

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

Thursday, 8 March 2018

(Extract from book 3)

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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)

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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
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Minister for Industry and Employment	The Hon. B. A. Carroll, MP
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Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development	The Hon. L. D' Ambrosio, MP
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Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
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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*): Mr Gepp and Ms Patten.

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

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

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Thursday, 8 March 2018

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notice of motion given.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Birth certificates

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition draws to the attention of the house the registry of births, deaths and marriages' standard practice of annotating the birth certificate of a deceased person with the word deceased.

The practice of annotating birth certificates, in particular those of newborn deceased babies, with the word deceased serves to further distress grieving families.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria call on the Victorian government to review and end the registry of births, deaths and marriages' standard practice of annotating birth certificates with the word deceased.

By Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) (674 signatures).

Craigieburn Road west, Craigieburn

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the residents of Craigieburn and surrounding areas draws to the attention of the house the deep discontent of residents about the current state of Craigieburn Road west, Craigieburn, in the state of Victoria. In particular, we note:

1. Craigieburn Road west suffers from severe congestion during peak times which is a major thoroughfare for all areas of Craigieburn and surrounding towns;
2. Craigieburn Road west is a safety risk for all pedestrians, motorists and cyclists utilising this road to go about their day-to-day lives.

The undersigned request that the Legislative Assembly immediately fund and commence works as a matter of urgency:

- a. the duplication of Craigieburn Road west from Hanson Road and Aitken Boulevard, Craigieburn;
- b. provide traffic lights at the intersection of Craigieburn Road west and Dorchester Street, Craigieburn;
- c. provide safe and accessible bus shelters along Craigieburn Road west, Craigieburn.

By Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (58 signatures).

Tabled.

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

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Acting Clerk:

Auditor-General:

Improving Victoria's Air Quality — Ordered to be published

Local Government and Economic Development — Ordered to be published

Managing Surplus Government Land — Ordered to be published

Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 — Government response to the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee's Report on the Inquiry into community energy projects

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

Frankston — C119, GC94

Kingston — GC94

Yarra — C237

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Australian Grands Prix Act 1994 — SR 23

County Court Act 1958 — SR 24

Meat Industry Act 1993 — SR 20

Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 — SR 22

Wildlife Act 1975 — SRs 19, 21

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rule 24

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001 — Notice of request for an assessment under s 26C.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (09:36) — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until Tuesday, 27 March 2018.

Motion agreed to.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Questions without notice

The SPEAKER (09:37) — The member for Hawthorn yesterday asked me to review the Deputy Premier's answer to the second supplementary question in question time. I have reviewed the transcript and find that the answer was responsive.

Use of props during debate

The SPEAKER (09:37) — On Tuesday the member for Rowville raised a point of order regarding a caution issued by the Deputy Speaker to the member for Eildon during her members statement and its consistency with my cautioning of the Minister for Industry and Employment during his earlier ministers statement.

First, a general reminder to members that they are not allowed to hold up exhibits or props in the chamber. Anything can be used as a prop; it depends on the manner in which it is used. Previous speakers of this house have ruled that deliberately holding up a report can be considered using a prop — Speaker Lindell; likewise, holding up a poster while answering a question without notice was considered a prop — Speaker Delzoppo. *May* says that:

... members should be sufficiently articulate to express what they want to say without diagrams.

The position is different in the House of Representatives where the member speaking can display articles to illustrate speeches, but this has not been the practice of our chamber.

Traditionally this house has taken the view that a visual display of material to contribute to debate was inadmissible as it was not possible to record it in *Hansard*. That may change with the increased reliance on the broadcast feed as a record and may be something for the Standing Orders Committee to consider in the future. Therefore under our current practices the use of props is disorderly. The consequences of using a prop will depend on the context and the level of disorderly conduct. Members can expect a warning at the least or suspension if the overall conduct warrants that.

In the specific cases that the member for Rowville has raised, the Minister for Industry and Employment during his statement held a document that I assumed he was either going to read from or potentially wave around or hold up, with the latter being clearly in breach of the practices I have just outlined. A point of order was taken before I saw him do either of these

things, and I cautioned the minister not to use the document as a prop as a result of the point of order. I am advised that during members statements the member for Eildon held a bag that had been created by a local Country Fire Authority brigade to promote children's fire safety. The member did not hold up the item, and the Deputy Speaker issued a gentle warning as the member spoke. The member was allowed to continue her statement.

While I can understand that some members may have seen either of these instances as the use of props, I did not see the minister's behaviour in such a way and I believe the Deputy Speaker's gentle caution of the member for Eildon and allowing her to continue was both appropriate and consistent with my earlier ruling.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Eleanor Burke and Kay Setches

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Women) (09:40) — Happy International Women's Day. Many members of Parliament are making statements today about previous inductees into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women. Not only are they worthy of this honour but they are worthy of the honour of having their names read into the historic pages of our *Hansard*. There are two women I want to pay tribute to.

For the past 40 years Eleanor Burke has devoted herself to increasing awareness, appreciation and advancement of Aboriginal people and improving understanding between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. Her goal has been to see that reconciliation and recognition of traditional owner groups is carried through into all aspects of everyday life beyond the cultural heritage matters, as important as they are. She was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2010.

As a former minister Kay Setches is one of the strongest women in the ALP. She created and chaired the Victorian government's women's caucus and she is a strong activist through EMILY's List. Though she has many impressive achievements, the one which I am still amazed by is how she improved the lives of many families by expanding 390 childcare places to 15 000 by the time she had left office. She was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2001.

