonly known as cooperatives, are gaining momentum in Europe, the UK and many other parts of the world. In the WSDE no separate group of persons — no individual who does not participate in the production work of the enterprise — can be a member of the board of directors. This is economic democracy and is not pie in the sky stuff. The Mondragon Corporation in northern Spain, an umbrella of 102 individual cooperatives owned by over 70 000 worker members, is a reality today.

The Co-operative Party of the United Kingdom is genuinely a no-nonsense task-focused, futuristic political party. The Co-operative Party has produced a blueprint for a 21st century democratic form of public ownership for railways, the energy sector and the water industry that will put power in the hands of many and not the privileged few. This could be a very effective way to reduce power bills. In a unique relationship with the British Labour Party, the Co-operative Party will be an enthusiastic partner of a future Corbyn Labour government that has committed to double the size of the cooperative economy; ensure that workers have a right to own, when a company is facing change of ownership or closure; and establish regional development banks that will help deliver low-cost finances to cooperatives.

The cooperative model challenges us to think beyond the old paradigms of the market versus the state, beyond the divisions between owners and customers, and to think creatively about new ownership and management models. I recommend that the next Parliament set up a parliamentary investigative committee to study and report on matters related to cooperative models and subsequently the impact of technological advancement.

It would also be helpful for the industry portfolio to have added responsibilities for economic democracy and automation. It is wise for the next Parliament to adopt a mechanism to present travel reports to the Parliament, rather than filing them in the library and leaving them to gather dust. It is useful for members to have the opportunity to speak on travel reports, and unfortunately 90 seconds is not adequate timing for that. This would be an ideal way to debate the relevance of modern concepts learned on study tours. In the 21st century there is a lot happening fast outside Australia. New thinking is important to move forward to deliver the best for the future generations.

I wish to end by wishing the next Parliament and the retiring members from this Parliament all the very best of luck. May I also take this opportunity to wish all the very best to the preselected Labor candidate for Cranbourne, Pauline Richards, who would be a great member of Parliament. Thank you and goodbye.

Honourable members applauded.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (16:05) — On Wednesday, 20 December 2006 — 4293 days ago — I rose to deliver my first speech in this place. Today, with pride and a little sadness, gratitude and much happiness, I rise to deliver my last. These opposite feelings do not cause confusion for me. Instead they now bring harmony.

My dear mum always told me to never forget where you come from. I often recollect my humble beginnings through a story mum and dad fondly told me so many times. The wind was howling, the thunder roared and the canvas tent was billowing. We were in our little bit of paradise on the St Leonards foreshore. The air was thick with dust, the sky dark, pitch black. We were on our first holiday as a family. I was in the middle, and all that my parents could see, they would exclaim, were the bright eyes of their first child — my blue eyes. I retell this family fable not just because as you get older touching stories take on new relevance, but because I realised, and the conviction has only grown over time, that it is the people around you that contribute — often, if you are fortunate, unconditionally — to the person you become. If the foundation relationships are loving, sturdy and hopeful, then they are sufficiently durable to take you on all of life's journeys.

Ruminating on what it has meant to be a member of this august chamber, I realise that my contribution, albeit it has not reached the highest of heights, has rather been dedicated to forthrightly yet tenderly representing the people who elected me, to making sure that they got a good start in life, to being a strong advocate and a steady guiding hand, especially in stormy weather.

I can never thank the people of Narre Warren South enough for showing their faith in me with three decisive election victories, but more so for making my husband and I so welcome in their homes, at their gatherings, in places of worship and clubs, even at weddings, christenings, birthday parties and of course 12 consecutive Kambrya College deb balls. We have many happy memories.

I keep the words of Ben Okri on my desk:

Our future is greater than our past.

The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love.

We are best defined by the mystery that we are still here and can still rise upwards, still create better civilisations.

I hope, indeed I know — let one not be a shrinking violet on one's last day here — that I have made people's lives better. For me, my focus as an MP has been to promote the transformational force of a quality education — my own experience — and make it more available, more relevant and more appealing to many others, encouraging others to step up and lift their sights upwards. As Joan Kirner, my mentor who was always there for me, said in her final speech in this place:

Isn't that what we come into politics for; to say to people, 'You can do it too ...

The children that started school when I first became the member for Narre Warren South are now doing the Victorian certificate of applied learning or the Victorian certificate of education or they are off to TAFE. With 10 new schools built — only by Labor governments — upgrades at five other schools, the new Casey Tech about to be opened, free TAFE and sufficient funding so that students can play the violin or the trombone, travel to classrooms in China, Indonesia and India, and acquire the science, technology, engineering and maths skills needed to navigate our changing and challenging world, I can tell you for sure that the futures of Narre Warren South students are brighter.

I thank both the Premier and the Deputy Premier for the rewarding opportunity to serve as the Parliamentary Secretary for Education. Deputy Premier, I can see Team Merlino in the gallery. They are amazing people, and I really do thank you for all your endeavours. Thank you to the principals and teachers in my local schools for harvesting this government's support into better results for their students. Victoria on our watch is the Education State, a place where a world-class education is available for everyone.

I represent a wonderfully diverse multicultural community. We have people from 150 different countries. There are 144 different languages spoken and 120 different faiths represented in Casey. Despite my own and others' best efforts to foster and celebrate our diversity — our strength — I too often witness minority and migrant communities being unfairly targeted, experiencing discrimination and being verbally maligned, often by people in positions of leadership. You should know better.

I reject wholeheartedly the current fearmongering, dog-whistling and nationalistic jingoism increasingly prevalent in our political life, often fanned by elements

in the tabloid media, radio loudmouths and meddling media moguls, all this taking place in the ceaseless echo chamber of social media. As an aside I can now declare: I have survived without Twitter in my life. Sadly, though, we have people in our suburbs living in fear of the fear. We have been a successful and safe community in most respects because, to put it simply, we have been good at being kind to each other — not perfect, but good enough. I cannot help but feel that kindness — a bit of an old-fashioned word — is on the decline. We really have to make an effort to practice kindness and it probably needs to start with us, by practising better respect for our democratic institutions and proudly acknowledging where we have all come from. We are all migrants in this state.

The upcoming treaty with Aboriginal Victorians is not just a landmark opportunity to acknowledge the 60 000 years of Indigenous heritage but also a timely and significant opportunity to place a precious and powerful construct under our fragile democracy. Victoria has been and can still be the standard-bearer for peace and prosperity if all Victorians feel at home in our state.