International Women's Day

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) (09:41) — Today is International Women's Day and I stand before the house to share in the acknowledgement of some of the great women leading our society both in the district of

Bayswater and the state of Victoria. These are women like Captain Diana Ferguson and her first lieutenant, Kim Phillips, from the Bayswater Country Fire Authority brigade; all the school principals, like Meagan Cook, Kitty Allard, Johanna Walker, Berna Buzaglo, Jennie Brown, Kerrie Anderson and Leanne Jennings. There is also Dot Walliker, Mirjana Angelov, Heidi Butler, Sharon Cosgriff, Debra Goldfinch — who is the CEO of Irabina — Rebecca Whitehead and Amelia Annat, Jenny Schapp and Diana Hicks, Susan Gin and Shirley Teh from the Chinese Association of Victoria, Margaret Merrylees and the beautiful Yvonne Cowling, who is better known as the Possum Lady.

Further afield there are Victorian women like Chris Gillies, Karen Hayes, Michelle Loader, Lisa Barron, Kate Roffey, Nicole May, Catherine Curry-Hyde, Sue Renkin, Sue English and almost too many others to name. They are all leaders in their fields but still find time to prepare for the huge influx of women leaders from around the globe that will happen here in Melbourne in May for the International Women's Forum Cornerstone Conference.

Then there are those who lead in my portfolio areas of the arts and tourism: Claire Spencer, Natasha Cica, Susan Proven, Virginia Lovett, Lynley Marshall, Jeanne Pratt, Libby Christie, Sophie Galaise and Laura Cavallo — I could do this list for pages and pages. Then add to that amazing list all the mums who juggle work, play, community and family life and still manage to smile and be genuinely positive role models. To each and every one of you, thank you for your inspiration to me, to other sisters and to the wider community.

Ann Tonks

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (09:43) — Happy International Women's Day. Each year around International Women's Day the Victorian Honour Roll of Women acknowledges and celebrates the outstanding achievements of women in Victoria across the sciences, health and medicine, arts, law, social justice, research and education. Since 2001 over 600 women have been honoured. Tomorrow we will induct another 20 at an official celebration.

The list is impressive. I could speak about any one of the 600. But one stands out: Ann Tonks. Among so many other things, Ann was general manager at the Melbourne Theatre Company from 1994 to 2012. But it is not just for that reason that Ann stands out. Ann will not know this because I never told her and I have not seen her for about 13 years — she may not even remember me — but Ann changed my life.

In 2002 I cold-called Ann. I was interested in the arts and leadership and thought she would be a great person to chat with. Ann did not know me from a bar of soap, but she responded and we caught up over several coffees. Then she put me in contact with other people, and that literally changed the course of my life. Ann's generosity to me, a complete stranger, had the most profound impact on me. Thank you, Ann, for your support and encouragement. You are a true role model and mentor. You found time in your incredibly busy life to speak with me and support me, a complete stranger but another woman.

Happy International Women's Day. This is a day to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of women and a day to recognise that each of us has the power to change lives.

International Women's Day

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (09:44) — Today is International Women's Day. It is a fantastic day to take the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women, to make sure we recognise those women that have made a difference to our lives and perhaps also to thank the important women in our lives for all that they do and all the contributions they make to our own lives and to the general community.

I would like to speak in support of this year's campaign, which is around Press for Progress. This is a very, very strong movement, which is around making sure that we maintain a gender parity mindset, challenge stereotypes and bias, forge positive visibility of women, influence others' beliefs and actions, and celebrate women's achievements. I think this is something we should do not just on International Women's Day; it is something we should be looking at every single day. I encourage all women and men to do so. It is very positive to hear so many people speaking about International Women's Day today and having so many people wearing purple in the Parliament today. I hope this carries through into the future.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my mum, who has been looking after my little boy this week while I am in Parliament. Thank you so much, Mum. Her name is Liz Kealy. She does a fabulous job. I thank her so much. She is a bit tired today, but she does an absolutely wonderful job helping me raise my little boy. It takes a village to raise a child, and I certainly rely very heavily on my family to support me. Thank you very much, Mum.

Fanny Brownbill

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (09:45) — Happy International Women's Day. Today I want to acknowledge the women in my electorate of Geelong. I will join many of them tonight at the Women in Community Life event, where I will present my First Nations women's award to an amazing Aboriginal woman.

I do also want to acknowledge Victoria's first woman Labor MP in this place, Fanny Brownbill, who held the Legislative Assembly seat of Geelong for 10 years from 1938 until her death in 1948. She was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2003. At the time, she was only the second Labor woman to be elected to a state Parliament in Australia. As one of very few women to hold the privilege to be the member for Geelong, I am very proud to follow in the footsteps of Fanny Brownbill. There are many wonderful stories about Fanny Brownbill told by her family, including the fact that she sat in Parliament knitting clothing for disadvantaged children and that she cooked a Sunday roast every week for disadvantaged families during the Depression years in Geelong.

When Fanny died, she was the only female member of Parliament in Victoria. At her funeral thousands of people lined the streets of Geelong as a mark of respect. In parliamentary debates Fanny raised many issues relating to the rights of women, children and families. Her inaugural speech in Parliament on 20 July 1938 was against the ban on perambulators on suburban trains in Melbourne. Fanny was also a tireless worker for the Geelong community. Fanny was born at Modewarre near Geelong in 1890 and was educated at a local state school.