In my inaugural speech I referred to the Stern review on the economics of climate change. At the time I was applauding the installation of the purple pipe — recycled water — into our expanding housing estates. I want to place on the record my thanks to successive state Labor governments for their stewardship of the environment and at the same time — you can do it — keeping our state economy booming and providing record jobs growth. I especially applaud Labor governments for expanding our national and state park networks, preserving the green wedges of Melbourne, transitioning to renewable energy — Solar Victoria is a game changer — and for having the guts and good sense to set the Victorian renewable energy target at 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025.

But I strongly believe we have to be even better custodians of our Earth and our country. We have a climate emergency on our hands, and our planet and our part of the world cannot take much more disrespect, climate scepticism, political obfuscation and plundering. It is one of the greatest political failures of the current generations that we have witnessed, indeed allowed, successive federal governments of all colours to shirk the key responsibility of guaranteeing a quality life for everyone now and into the future by consistently failing us on energy and climate policy. It is a national disgrace, an international embarrassment and an abrogation of our fundamental duty as parents and decision-makers to leave this place in a better shape

than we found it. Sadly, it is scary for our children and it is plain downright unfair on them too.

With all that off my chest, I turn to the most important part of my contribution — the thankyou's. You do not get here without the support of many others. I am a fully paid-up member of three teams: my family, the Western Bulldogs and the Australian Labor Party. The Labor values of fairness, equality, solidarity and internationalism are still my guiding principles. Joan said it perfectly:

There is a sense of comradeship in our party which, when remembered, strengthens the party and will take us forward.

It is worth remembering. On this side of the house we do not need to wear red high heels to make a point. Our commitment to gender equality is here for all to see. Hear us roar in numbers too big to ignore.

I thank the Labor Party, with a special acknowledgment to Kosmos Samaras at HQ — I have never left the grid on roads, education and health; we have poured nearly a billion dollars worth of bitumen into my electorate — for giving me the chance to experience a rich and meaningful political life. I have had the privilege of serving with three Labor premiers — all fine men. To the Premier, I have admired your engagement with ideas and your capacity for hard work — getting things done — but most of all your bold commitment to a progressive government agenda. The Royal Commission into Family Violence and the acceptance of its 227 recommendations, and the voluntary assisted dying legislation are milestone reforms. They will change many people's lives for the better. Thank you for your leadership. My heartfelt recognition of the role of the Minister for Health, Jill Hennessy — she is such a beautiful person — on the latter reform, but also her relentless championing of the Casey Hospital redevelopment. It is high-quality healthcare delivered locally. It will improve and save people's lives.

Further thanks to my small but special band of National Union of Workers parliamentary colleagues: my young friends Nick and Steve make me laugh out loud, usually at other people's expense, I have got to say, and our trio of fine ministers, Pakula, Pallas and Pulford. Thank you to Clare O'Neil for being on my team from the very start and to the Honourable Tim Holding, who gave me that helping hand so many of us need at times. I have been part of a caucus full of extraordinary people. Go boldly my friends and colleagues to the next election. I wish you all every success on 24 November, especially Gary for Narre.

To my electorate office staff, the golden-hearted Nichole Hayes, Myles, Isabella and James, and before

you, especially Naureen Choudhry, David Iles and Efstratios Staikos, I really appreciate your efforts, and when I get demanding, which I do, the extra effort. To the staff in Parliament House, what would we do without you?

To the men and women in the red, white and blue, I expect you do not realise what happiness you provide. I certainly could not have survived public life without letting off steam — my many Eliza Doolittle moments at the footy — by barracking loudly for my team. Cede nullis. Go Dogs!

And finally, I thank my number one team: Stephen and our family. Where I come from bragging was frowned upon. It was not done to talk oneself up, and you were certainly not to think yourself better than others. However, you were encouraged to do your best, be your best and always do your best for others. But I have a family that I find it hard not to brag about. I struck gold with my husband: driver, photographer, handbag holder — he dislikes that to this day — letterboxer, comic, thankfully willing to eat anything and dance to any tune, my in-house chiropractor, above all else a good listener. I could not have done public life without him by my side. To our children, Rebecca, Vanessa and Lucas, I love you not just because you are mine or got the education I so wanted you to have, or just because of your very solid work ethic, but overwhelmingly because you are generous, passionate and kind. I am so grateful to have your partners Tyler and Delphine in our lives. Soon I will hold a baby in my arms. Can you believe it? It is due on election day! Thank you for skilfully navigating your way around my political existence and becoming very good people. To Val and Gerry McKenna, our lifelong friends who are more like family — we barrack for the same teams — it is a joy to have you as part of our cheer squad.

I finish my time as a member of Parliament overwhelmingly with a sense of gratitude. It's Time. Dispensing with the political philosophers, I quote the enlightened — well, maybe not — but always extravagant advice of Edina Monsoon from *Absolutely Fabulous*:

I don't want more choice, I just want nicer things.

I venture onto the next branch of the tree of life, as always with hope. Hope itself can be a mixed emotion — hope hopes against hope — but for me hope is the imagination, the heart and the head at full stretch, the elixir to enjoy the artistry of being alive. It has been an honour and privilege to be the first woman to represent the people of Narre Warren South. Only 88 women have sat on these benches. I have been lucky

enough to be one of those 88 women. I wish everyone the best future they can imagine for themselves. Be well and happy. So with my eyes all lit up, looking beyond, always upwards, I say goodbye.

Honourable members applauded.

Ms THOMSON (Footscray) (16:25) — Thank you, Speaker, commonly called 'Snitch' by those who are on this side. I cannot compete with the tour de force that was the member for Narre Warren South's contribution, but I will attempt to try to summarise 19 years in Parliament. I am not going to start off with my life in the party because we would be here until Christmas, but I do want to say that I am here by accident rather than by design.

For those of us who are members of the Labor Party, we all love our branch meetings, don't we? Well, my first branch meeting consisted of fronting the Pascoe Vale-West Coburg branch of the ALP, at which there was a sensational turnout — about 35 members, which is quite a good turnout — of which three were under the age of 45 and one of those was me. When you are 18 years of age you are full of idealism and intent to change the world. They spent 2 hours talking about whether there should be one garbage collection per week or two. So I nearly did not survive the Labor Party, and I have to thank Young Labor for giving me the inspiration to keep going and to change the way our branch meetings worked. And that enabled me to be here today.

I joined the Labor Party because I believe government has a responsibility to provide opportunity and voice for those who, without government, would have no voice and limited opportunity, whether it is a worker at risk of exploitation, a consumer ripped off by a company or someone unemployed needing support to get back into employment. However, the major issue that drives me to be politically active, and one I raised in my inaugural speech, is education. I believed then, and I do now, that the government has a responsibility to provide the best possible education to our children, especially when their parents do not have the capacity to pay for it.