Somerville police station

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) (09:47) — Last week the shadow Minister for Police, Edward O'Donohue in the Council, and I attended the Somerville police station to do something that should never have been necessary. We were there to make it clear that if elected in eight months time, a Guy government would open the police station that was worked for by the Somerville community, paid for and built by the Liberal Party but heartlessly denied by the Premier and the Labor Party — people who would deny a community safety just to satisfy their own political agenda.

An important aspect of the Liberal commitment to the local communities of Western Port was that no officers would be drawn from surrounding stations to staff Somerville. During its building I am aware of large

numbers of expressions of interest from senior officers around the state to work at Somerville police station. Who would not want to work in such a fantastic area and such a wonderful community? If further officers were to be drawn from the 1900 additional police employed by the Liberal government, Hastings would keep its current contingent of officers while having the area that is required to be covered cut in half. This would be close to a doubling of Hastings police officers.

In stark contrast, the Andrews government has refused to provide any additional police to this community, where crime has risen to a crisis point. It is the same Labor Party that now sees the 24-hour police station at Hastings reduced to one officer at night with orders never to open the door — a closure by stealth. The \$16.3 million Somerville police station funded by the Liberal government was designed and built to be a fully functional, publicly accessible station for Somerville and the broader Mornington community. This important community safety project followed the election promise I gave in 2010.

This government and some within police command attempted to rewrite history, even suggesting at one point that Somerville police station was not a station at all and had been built as a complex as a new way of policing. Inconveniently for this government and some within police command that did not agree with them —

The SPEAKER — The member's time has expired.

Linda Beilharz

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (09:48) — I am delighted to join with my female colleagues on all sides of the chamber to mark International Women's Day and give a big shout-out to women in the Bendigo and central Victorian community and wish them all a happy International Women's Day. Of course I would like to remind the house that it was two women who first discovered gold in Bendigo in the 1850s. Mrs Kennedy and Mrs Farrell down in Golden Square were the women that discovered gold in Bendigo, and women continue to make a strong and proud contribution to our wonderful city.

I wanted to acknowledge in particular one special woman today, Linda Beilharz, who was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2009 for her, can I say, absolutely remarkable achievements. Linda was the first Australian woman to trek to the North Pole and to the South Pole, and her physical and mental capacity to achieve this is absolutely remarkable. She shows an enormous strength of character. She is a strong environmentalist and a passionate advocate for women.

I have known Linda for a very long time and worked with her in her former role as executive officer for Women's Health Loddon Mallee. I will leave the last words to Linda. She has said:

My journey challenges stereotypes of women, what they are supposed to do, and what they actually do ...

Life for women is like that. We have more opportunities than we think, because what is perceived to be available and what actually is available are two different things.

Yarra Boulevard, Kew

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) (09:50) — Before Christmas there was a community forum held at VicRoads in Kew to discuss the ongoing lawlessness around the Yarra Boulevard. VicRoads made certain undertakings that there would be a subsequent forum early in 2018. Unfortunately no such forum has been organised.

A drop-in has been organised on 28 March at VicRoads, which is a parliamentary sitting day. That is unacceptable. VicRoads promised a full forum with community leaders, with the council, with constituents and with concerned residents. I have not been invited to this so-called drop-in on 28 March, and I will be raising with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety this totally unacceptable situation, where the local community is being completely ignored as to their genuine concern with lawlessness on Yarra Boulevard, which sees hoon behaviour, hoon driving from both motorcyclists and cars, rave parties at night that are keeping residents up and cyclists being attacked with tacks which have been thrown on the road, resulting in many cyclists receiving quite dramatic injuries.

This sort of behaviour is totally unacceptable, and it shows that VicRoads's pledges before Christmas were nothing but, frankly, hollow lies. We need a proper forum to get to the bottom of these issues. We need CCTV cameras, and we also need noise attenuation measures around Yarra Boulevard in Kew.

Mill Park Heights Primary School

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) (09:51) — Happy International Women's Day, and I acknowledge the amazing work women in my electorate are doing to improve Victoria for the better.

Last Friday I had the opportunity to visit a ResourceSmart school, Mill Park Heights Primary School, which was participating in the annual Schools Clean Up Day. It is a fantastic program that engages students about thinking sustainably and doing sustainable things. This is just one of many programs

that Mill Park Heights runs to educate our community on the importance of looking after the environment.

I particularly acknowledge the principal, Deborah Patterson, and her dedicated team for taking leadership in the school community on sustainability and protecting our environment. Deborah's work has done more than educate; she has given students the power to fight for their own future. That is an incredibly powerful tool. Deborah is one of those fantastic leaders of our community. She has boundless energy and a real commitment and love for what children can do and what they can achieve in their own communities and for themselves.

I would like to take this moment to say to Deborah and every other woman in Mill Park and across Victoria who works towards a better future: this government sees you, we value you and we will fight for you and with you to achieve better outcomes.

International Women's Day

Ms D'AMBROSIO — I take this opportunity also to acknowledge other fantastic women. There are too many for me to even begin to mention, but I want to congratulate everyone, particularly those in our government and the fantastic Minister for Women who are delivering real outcomes for women across the community as we continue to work towards equality and economic independence.

Aunty Pam Pederson and Rien Silverstein

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (09:53) — I am so pleased to be able to talk on International Women's Day, and I am so sorry that I am not in my electorate attending some of the amazing events that are being held in the community today. There are so many women in my community who contribute every day. In fact I believe all of them do, but I have only got time to talk about two women who are really significant contributors. I would like to highlight them because they have already been acknowledged.

Firstly, Aunty Pam Pedersen is a Yorta Yorta woman who is on the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll. She has been involved with a long list of social justice and community organisations, including the Aborigines Advancement League and the Victorian Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Prevention Service. She has been working in the Koori Court since 2004 and really makes great efforts to support young people throughout our communities to value their community and a law-abiding lifestyle. She, like me, took an unexpected career turn later in life and has represented Victoria and

Australia at the World Masters Games in swimming, running, cycling and sailing. She has also beaten breast cancer just recently.

The second woman I would like to celebrate is Rien Silverstein, a member of the Victorian Honour Roll of Women, a water advocate and a champion of women's role in agriculture who was, in her own words, never content to be a 'farmer's wife'. She has raised a family and battled disability, and in the drought she set up a women in horticulture group to celebrate and support women in the ag industry.

Molly Hadfield

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (09:55) — Molly Hadfield, born 14 July 1922, died 10 November 2012, was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women, among many other awards bestowed upon her for her unwavering dedication to humanity and community service to women and society generally. Molly was a member of the Union of Australian Women (UAW) for 50 years. She campaigned along with my grandmother Peggy Groszewski and great aunt Gina Lewis for peace and disarmament, the most important issue of the time after the devastation of the Second World War.

The UAW, of which Molly Hadfield was a central figure, also fought for ideas that were way ahead of their time: the enhanced status of women and children, higher living standards, improved welfare services, extended public infrastructure, equal pay, free child care and kindergartens, equality for Indigenous Australians, colonial independence and the abolishment of the White Australia policy, as well as peace and disarmament. As I said, early in her life Molly campaigned for peace and disarmament, but later she was very well known and respected for campaigning for better public housing and the rights of the aged in the northern suburbs. She was also seen very regularly on the picket line during the horrific Maritime Union of Australia dispute.

I would like to thank and acknowledge all of the women who have fought tirelessly but are often unrecognised for their work for the rights of women like me and others of this generation, who have benefited from the improvements they achieved.

Sale police vehicle

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (09:56) — On Saturday I had the pleasure of being present at the handover of a new vehicle to Sale police to be used by its proactive policing branch headed by Senior

Constable Ken Kell. The vehicle is a testament to the goodwill and great community spirit in my electorate after funds were raised by local groups to provide police with the vehicle, which removes their reliance on operational police cars, which had often meant community, youth and school talks had to be cancelled at short notice due to police call-outs.

I congratulate a number of Wellington Lions Clubs, headed by Steve Boyce, and the Sale Lions Club, along with Freemasons Victoria's Gippsland Lodge 51, the Loch Sport branch of the Country Fire Authority, Rebecca and Liam Cole of ReLi Fundraising and local businesses Dyers Transport, Turnbull Toyota and Sale Signtorque, which all raised money or contributed to this project. It is a great sign of how the community, local businesses and police can work together to improve community safety in our region.

Gippsland South electorate schools

Mr D. O'BRIEN — I am looking forward to having the member for Kew, the shadow Minister for Education, join me in Gippsland South tomorrow to look at the poor state of Foster Primary School and the need for stage two of Korumburra Secondary College to be funded. Foster school was built in 1965 and is outdated, full of asbestos and falling apart, with maintenance costs now placing a real burden on the school budget. It is not a conducive environment for our children's education and needs to be rebuilt.

Next Friday the Minister for Education will open stage 1 of Korumburra Secondary College rebuild, funded by The Nationals in government. He should bring a cheque with him to finish the job.

Foster & District Agricultural Show

Mr D. O'BRIEN — Congratulations to the Foster & District A & P Society for a successful 111th Foster and district show last weekend. At a time when the number of local shows is in decline and many are struggling to hold on, the Foster show provides fresh ideas and still attracts a good crowd.

International Women's Day

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (09:58) — It was great to begin celebrations for International Women's Day on Monday, when I attended my colleague the member for Eltham's International Women's Day awards and breakfast and Pauline Toner Award. Pauline Toner was the first female cabinet minister in the Victorian Parliament and she was the first female Diamond Valley councillor. It is great that the member for Eltham has

established this award in her name. Bridget from Montmorency Secondary College was a worthy winner.

Pauline Toner was the MP for Greensborough, which covers much of the electorates of Eltham and Yan Yean. Sadly we lost her to breast cancer too young in 1989. She was succeeded by Sherryl Garbutt, who had been generously mentored by Pauline Toner. Sherryl represented Greensborough and then Bundoora. Sherryl held many portfolios and achieved much, including the establishment of the Victorian Honour Roll of Women, which we are all speaking about today. She also established the Diamond Valley International Women's Day award, and Sherryl generously mentored me and allowed me to join her in co-sponsoring this award.

I have named this in honour of Selina Sutherland, who has been posthumously added to the Victorian women's honour roll and who did so much for children in my electorate and across the state. Other great women in the area in local government include Helen Coleman, Pam McLeod and Ann Trott, who have continued the legacy of Pauline and Sherryl.