This is hard because it is about my dad. I also said my father taught me to challenge and to question, to fight passionately for what I believe to be right and to give back to my community. It is this commitment — and perhaps a good dose of chutzpah — that has given me the great honour of representing the people of what was then the Melbourne North Province and now Footscray as a proud Labor member in the Bracks, Brumby and now Andrews Labor governments.

I was elected on 18 September 1999 as part of a Steve Bracks Labor government and was sworn in as the Minister for Small Business and Minister for Consumer Affairs on 20 October. Steve got us around the cabinet table very early, and he said to us, 'We have come here to govern for all Victorians, and you have to go out and reach every part of Victoria and let them know this'. So I, being a dutiful and very well disciplined minister, packed up my then chief of staff and one other staffer and decided to go on a two-day tour of Gippsland, stopping in every small town we could find along the way and meeting with small businesses.

Every speech would start the same way: 'The Premier has said, and told all of us as ministers, that we are to go out and govern for all Victorians, and that is why I am here today'. Well, we got to our last stopping point, which was Warragul, and in the car on the way my chief of staff and my adviser, very supportively, were making fun of the fact that I would always start my introduction the same way. They mimicked me the whole way from where we were all the way to Warragul. Well, we got to Warragul and I was dutifully going to start with my usual starting point, but I could not because I kept bursting out laughing because of the way they had mimicked and mocked me in the car. That was the last time I ever started any of those proceedings in that way. So thank you, guys — thank you very much!

The Legislative Council was a baptism of fire, with 30 members of the coalition and 14 Labor members. Three of the four ministers were new to the Parliament: Candy Broad, Justin Madden and myself. Monica Gould was leader, and Gavin Jennings, also a new member, was deputy leader and cabinet secretary. The new opposition struggled to accept that they had lost government and were determined to make our lives difficult as hell. They did a pretty good job of it, and I think the current opposition in the Council is not much different to that which we experienced in 1999 and for that first term of the Bracks government.

I have great respect and sympathy for the hours worked by our legislative councillors. In our first term of government we put in a number of all-nighters and even more sittings that went on into the early hours of the morning — although I have learnt from the member for Brighton that there might have been other reasons as to why we sat late. I recall on one occasion arriving home around 7.30 in the morning to greet my son, who was leaving for school. The look on his face was of sheer astonishment, and he asked me if I was just getting home. The answer of course was yes.

Our families pay a high price for the work that we have chosen to do. Mine had the double whammy of having to grow up with two parents in politics. They had to put up with not only the long hours but the bad stories in the press, and I am grateful to be able to say now that I have two amazing adult children that I am so very proud of. I have been very lucky. I have had the support of a wonderful family, both mine and my in-laws, who have given me so much practical and emotional support throughout my time in politics and before. I could not have done this without them. And to the friends I have here in the gallery: thank you so much for all of the support that you have given me. They say you cannot make friends in politics, only shared interests — it is not true. Fun food faction, take note.

The men and women who make up the great Australian Labor Party work tirelessly to see Labor governments elected. I pay tribute to them and thank them for the support they have given me over my entire time as a member of the Labor Party and as a member of Parliament — note I have not said how long for.

A great deal of time is spent by members opposite denigrating the trade union movement. To those members opposite, this is a message for you: I am a proud, card-carrying member of the Australian Workers Union and have been since 1999. It was a gift from Bill Shorten to me when I became a minister. Before that I was a member of the Australian Services Union. Without the trade unions workers are left vulnerable to exploitation and poor occupational health and safety practices. We see this today in areas where union membership and influence is limited. There is a legitimate role for trade unions, and that should be respected by everyone, not just by members on this side of the house. Just as we support business to grow and provide jobs, we should support the very important role of our unions.

In my inaugural speech I thanked a number of individuals who supported me in my journey here. I am not going to rename them, because if you are suffering from insomnia, you can read my inaugural speech and work out who they are. I have, however, not forgotten their support, nor will I ever.

I have had the great fortune to be in this Parliament to participate in some of the greatest debates on social policy, including debates on legislation based on inclusion, respect and addressing past wrongs, and legislation on racial and religious vilification. I want to thank the Jewish community — my community — for the leadership they showed in ensuring we introduced that into the Parliament. Rights for the LGBTQI community, abortion law reform, voluntary assisted

dying and the legislation we brought into this Parliament to fight the plight of family violence — these are not all but just some of the significant pieces of legislation that have come before this place during the time of the Bracks, Brumby and Andrews governments.

On Tuesday night I joined members of the class of 1999 for our annual dinner. Apart from just catching up — which we do and talk about how our lives are travelling — we talked about how close-knit the caucus of 1999 was. We were in a minority government, but we looked out for and cared for one another. We were disciplined and focused. We knew what we had to do, and we did it together. We could not have achieved that without the strong leadership of Steve Bracks, ministers who worked closely as a team and an extraordinary caucus that worked together and helped produce our 2002 election result.

I came across a quote from Bernadette Devlin, an Irish Catholic member of the House of Commons who was actually assassinated. She said:

My function in life is not to be a politician in Parliament: it is to get something done.

I hope I am judged as having done just that. I have been told by my former chief of staff that I have to insert the next bit. As Minister for Small Business, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Information and Communication Technology, there are many achievements that I am proud of. Some of the most significant of these include, as the Minister for Information and Communication Technology, working with industry to make Victoria the leading ICT state in Australia and greatly raising the international profile of our companies overseas; delivering Australia's best overall communications contract for government, which enabled all Victorian government offices to be connected to high-speed broadband and, together with the current Leader of the House, ensuring that that broadband went out to 1600 government schools; delivering innovative ICT reforms, such as the retention of intellectual property for ICT companies so that they could actually increase their opportunity in business; and giving small ICT companies opportunities to win government contracts. We worked with the sector to ensure that we led the nation in addressing ICT skills shortages.

In consumer affairs we re-established Victoria as the nation's leader in consumer protection. We implemented reforms in areas such as conveyancing, bodies corporate, fundraising and funerals. We advanced lemon laws and enhanced protection for tenants. I am so proud to see that we have now had

another go at ensuring that we increase the rights of renters. I wish to acknowledge the work of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation in that regard. We introduced the first retirement villages legislation act to ensure that we were protecting those most vulnerable in our retirement villages. I want to pay a special tribute to Michael Leighton at this point for raising with me a very important issue around the way our senior citizens were being treated in caravan parks.