Surf Coast police resources

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) (09:59) — The recent announcement of additional police resources has seen the Surf Coast police service area miss out completely when it comes to gaining any additional police officers. Torquay station at the moment, despite having the capability to be a 24-hour station, only has two sergeants and nine senior constables, with one of those senior constables being part time. Due to this lack of resourcing by the Minister for Police, it is not always possible to have two units servicing the Surf Coast in the morning and afternoon shifts. I am informed that as a consequence a youth officer is being used to fill in shift gaps on patrols.

Torquay's population has increased from 3000 to 16 000 in the last 20 years, yet there have only been two additional officers in all that time. Due to the lack of police resources in the Surf Coast, Torquay station officers are regularly required to attend incidents at Lorne, Deans Marsh and Winchelsea, which is resulting in very poor response times. Torquay police are regularly having to do this as it is common that these three stations are not manned during the morning and afternoon shifts. As a result, there are often circumstances where there are no police in Torquay for 2 to 3 hours at a time. This is unacceptable and is putting the Torquay community at risk.

The Surf Coast night shift unit is also regularly being redeployed to Grovedale, Belmont, Highton and even

as far as Corio to respond to calls that Geelong and Wurn Ponds simply cannot handle. Unfortunately the Chief Commissioner of Police, Graham Ashton, does not see additional police officers for the Surf Coast as a priority. On the Neil Mitchell program on 26 May 2016 he said the Surf Coast is 'one of the best areas to be living from a crime point of view'. Perhaps the chief commissioner and the minister can go and talk to police and residents.

International Women's Day

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (10:01) — Women make up 49 per cent of the global population, yet only 8 per cent of countries have women in the highest position of government. The first female Premier of Victoria, the Honourable Joan Kirner, hit the nail on the head when she said:

It's okay when we as women are in a serving role. But it's not okay, it appears still, when we have full access to power.

It is International Women's Day, and we should all take this opportunity to reflect upon the progress we have made but also recognise how far away we are from true equality. Globally the health and wellbeing of women is improving faster than at any other point in history, even in the poorest nations. However, one in three girls in the developing world is still forcibly married before 18. Here in Australia over 69 cases of forced marriage have been reported over the past five years, largely by young girls.

We know that girls with eight years of education are four times less likely to be married as children and we know that for every year a girl stays in school her income will increase by at least 10 to 20 per cent. Yet there are still more than 130 million girls around the world who are not in school. They are missing out on a vital education simply because they were born girls. Our government's commitment to professional education exchange of female principals between Victoria and India is an excellent vehicle for changing girls' futures.

Despite working more hours, women are paid on average 15.3 per cent less than men and receive zero pay for fulfilling the majority of caring roles at home. These archaic gender stereotypes act as a barrier to reaching true gender equality. Women are under-represented in leading business roles as well. Eight companies on the ASX 200 have zero women on their boards. They do not have women serving as directors and seem to be complacent about hitting their targets of 20 or 30 per cent — I say why not 50 per cent? Having more women in the room is the only way to overcome gender bias. The time is now.

International Women's Day

Ms THORPE (Northcote) (10:02) — As a strong Aboriginal woman with unbroken lineage to my matriarchal country of Tjapwuring of the Western District, today I stand proud to be a woman and stand proud to be a Green. Today is International Women's Day, a day to celebrate the achievements of women, and the Victorian Greens have a lot to celebrate. Seven of our eight members of Parliament are women. Our leader, Samantha Ratnam in the Council, is a woman who came to Australia as a refugee from Sri Lanka and is now leading the biggest political shake-up this state has ever seen with the rise of the Greens. Huong Truong, our Greens member for Western Metropolitan Region in the Council, is the first Vietnamese woman to sit in the Victorian Parliament, and of course I am the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to the Victorian Parliament. But the Greens' greatest achievement is that we women will always campaign for justice, for peace and for caring for this land.

International Women's Day

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (10:03) — I want to acknowledge the Kyneton Zonta Club for 25 years of celebrating International Women's Day, of service to girls and women and of campaigning for gender equality. This year alone Kyneton Zonta participated in the international 16 days of activism to end violence against women campaign, encouraged girls and women locally through scholarships and awards at schools and through the Kyneton Community and Learning Centre and the Kyneton Football Netball Club, continued to support the Z club at Kyneton Secondary College and participated in Zonta's international breast care program.

It was my pleasure to join the president, Carolyn Dennis, and special guest, Tracey Spicer, at last night's celebration — a sold-out dinner of around 200 women at the Kyneton Town Hall. Tracey's stories about her experiences in the media industry, her courage, her fearless advocacy and her determination to stamp out sexual harassment and everyday sexism made for a compelling presentation.

On this International Women's Day I want the women in my electorate to know that sexism, sexual harassment and violence against women and girls are never okay and that there are many thousands of women like Tracey, like Carolyn and like me who are determined to build a more equal future for girls and women and that we are here for them.

To the Kyneton Zonta Club, keep up your fine work, your campaigning and your initiatives in our local community. You are making a difference in the lives of girls and women. In Zonta's 25th year, I acknowledge founding president Ronda Walker, vice-president Annamarie Perlesz, secretary Ruth Perry and our current committee —

The SPEAKER — The member's time has expired.

International Women's Day

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (10:05) — My grandmother was born in 1896 into a society where she could not vote and there were very substantial barriers to her economic participation. For me to be able to stand here as her granddaughter, as a legislator and as one of the most economically advantaged and powerful women in Victoria is a demonstration of how far we have come as a society. I celebrate women's progress towards equality, including as the first woman MP for my electorate of Ripon and, with the member for South-West Coast and the member for Lowan, as one of three women MPs celebrating that status in western Victoria.