As Minister for Small Business I had the opportunity to speak to thousands of small businesses. Listening to them we came up with the idea of establishing Australia's first small business commissioner — a role that has now been replicated right across the country. We also rewrote the retail tenancy legislation that the member for Brighton was referring to before to ensure that there was more balance and fairness in the relationship between tenant and landlord. We put business impact statements into legislation, and we put 'pay on time or pay commercial interest' requirements on government departments.

None of these things would have been possible without the support of my extremely talented and hardworking ministerial staff and the many public servants in Multimedia Victoria, Consumer Affairs Victoria and Small Business Victoria, along with the stakeholders in each of these portfolios. I do need to single out my chief of staff, Rob Acton, who came out of his small business to work with me as my chief of staff for a short time and stayed for the duration. Shaun Thomas, Robert Larocca and Nicole Rich brought intelligence, diligence and a great sense of humour to work, at least on most days. You and the rest of the team, my media advisers, my very patient and supportive executive assistants — who would not let me touch my diary — and my department liaison officers made my job so much easier and so much fun. You made me look good. Thank you.

In 2006 I moved to the seat of Footscray, a beautiful, diverse electorate that celebrates multiculturalism and inclusion. It is an exciting and rapidly changing place that requires a government sensitive to the needs of the whole community. I have to say that I have met some amazing and beautiful people. I want to single out Mehmet, who is here today, from the Turkish community who has been an incredible delight to work with, and Jasvinder Sidhu, who engaged me in the issue of family violence within the Indian community and for whom I hope we have made a little bit of a difference.

Our days in opposition were dark days — none of us liked them. They were dark days for my electorate.

There was little that the then government spent on my electorate, and the planning decisions that were made by the now Leader of the Opposition have led to huge towers being constructed that will overshadow the Maribyrnong River and put thousands of people on an effectively isolated island that will be difficult to get in and out of.

Those years in opposition were hard, but they enabled us to develop a plan in partnership with the Maribyrnong City Council, Victoria University and school communities to create an Australian first: the Footscray Learning Precinct. This precinct will provide lifelong learning from birth right through to the University of the Third Age. Regardless of your age it will provide the education you need when you need it. This would not have been possible without the support of the then deputy opposition leader and now Deputy Premier, who has championed this precinct as an iconic project of the Education State and has provided the funds to make it a reality.

Not only has he funded that but he has funded a whole host of my schools as well. Sunshine College, which missed out when the Liberals came into government, has now got its money. Dinjerra Primary School, a school that is filled with a whole lot of kids with refugee backgrounds from many, many countries, has now got its money. There is also Sunshine Special Development School and Glengala Primary School, and the list goes on and on. A big thankyou to this government and to this minister.

To the Minister for Health, my favourite constituent, a big thankyou for the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital. It will make a big difference to the lives of women and children in the west. Thank you to the Premier and to the Minister for Health for the commitment to the rebuilding of Footscray Hospital. I know that the people of the west will show their gratitude.

The West Gate Tunnel — 9000 trucks off the streets in the inner west — much called for, and now bans will be placed on Buckley Street and Moore Street, and residents will be able to sleep at night.

In my electorate office I have the constant support of Clive Bracey, who has been with me since 2006 — such patience, such endurance — along with Chris Owner, Kaitlin Ferris, Katherine Munt and Nomi Kaltman, who have all gone on to bigger and better things. Add to this Sara, James, Angela and Adam. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication.

To the parliamentary staff, to Bridget and to the team, to everyone in the library, to Karen and the team in Strangers Corridor whom I have given a hard time to over many years — I am not hard to please — to the library staff, to everyone, a big thankyou. To Hansard, who always make us sound better than we actually are, a big thankyou. I am very sorry that there are no more Olympic doughnuts for me to give out, but the doughnut man left and he did not pass on his recipe. To those of you who have chosen not to recontest, I wish you well in the next phase of your lives.

Premier, thank you for your leadership. It was your commitment, sheer hard work and confidence that brought us back to the government benches in just one term. There has not been another government that has done more in four years than the one that you lead, not just in infrastructure but also in social policy, equity and in your personal commitment to deal with the issue of family violence. It has been a pleasure to work with you in areas of trade and a great pride to see the opening of our office in Tel Aviv. Shimon Peres said:

A politician and a government should be judged by one way only: on the record of what you do or did, not on what you say.

Premier, if the Victorian people judge this government on these principles, we will win a much-deserved second term. I wish to thank you for your support and friendship and wish you and Catherine all the best for the future. To my caucus colleagues — God, struth, you're all here — to be in this place is a privilege that many seek but few get. Make the most of every moment and make every moment count. Good luck to those recontesting — not that you need it. I know you will put in the effort that is needed to win, and I hope to see all your faces back on these benches with a few more added.

To Katie Hall, who is to be my successor, I wish you every luck. I know that you will continue the tradition of good Labor representation in the seat of Footscray. To Melissa Horne, who is the candidate for Williamstown, thank you for being my campaign director for two of my elections, and all the best in your endeavours to become the member for Williamstown. That brings me to the member for Williamstown. No one could ask for a better neighbour than Wade Noonan. We worked together as a tag team covering the issues of the inner west. He is a friend that I respect and admire, and I look forward to spending more time with him enjoying a few drinks — thank you to his mum for encouraging him to do that — in our retirement. I leave this place knowing that there are many talented and dedicated Labor members who will serve the people of Victoria well, and I wish you every success.

Honourable members applauded.

FELICITATIONS

The SPEAKER (16:50) — Order! I just wanted to take a very quick opportunity to thank the retiring members on behalf of all members for their contributions today. On behalf of the house, we wish them well for the future. You are allowed to retire, but you have got to stay in contact. As the song says, you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.

To members: as this is the last chance that I will have in this Parliament to say a few words, I just wanted to say that I do not need to tell members of this place about the important function that this Parliament plays in our democracy, but the 58th Parliament in my view has performed that role effectively, if somewhat robustly. I want to thank all members of this place for their hard work in that regard.

However, we would not be able to do our jobs without the wonderful support and assistance of parliamentary staff. I am not going to go through every business unit and name every single person in staff, but to Bridget Noonan and her Assembly team and to Peter Lochert and his Department of Parliamentary Services team, on behalf of members I want to say thank you.

On a personal note, very briefly I wanted to thank the Deputy Speaker, the member for Bendigo West, who is obviously not here with us today. She is off being a grandmother again. I also thank the acting chairs, who have assisted me so much over my time in this role and taken on the role of chair, and my counterpart in the other place, the President, the Honourable Bruce Atkinson, for his support and assistance over my time as a Presiding Officer. I wish all members good fortune over the months ahead.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES COMMISSION (GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Mr PAKULA
(Attorney-General).**

Debate adjourned until later this day.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of motion

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) (16:52) — I move:

That the consideration of government business, orders of the day 2 to 4 inclusive, be postponed until later this day.

Could I just by indulgence, Speaker, thank you for your stewardship of this house in what have been very difficult times occasionally. As well as farewelling all of those departing members, I just add my thanks to two particular classes of members who I do not think get enough recognition — and nobody else will do it: the whips, who do so much to keep us all in line, and the Leader of the House and the manager of opposition business, without whom none of what we do would be manageable in any respect whatsoever.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (16:53) — In supporting the motion moved by the Attorney-General, can I add on behalf of the opposition our appreciation to table staff in particular for the support they have given everybody in this house. I express my appreciation to my counterpart, the Leader of the House. Hopefully we have conducted ourselves in a reasonably civilised manner in terms of ordering the business of this place. I certainly express my appreciation to the member for South Barwon for his support as whip. I am sure the member for Thomastown has given similar support to her side of the house, and I have appreciated our dealings with her.

I express our appreciation to you, Speaker, in taking on your job in very difficult circumstances and for the labours and effort that you have contributed trying to restore some respect and standards in the office that you hold. Certainly on behalf of all members of this side of the house I express our appreciation to all members of the parliamentary staff for the various supports that they have given us during the life of this Parliament.

Motion agreed to.

OPEN COURTS AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 19 September; motion of
Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).**

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Consideration in detail

Clause 1

Mr PESUTTO — Could I add my comments — with indulgence — just to extend my thanks to the Speaker, to all of the parliamentary staff and to all of the electorate office and ministerial staff, who work harder than they should have to to serve us as MPs and ministers in the government. They are often the forgotten ones. To those members of this house who leave with our warmest wishes, I offer my best wishes for their futures. I hope that the next chapter of their careers and lives is as enjoyable as I hope their time in this Parliament has been.

As for clause 1 of this bill, following the report by the Honourable Frank Vincent, which the government commissioned back in November 2016, the bill's purpose principally is to, amongst other things of course, establish the primacy of the principle of open justice, and I would just ask the Attorney-General how, in practice, does he see that principle being implemented by the courts?

Mr PAKULA — I thank the member for Hawthorn for his question. It appears that, up to the adjournment, I may have the last word of the 58th Parliament. I will do two things in the 90 seconds I have. First of all, I will respond to the member for Hawthorn's question directly by saying there were a number of recommendations in the Vincent review, not all of which are being implemented by this bill, and that is really a function of complexity. Those that are less complex have been instituted by virtue of this bill, and it is the intention of the government, should we get the opportunity to govern again, to have not just this bill recommitted but the introduction of a second bill that will deal with some of the more technically difficult recommendations that former Justice Vincent put in place.

The second thing I want to say for the record is to express my thanks to the member for Hawthorn for the manner in which he has conducted himself as my shadow minister. We have disagreed about many things, vigorously and at high volume, over the last four years, but I say to the member for Hawthorn that I do not expect that he will lose his preselection on the basis of being described as courteous and reasonable. I have thought him to be mainly courteous and reasonable over the last four years. We have said some nasty things about one another, but I do not think we mean it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkeny) — The time set down for consideration of items on the

government business program has arrived, and I am required to interrupt business.

Clause agreed to; clauses 2 to 16 agreed to.

Bill agreed to without amendment.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

**ESSENTIAL SERVICES COMMISSION
(GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS)
AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

Second reading

Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr SCOTT (Minister for Finance).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

SALE OF LAND AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed from 18 September; motion of Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

**MINERAL RESOURCES (SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT) AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

Second reading

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

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny) — The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

ABC Elsternwick site

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (17:02) — (15 035)
The adjournment matter I wish to raise today is for the Minister for Planning. The issue I wish to raise with the minister concerns the ABC site in Elsternwick. I call on the minister to intervene immediately to consider Glen Eira City Council's request for an interim heritage overlay to ensure the site remains in community hands and its significant history is protected.

Overdevelopment has been the major issue in my electorate of Caulfield in this term of government. In particular, constituents in Elsternwick have seen massive overdevelopment with lots of proposals for large towers to be constructed in the area of Elsternwick. We have seen a proposal for one of the ABC sites for a 14-storey development and a Woolworths supermarket is being considered.

The site that I am referring to is the ABC site next to Ripponlea gardens, which many people in this Parliament would have memories of, particularly of the great shows produced there, including *Countdown*, over many, many years. We request that this site be returned to the community. It is a great site. It would be a real shame to see the site destroyed by overdevelopment. There is a great opportunity for some continued flow into the beautiful Ripponlea gardens, which many visitors frequent. As I say, this is something that is very important to my constituents.

Glen Eira council has formally requested consideration of an interim overlay for the former ABC studios at 8 Gordon Street, Ripponlea. The council have received an independent assessment of this site for their heritage allowance, which found the site had significant heritage value on a national, state and local level. This is something that we think is very important, and this overlay will ensure the heritage value of the site is

maintained and will enable future community use of the space. Glen Eira has the lowest amount of open space in our electorate. We desperately require community assets to be protected, and this ABC site is a site of significant heritage that should be protected and not be subjected to the overdevelopment that we have seen lots of our area subjected to since the government came to power.

Frankston railway station car parking

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (17:05) — (15 036)
My adjournment debate is for the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is, in light of the recent announcement of the Car Parks for Commuters Fund, for the minister to visit Frankston. Last week it was announced that a re-elected Andrews Labor government will make it easier for commuters to find a car park, building over 11 000 new spaces at stations across the state. The \$150 million Car Parks for Commuters Fund will see new car parks being built at some of our busiest metropolitan and regional train stations.

In August 2015 our community in Frankston released the master plan recommendations for the Andrews Labor government's \$63 million revitalisation of the Frankston station precinct. In doing so, it tabled the first tangible plan for Frankston CBD. Since then I have been working down the list of priorities in the master plan, which included improving Frankston station by rebuilding the station, which we have done, and improving Young Street by creating a high-quality pedestrian streetscape, which we have done, and much more as well. Next on the list is improving access to and management of car parking. I look forward to the minister visiting Frankston so we can have a discussion about it, and I look forward to her response.

Just before I conclude my adjournment matter, Speaker, I would like to thank you for your custodianship of the Speaker's role this term.