I am keenly aware, however, that while counting women MPs is a powerful measure of equality, delivering real economic and social advancement for all Victorian women is far more important. So it is deeply concerning that this week — the week of International Women's Day — the Labor government has backed a firefighters enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) that bans part-time work. Many women prefer to work part-time and do so very successfully in other emergency services frontline roles. The EBA that is currently before the Metropolitan Fire Brigade requires the consent of the United Firefighters Union, and they completely oppose part-time work. They argue that it compromises firefighter proficiency and skills. Tell that to the women in the police force, and tell that to the women in the Victoria State Emergency Service. They have skills.

Tilly Aston

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) (10:06) — Today on International Women's Day it is important to remember those women who came before us and blazed a trail for change and equality. There have been many women inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women, but one woman stands out to me for her dedication to women with disabilities. Tilly Aston was born in Carisbrook, just outside of my hometown, Maryborough, in 1873. She was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2001. Tilly was

totally blind by the age of seven. She learned to read braille and later attended the St Kilda Asylum and School for the Blind. She became the first blind Australian to go to a university, enrolling in an arts degree at the University of Melbourne. Her studies ended due to the lack of braille available to students.

Tilly went on to be instrumental in establishing the Victorian Association of Braille Writers in 1894. This organisation would eventually become the Victorian Braille Library. In 1895 she founded the Association for the Advancement of the Blind, now Vision Australia, to fight for greater independence, social change and new laws for blind people. The association quickly won voting rights for blind people, free postage of braille material and transport concessions for the blind.

In 1913 Tilly did teacher training and became head of the Victorian education department's school for the blind — the first blind woman to do so. Because of her disability, her appointment was not without criticism from staff and officials at the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, and she was eventually forced to sever her connection with the blind societies she had helped to found.

Women's Health Loddon Mallee International Women's Day breakfast

Ms EDWARDS — A major shout-out to all the women attending the Women's Health Loddon Mallee International Women's Day breakfast in Bendigo this morning. Remember, you are all fabulous.

Kingston bay trail

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) (10:08) — The City of Kingston newspaper, *Kingston Your City*, February–March 2018 issue, contained a special feature lift-out titled 'Kingston's bay trail: the missing link'. Under the heading 'Cycling', the at-a-glance section notes that Bicycle Network Victoria conducted an independent safety audit of the proposal and has supported plans for the bay trail.

I note the reputational authority associated with Bicycle Network Victoria and the potential gravitas of the independent safety audit. I further note advice conveyed to City of Kingston residents on 23 February 2018 that council does not have a copy of the independent safety audit conducted by Bicycle Network Victoria and that council advised City of Kingston residents to contact Bicycle Network Victoria directly. I also note that I wrote to Bicycle Network Victoria on 18 February to

obtain a copy of the quoted report and was told they were not aware of a safety audit.

I have proposed to the City of Kingston, in the absence of a publicly available report, which is made a very strong feature of in their newsletter to the people of Kingston and which is subject to independent assessment, that the City of Kingston put the bay trail on hold pending the distribution of the report for independent review. It is pointed out that 10 000 to 15 000 cyclists use this bay trail per week, and it is imperative that every safety consideration be taken into account.

International Women's Day

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (10:09) — It is a pleasure to rise on International Women's Day and pay tribute to the contributions of women throughout our community. As a father, as a brother and as a son I am determined to see our Parliament do more to support women throughout our communities to create a fairer and more equal society. That was the promise I gave to my little girl as I gave her a kiss this morning and she headed off to child care.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed from 21 February; motion of Mr MERLINO (Minister for Emergency Services).

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (10:11) — I rise on behalf of the coalition to speak on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. Obviously we will go through the opposition's position in relation to this bill, and I will put it on record from the start that we will not be opposing the bill in the Assembly. However, we reserve our right in the upper house to have some further discussion and consultation around different parts of the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill.

As many would know, Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) was formed after the white paper came through back in 2012. Our first emergency management commissioner was Craig Lapsley, who is still there now. Craig worked with the government at the time to ensure that we had a program and planning for the future in place and so that we could implement changes to our emergency management response after the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. After we received the responses to that inquiry we found that one of the biggest issues was interoperability. It was

something that had to be addressed, and while we were in government at the time we made sure that we worked as collaboratively as we could with the emergency departments and with emergency services to make sure that was delivered.

This bill establishes a new framework for emergency management planning to enable greater consistency and integration across the state. Many people in the emergency services have said in the past that the integration and interaction between emergency departments in years gone by was very difficult, with different radio channels, different frequencies, different communication sets and different incident control centres. At stages in the past we used to have different emergency services working from totally different rooms. Now you have got a system where obviously you have the emergency control centre in the city. I think most members of Parliament would have visited the emergency control centre in Melbourne at some stage, and if they have not, I strongly recommend that all members visit the centre to see how our departments and our emergency services can work so well together, whether there are one or more emergencies going on across Victoria.

The operations in there range across the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES), the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB), the Country Fire Authority (CFA), the lifesavers, and the list goes on. There is also the Bureau of Meteorology making sure that when we have got any emergencies we are up-to-date with what is happening with weather. They can see what is going on. Also very important is social media. They actually have a unit in there to ensure that the warning message is getting out so that people are warned as often and as early as possible when any issues might affect their areas. That is why it is important that legislation coming through this Parliament is consistent with the reforms outlined in the white paper, and we believe a lot in the bill before us today has that consistency going forward.

There are some changes in the bill, with the replacement of the emergency management planning committees by regional emergency management planning committees and municipal emergency management planning committees, and their responsibilities will be transferred. However, it will be a staged process to ensure the state plan is done first. In that way, when the regional and municipal plans are done, they will understand what the overarching state role is.

The aim of this bill is to improve statewide emergency planning and encourage cooperation between districts in developing their emergency plans. When you speak

to those at a council or regional level, they are all very keen to ensure that they have an opportunity to plan at a local level because emergencies in different areas can vary greatly, depending on the density of something like a forest or a low-lying area that is more prone to floods. In my electorate one area which you would think would not normally flood would be Emerald. However, we did have floods through there, and the local community needs a plan so that they are ready for any emergency that comes their way.

That brings us to a very important part of planning. When you are talking about any of these committees, regional or municipal, it is important you have local feedback. Whilst you can have an academic view of what is going to happen with a fire — we have programs like Phoenix RapidFire, and I know there is a similar program to predict floods — there are things on the ground that local emergency services workers who have been there for many decades know or which have been passed on through families about what is going to happen when an emergency occurs. It can be in relation to fires, where you can feed into Phoenix wind changes et cetera, but what Phoenix cannot predict is how a fire will behave when its gets into an area like a valley where it can create its own weather pattern. That weather pattern can change the direction and behaviour of that fire. That may mean that someone at the local level understands that, because they have seen it happen in the past and they have seen the outcomes of those fires.

Currently volunteers have an opportunity to work with municipal councils on emergency planning committees. The concern we have with bringing in the two emergency planning committees at both levels is that this will actually take away that prescribed right and put it into EMV. It will take it away from the CFA and put it under EMV, and there is nothing to say that volunteers should or must be on these committees. Volunteers across Victoria at the moment are starting to raise concerns about this, because they know their voices need to be heard and they know they have had issues with getting their voices out there in other areas under this government. I think it is important that they have an opportunity to be on those committees and not just through having someone from the CFA. The CFA could nominate someone who is not a local from that area or someone who is even on temporary duties, taking up one of the managerial roles in a community because someone is on leave. There may be no-one who has that local knowledge and that local input when you are planning down there. I will come back to that shortly.

I will just quickly go through some of the other purposes of the bill, which I think are important to

mention here. One area is the alpine resorts, and we do support this. Alpine resorts currently fall outside the municipal committees because of their structure. We have some big industries up through the alpine resorts, and it is important they have a voice and they understand the process of preparing and planning for emergencies up there. The bill will also remove some of the barriers in relation to volunteers claiming compensation, which is supported. The bill will revoke part of the Fawcner Memorial Park reservation currently used as a cemetery to enable the relocation of the Broadmeadows unit of the Victoria State Emergency Service, and obviously we support that. We think anywhere you can put an SES unit in the Broadmeadows area is good for the locals and good for the community.

Another concern that it is important that we raise specifically is the enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, and I think the minister should have to answer this later on. That EBA has a clause in it which says that any new legislation, state or federal, that can affect the workplace — this bill will affect the workplace because it affects planning, it affects preparations and it affects where staff will be — will not affect the MFB firefighters until the union agrees to it.

It is important that we are bringing in new legislation giving powers to the emergency management chief, but we want to make sure that those powers that are given to the chief are given without any conditions, such as where the union can come in and override what the chief is trying to do in the future to protect Victorians. We have raised the concern specifically around the union having more power than the chief within the fire services, but it does go that one step further when you are talking about planning and preparation. The emergency management commissioner has to plan for Victoria's future to ensure all communities are safe and work with local communities and local levels across the whole state.

The fear that a union could then have control to veto decisions made specifically around that preparation and planning is something that I think sends shivers through volunteers across the state, not just those within the fire services but those in the SES and Life Saving Victoria or anywhere that could involve firefighters who could then say, 'According to our EBA this must come through our consult and agree process, and if we don't agree, then it can't affect us'. You cannot have a two-tiered system when you are talking about emergency services. You cannot have a position where one group of firefighters in the firefighting service is actually saying, 'No, we're not going to implement this,

and we're not going to work through that particular part of the planning or that part of the preparation. We're going to leave that to the volunteers' or 'We're going to leave that to the other parts of our department'. They all have to be on board. Interoperability is not just about having the crossover between the MFB and the CFA or the CFA and the SES; it is to ensure they are all on the same page and they are all working together as well.

During our consultation we have gone out and spoken to some of the groups this will affect. Obviously Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, the VFVB, is very, very important, and we have spoken to them in relation to their concerns. Following the introduction of the integrated fire management planning arrangements previously, they have been talking with their volunteers across the state about the arrangements surrounding the new municipal fire prevention planning and regional fire prevention planning, and they have raised a few concerns as well. I think it is important that their concerns go on the record. These are the ones that we want to make sure we work through with them when we are talking about what we will be bringing forward during the debate in the upper house.

Their concerns — and they have been raising these concerns for many years — include the weakening of formal local engagement between brigade groups, the CFA and the municipal fire prevention committees. This goes back to that local knowledge. They have got a genuine concern that the local firefighter, the local volunteer who has been involved for many years — as I said, possibly decades — really should have input into these preventions and plan what is going to happen in their community. It is vital — and we have to get this on the record — that these volunteers are involved in that planning and preparation and that it not be that they 'may' be invited. At the moment the bill is a little bit loose in the way it says it. It sort of says they may or could be involved. We do not want them having to beg to be invited. We actually want to make sure that the volunteers out there have the opportunity to be formally engaged in this process.