Pest animal and weed control

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (17:06) — (15 037)
My adjournment matter this afternoon is for the Minister for Agriculture. The action I seek from the minister is that she adopt the very sensible solution put forward by the Liberal-National parties recently to establish a dedicated invasive weeds and pest animal enforcement task force within Agriculture Victoria. Pest animals like rabbits and foxes are out of control in many parts of Victoria, and weeds strangle the productivity of our farmers and cost an estimated

\$4 billion through yield losses and product contamination across our nation each year.

But supporting our farmers and land managers does not seem to be a priority for the Andrews Labor government. That is probably because it happens in areas of the state that do not have tram tracks, so the Premier is not interested. You only have to look at the budget papers to confirm that the Andrews Labor government has been lacking when it comes to property inspections. The number of inspections conducted annually over the last four years has dropped under Labor, and that is a very real worry for our farmers and our land managers. Not only has Labor cut the number of property inspections taking place, but under the Andrews Labor government laws that are already in place to protect private land and public land are not being properly enforced.

Recently we made a policy commitment that would help fix Labor's mess. Unlike Labor, the Liberal-Nationals want to support Victorian farmers and land managers in the fight against weeds and pest animals. We have proposed the establishment of a new dedicated task force within Agriculture Victoria that will be there to properly enforce those particular laws. The task force would support the hardworking landowners who already manage weeds and pests on their properties. Landholders who do the right thing by controlling invasive species on their own properties should not have to put up with lazy neighbours who do not do the same on adjoining lands. There are lots of farmers who do the right thing. They spend a lot of money and put in the time and the grunt work to control weeds and pests on their properties, but all that good work is undone if recalcitrant neighbours flout the laws.

The Liberal-Nationals' ideas have been roundly welcomed by farmers and land managers, who are exasperated with the lack of action by the current Andrews government. The action I seek is for the minister to adopt this policy solution that the Liberal-Nationals have put forward, and I ask the minister to commit her support for the establishment of a dedicated invasive weeds and pest animals enforcement task force within Agriculture Victoria to make sure all farmers do not have the problems with pest animals and weeds.

Revitalising Broadmeadows

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (17:09) — (15 038) My adjournment request is to the Minister for Suburban Development. The action I seek is that she coordinate a response to the Revitalising Broadmeadows plan. This has now become a matter of

urgency with the announcement today by the Ford Motor Company that they will be putting up for sale 40 hectares of the iconic site in Broadmeadows. This is vital to become a new landmark for jobs of the future and a hub for innovation where jobs and growth are needed most.

I specifically use that phrase because I want to remind the Australian government that they had an unspent \$1.324 billion from the automotive transformation scheme. I have been lobbying them to say how much of that they will reinvest in Melbourne's north, where it is needed most, and to honour their commitment that they govern for everyone. We have seen that Adelaide got billions of dollars for their loss of the auto industry, and yet Melbourne's north was treated, if I could categorise it, with managed decline. We saw that happen under the Thatcher government in England's north in the 1980s, and that led to social catastrophe.

I want to thank the Andrews Labor government for its commitment in establishing the Broadmeadows Revitalisation Board, which I had the privilege to chair, and all of the work that has been done with that, reporting directly to the Minister for Suburban Development and the Minister for Industry and Employment. What we really have is an opportunity to look at how we can coordinate the three tiers of government, business and civil society to come up with another landmark for jobs for the 21st century and what the industry should be.

I have referenced that we should look at La Trobe University or RMIT University relocating innovation from these academies onto this site, because that would add value to what Ford has already done there as well. So even though the assembly lines have fallen silent, Ford have reinvested hundreds of millions of dollars, making this their innovation headquarters and leading centre for the Asia-Pacific region.

Here is a wonderful opportunity to have mutual obligation and all that means from the Australia government to actually invest where we can deliver a great result. A part of that should also be city deals for Melbourne's north and Melbourne's west, because both will soon have populations larger than Adelaide and provide much better opportunities than the city deal that was given to Sydney's west. Here is an opportunity, with a new Prime Minister, to show that he can deliver in Victoria and help to readdress that imbalance on infrastructure and actually deliver where jobs and growth are needed most.

Hawthorn electorate mobile network rollout

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) (17:12) — (15 039) On indulgence, Speaker, before I turn to my adjournment matter, can I congratulate you. You have had a difficult job, and although at times I have wanted to stand up and ask that you remove yourself from the chamber for 1 hour, I know that is beyond my power as a mere member of Parliament. Congratulations on your service. It is not an easy job.

My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Planning, and the action I seek from the minister is that he exercise those powers that are available to him to intervene in relation to the relocation of some mobile cell sites in my electorate that TPG is rolling out. As we all know, TPG, one of Australia's major telcos, is rolling out its own mobile network. It has reached my electorate in recent months. Whilst most of the installations that TPG is either proposing or has implemented have not met with any controversy, there have been a number of proposed installation sites, and sadly sites that TPG has proceeded to install cells at, that have left my constituents very concerned. So I am seeking that the Minister for Planning intervene in this matter.

I also want to, as part of that, alert the minister to the advocacy of a number of my constituents with whom I have worked or corresponded on this matter to try and force TPG to relocate certain of these cells that are the most controversial. Nick Katrivessis, Peter Horak, Dana Gee, Kata Acciarresi, Nick Xerakias, Annette Muldeary, June Sutherland, Mia Livingstone Ale, Patrick Ale, Boon Tung, Elizabeth James, Mary Garkinis, Jenny Ellis and Libby Moore are signatories to the petition that Camden Road residents have organised, as are Roy Lilley, Betty Davis and Margaret Mary Brew, amongst a number of others.

I met with residents in Camden Road, Hawthorn, in my electorate last week, and they were very angry, as have been all of the other people I have met with. In some cases they have children's bedrooms which are located only metres from these proposed cell sites. There are questions that TPG really needs to address in the interest of being fair to my constituents. I hope and trust that, with the minister's intervention, TPG will do just that.

Family violence

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (17:14) — (15 040) My last adjournment matter is, most appropriately, for the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and concerns support networks for victims of family violence. The action I seek is that the minister ensure greater access to support networks for

people with poor or no English skills who are experiencing family violence. As I have said many times in this place, unfortunately Casey has the highest levels of family violence in this state.

Recently I was contacted by Elaine Smith, who has worked extensively within the newly arrived migrant community. The establishment of the Women's Friendship Cafe in Hampton Park was only made possible by Elaine's drive and commitment but above all her compassion and kindness. She has done amazing work helping women from all backgrounds and circumstances, often in very troubled times. She described to me that a number of women who are part of this community struggle to navigate the current support services due to their lack of English skills. This is of concern for both of us as it means there are women out there who are feeling isolated and believe they cannot share their experiences and seek support. We know they are putting themselves and their families at risk as their safety and wellbeing is being undermined.

I am very proud of the steps this government has taken towards ending family violence in the state but, as I have said before, there is always more that we can do. Elaine pointed out to me that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse used professional writers — they made them available to help make the personal stories of victims readable and coherent. Methods like this would go a long way to ensuring that the victims of family violence from diverse cultures and backgrounds and who have limited English skills can have their voices heard. I look forward to hearing from the minister about what we can do to make sure everyone feels they can seek help and support if they are experiencing family violence.

Barwon Soccer Club

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) (17:16) — (15 041) I wish to raise an adjournment matter this evening for the Minister for Sport. The action that I seek is for him to give a favourable outcome to the City of Greater Geelong's funding application to the Female Friendly Facilities Fund on behalf of the Barwon Soccer Club in Grovedale. The Barwon Soccer Club is located in Reserve Road in Grovedale. The club has about 500 players and approximately 100 of them are women and girls. It is a fantastic club that has grown immensely. I remember going there with the then shadow minister for sport, Hugh Delahunty. The facilities they had at the time were, quite frankly, abhorrent; they were terrible. We gave them a \$400 000 funding commitment at the 2010 election and saw some very good clubrooms built.

What has happened is that the continued growth in the southern suburbs of Geelong, particularly Grovedale and also neighbouring Armstrong Creek, has put additional pressure on the soccer club. The proposal is to extend the changing rooms to provide more changing facilities for women and girls. The City of Greater Geelong is contributing \$325 000 for this project, the club is contributing \$24 000 and the application that has been made to the fund is for \$150 000. That will be very important for the local community there in Grovedale and also indeed for people in the suburbs south of the river because, with the exception of the Surf Coast Soccer Club down in Torquay, that is the only soccer club in Geelong's southern suburbs. It does get a significant amount of pressure from people wanting to play soccer and obviously we are getting more and more people playing soccer, whether they be men, boys, women or girls. With that increased pressure there is a need for new changing rooms.

I also commend the president, David Rea, the treasurer, Colin Drain, and also the committee at the club. They do a fantastic job. I ask the minister to give a favourable outcome to the funding application by the City of Greater Geelong for the Barwon Soccer Club.

Hurstbridge rail line

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (17:19) — (15 042) The last adjournment matter that I wish to raise in this Parliament is for the Minister for Public Transport, who has delivered so much to the Yan Yean electorate over the last four years. The action I seek is for her to provide assurances to my community that the \$530 million Hurstbridge line upgrade stage 2 will deliver an unprecedented level of rail services for Melbourne's north-east, while importantly preserving the livability and the much-loved Eltham trestle bridge as well as retaining valuable parkland along Diamond Creek.

At a recent public transport forum the Liberal candidate for Eltham said he was only interested in Eltham and not in Diamond Creek or Mernda. I find that alarming given that the southern part of the Eltham electorate in fact encompasses Diamond Creek. Other Liberal operatives in the area — being the Nillumbik mayor and my opponent, also a former Nillumbik councillor — are favouring a full duplication of the line to Hurstbridge and saying that this is what is needed to deliver 20-minute services. Neither of the alternate Liberal plans includes a new station and bus interchange at Greensborough, which, as you know, Speaker, is essential to improve bus travel times and the ease of connection between bus and rail.

A number of the plans articulated by Nillumbik shire, being the full duplication to Hurstbridge and the upgrade of the small dirt country lane that is Allendale Road to arterial status, have nothing at all to do with delivering better roads and public transport but everything to do with assisting the opposition leader to deliver his 290 000 new house lots in Melbourne, which we know cannot be included inside the current urban growth boundary, which places Nillumbik's green wedge at huge risk.

Not only can the Liberals not be trusted on planning but they cannot be trusted on public transport. They have two alternate plans being articulated in the Diamond Valley and they are poorly costed. They cannot be trusted on public transport because they have never actually delivered anything. They have never built any; they have only ever talked about it. I think they went to the election before last promising four rail lines and delivered none. We know that their record in the 1990s was merely closing rail lines. If we go back to before I was born, they closed the Whittlesea rail line.

Ms Allan interjected.

Ms GREEN — Yes, 38 years ago. I would trust the Minister for Public Transport on any measure to deliver a public transport project. I feel certain that she will be able to give my community the assurances that are needed, that this public transport project, yet another public transport project, can be delivered.

Finally, I want to thank my electorate staff, my volunteers and everyone who has assisted over the last four years. I wish the numerous numbers of my colleagues who are retiring all the very best.

South-West Coast electorate roadside vegetation

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (17:22) — (15 043) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Emergency Services, and the action I seek is for him to coordinate a meeting of government departments to develop a comprehensive plan for fire preparedness in South-West Coast which eliminates cumbersome red tape. Minister, for three years I have had Country Fire Authority volunteers from across the South-West Coast electorate come to me frustrated by the processes which get in the way of them doing what they have always done: managing our roadsides to reduce risk during the fire season. What was once a relatively simple process has over time become a convoluted process that now requires brigades to organise fire services officers, departments like VicRoads and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and local

governments to issue permits for roadside burns. A bureaucratic nightmare has developed. These historic practices do not go where native vegetation is found nor are they environmentally destructive. They are an effective way of ensuring the long grass that can serve as fuel for a fast-moving grassfire is reduced and create wider firebreaks to help brigades maintain control during an emergency.

Since the St Patrick's Day fires my office and the office of my colleague the member for Polwarth have been inundated with calls, letters and representations from people who had horror stories of trying to escape the fire front only to find their way out blocked by fallen trees, which in many instances were not native species. Many feel our roadsides have become unsafe because proper maintenance has taken a back seat in the name of environmental practices. What has happened in the past where farmers took responsibility for the roadsides, making sure they were clear of fallen limbs and long grass, has ceased because people do not know what they are allowed to do. We also need to get VicRoads out there slashing and spraying the roadsides, not just for fire safety but for motorist safety. The time to do this is now. If you do not spray, the grass will grow and get to a point that we have seen over the years where it is beyond spraying and needs slashing.

Last year I had hundreds of constituents come to my office reporting intersections where the grass was so high they could not see what was coming down the road. VicRoads said there was a backlog and they would get a tractor and slasher when they could. This backlog is caused by a lack of planning and lack of spraying. Every year it rains over winter and spring and then the grass grows. It is not a surprise. We should not be caught off guard by something like this. This happens year after year. You would think we would learn, but it is not the case because the departments are siloed and one does not know what the other is doing. There needs to be a coordinated approach to get a plan in place so that we know, year after year, who is going to do what and when. It is too important for community safety to have a haphazard approach, like we have seen this year.

As I have the honour of having the last word as the last speaker of the 58th Parliament, my message is: listen to the country. Labor clearly do not give a stuff about the country, but I do and I will deliver.

Maribyrnong Park Football Club

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (17:25) — (15 044) Speaker, I too join in complimenting you on your service to this house. I know I have personally tested

your patience on a number of occasions in the course of question time. I congratulate you on the way you have discharged your duties over the course of this Parliament.

I direct my adjournment matter to the Minister for Water, and the action I seek is that a meeting be convened between Melbourne Water, the City of Moonee Valley and the Maribyrnong Park Football Club, otherwise known as the Marby Lions, who play at Maribyrnong Park, to discuss options to improve the playing surface of the oval at Maribyrnong Park. I recently met with the president of the Marby Lions, Doug Stevens, who showed me the playing surface of the oval, which is in a poor state. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss what options might be available to improve the playing surface.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to quote Marcus Aurelius. I think Marcus Aurelius should appear in print at the very end of the 58th Parliament:

Perfection of character is this: to live each day as if it were your last, without frenzy, without apathy, without pretence.

I am very pleased to say that I think I and members on this side have fulfilled that obligation over the course of this Parliament.

Responses

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (17:26) — I will, in the spirit of the day that we have had — if I can also on indulgence — just make a few brief acknowledgements. Please do not mistake it: the brevity is not in proportion to the appreciation I feel for the people I am about to acknowledge. We have heard a number of times today, and I think it is terrific, how the parliamentary staff have been repeatedly acknowledged. I add my voice to those acknowledgements. They are a terrific group of people across all the different departments. Thank you for the great work you do in supporting us.

I will also give a shout-out to our clerks. I acknowledge Bridget in her historic position; I know Ray was very proud to hand over the mantle to you. To you, Speaker: thank you for the work you have done over the past couple of years guiding us through the slings and arrows of question time and other parts of the parliamentary day. Thank you for the work that we have been able to do with you.

I would also like to thank my whip, who I have already spoken to but she has had to depart. I have had two whips in this term of the Parliament: the member for Yuroke and the member for Thomastown. They are

both wonderful women to work with, great Labor women, and I have enjoyed working with them enormously. I thank them for putting up with me during that period of time.

I thank the manager of opposition business. I have had the opportunity to say some words privately to the member for Box Hill, but I would like to say them publicly as well. I really appreciate the way that he and I have been able to have a respectful and quite open relationship — maybe not as open as the members for Rowville and Nepean, as we heard before, I want to make that very clear. We have had a very respectful relationship in terms of understanding that we both have a set of responsibilities to our parties in the roles that we have but we also have a responsibility to the Parliament and to the chamber to make sure it does operate in a smooth way. I will also acknowledge that the manager of opposition business has from time to time helped me do my job by picking up on some little slips and trips I might have had along the way. But I will perhaps never forgive him for calling on the ABC motion a few months ago; that was a cunning move from someone who has been here a while. I do genuinely, though, appreciate the member for Box Hill's support, and I wish him all the best over the months ahead.

I thank my office. I do not know if they are watching. They might be or they might be doing some other entertaining things. I thank them for the tremendous support they have given me and also my caucus colleagues. I have got a great team. They are a fantastic team. I think, as some of my colleagues have said, they make you look good, and that is certainly true for my team.

I thank my wonderful caucus, who have supported me in this role, particularly my government business program team. I think they have mostly been boys. My government business program boys: you have been great to help me out. It does mean a lot standing here to know that you have got the support of your team behind you.

To everyone in this chamber: I wish everyone well. We will all be doing a lot of driving, a lot of travelling and a lot of campaigning over the weeks ahead, and I really do wish for everyone to do that as safely as they possibly can. Take good care of yourselves and take good care of your families, because ultimately that is the most important thing in our lives.

Having said that let us get back to battle. The member for Yan Yean has raised with me —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — No, I do not want my reputation to slip. The member for Yan Yean has raised with me the desire to gain some assurances around the delivery of the Hurstbridge line upgrade stage 2. Of course as the member for Yan Yean knows, you can only have stage 2 of the Hurstbridge line upgrade because the Labor government has already delivered stage 1 of the Hurstbridge line upgrade. This is now a key election commitment that we have made to the communities along the Hurstbridge rail corridor.

This is a big project. It involves new stations at Greensborough, Speaker, which I think you might be quite interested in as well, and track duplication in a number of places. This is all about enabling us, at the end of this project, to run more trains more often. That is important for the growing communities in Melbourne's north. The member for Yan Yean mentioned the Mernda rail project. We have got runs on the board with that, and we want to continue that with Hurstbridge.

I also want to give the member for Yan Yean and her local community very clear assurances around our protections for the Eltham trestle bridge. This is the last remaining timber bridge on Melbourne's electric train network. It is much loved in the local community, and its preservation is being strongly fought for and advocated for because it is very much part of the local area's character. Only Labor will deliver the Hurstbridge line duplication, protect the Eltham trestle bridge and not wreak further havoc on the local community, unlike those opposite, who have an alternative proposal in the marketplace that is undercooked and underfunded and which would not provide those protections. I hope that provides the member for Yan Yean with what she was looking for — the thumbs up — and I wish her all the best in the weeks ahead.

The member for Frankston has asked me to come and visit Frankston and talk about car parks, if I remember correctly. I am very pleased to accept that invitation from the member for Frankston because not only will we be talking about car parks but we will be talking about the \$2 billion of investment that we are making on the Frankston line in removing level crossings and building a beautiful new station at Frankston. I cannot wait to see the progress. I did a bit of a walk-around during the last school holidays when I was in the area. I look forward to doing that again next week when I am in the area again.

Can I thank the member for Frankston — and the member for Yan Yean, but I am on the member for Frankston at the moment. You are a terrific advocate for your local community. You work damn hard in your local community. You should be proud of what you have achieved to date, and we look forward to there being more to come into the future. We will see you next week, and then next year.

With those words, eight other matters were raised by honourable members for the attention of ministers. I will refer those matters to them for their action and attention. As I said before, I wish everyone all the very best for the weeks ahead.

The SPEAKER — The house now stands adjourned.

House adjourned 5.33 p.m.