There are concerns about a reduced focus on wider community engagement in the development of municipal fire prevention plans, and that concern has been raised in a few emails that have come through in which they are talking about not just themselves but about that wider community. I think some of our regional members will raise these specific issues and will talk about farmers who have been in areas for long periods of time and who understand the lie of the land and that there are issues that they have seen on the ground and firsthand which could never be put into a program like Phoenix. They have seen it happen before,

and they want to make sure that the whole community has an opportunity to be involved in these plans.

The third point they were concerned about was changes in volunteer representation on committees and changes to meeting times and days that sometimes hinder volunteer community involvement. This is a concern volunteers have raised not just about this Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill; this is a concern that volunteers have raised around training, around their ability to have an input into the CFA, about their ability to meet with management in the CFA and about their ability to have discussions with anyone who is basically a career person within the fire services — and it not just career firefighters but the management structure through the regions as well.

Some regions are very, very lucky. They have fantastic local regional managers who have been volunteers and who understand the volunteer system. Some regions unfortunately have had people who have been promoted through the system and who come from metropolitan areas and so do not have as good an understanding of what it is to be in a regional area with volunteers, and they tend to have hours that do not suit volunteers.

Volunteers do work. Most volunteers in regional areas are firefighters because they want to protect their community. Some of them do it because it is a necessity to protect their community, but all of them do it because they want to make sure that their community and their surroundings are protected. When they do their training or when they are involved in things like this and they have meetings, the meetings cannot be at 2 o'clock on Tuesdays because farmers are out on their farms at 2 o'clock on Tuesdays. Regional managers have to make sure that meetings are at times that suit the local community they are in. When you are talking about set times, you may have to adjust them too.

I am not in a farming area but I have gone out to many of them over the last few years. When you go out and talk about times of cropping, that means they work when needed to make sure that they can get that crop in. You cannot organise meetings during the middle of what is the cropping season there because it will place pressure on the farms. This is their livelihood. They will still drop everything to go out and fight a fire and protect the community, but do not ask them to come to meeting after meeting for meetings' sake. We have to make sure that we work out times that are suitable for that local community. I think that is vital, and it needs to be discussed through all of CFA management.

The volunteers have also raised a concern about a reduced focus on the coordination and planning of firebreaks and strategic fuel reduction plans for areas located within a municipality but not located on public land. Again, we are talking about firebreaks probably mostly in regional areas, but we get many emails about them. I am sure every member of Parliament who has represented or represents part of a rural area or anyone who has had a title of either shadow minister or minister in emergency services — or roads, which is probably another one — has had emails about looking at strategic firebreaks and the challenges that they now face out in the community to prepare themselves for fire, including those strategic firebreaks along the edges of roads.

It is something that has been raised and something that volunteers have been able to do for a long period of time, and it is something that I am hoping the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill can address with these local committees, the regional and municipal committees. Hopefully they can look at it from a local level and take that feedback, take that input from the local volunteers and ensure that they put in place those plans to put firebreaks in.

We obviously went into opposition in November 2014, and one of the first places I went over that Christmas period was Moyston. We went up after the fires there and spoke to many of the farmers. It was quite interesting because it was a very similar conversation with all of them: 'They haven't listened to us within fire management about the firebreaks for a long period of time, they've neglected to make sure that we maintain firebreaks and they've neglected to make sure that we have the preparation to see a fire stop in its tracks'. A break that meant a fire could not go from one side of a normal, standard road to the other would actually create a bigger divide on the other side. It is very important that those people out in those communities, the heart and soul of our communities, have that opportunity to have their say. I think it is vital that we do what we have listed there.

As I said, this bill was partially designed over a period of time. As I have also said, the framework of emergency management legislation in Victoria is very, very important. I referred to it as a living document. The reason I said that is that it will need to change over time. Emergency management will change and emergency management preparation will change. There is nothing surer. I could actually say most of Victoria now, as well as where I am out in Gembrook, is exceptionally dry in March this year. That is something you have to prepare for, that we are getting different weather patterns, with sometimes a lot more rain. We

hear of forecasts of major events and we also hear of changes, things that we had not heard of only five years ago in a public arena. We had not heard of things like asthma thunderstorms. All of a sudden this is something that needs to be put in place for planning. It is not just at a state level that you have to plan for that; you have to start planning at a local level. I think having these committees will give the opportunity to plan for that.

As I said, the climate is changing when you are talking about areas like that and you are seeing events change. We are getting in some periods so much rain that it is almost unbelievable. I know that after we came into government in 2010 — I will be corrected; I have the member for Caulfield here — I think it was in 2011 when we went up to the north of Bendigo, to the floods up there. It was actually very interesting for a metropolitan member to go up and have a look around where the floods were happening. One of the things that surprised me was we were standing at a gentleman's house and he was telling us exactly what was going to happen, to the absolute second. The floodwater was moving exceptionally slowly. It was almost like a wall of water had stopped, but it was just moving an inch at a time. It was terrifying to watch. This older gentleman on a farm could tell us exactly what was going to happen.

The emergency management group — they were emergency firefighters and SES — had come in and they were putting in some sandbags and he was saying, 'Don't put them there; don't put them there'. You could not tell by the lay of the land. The water was actually going nowhere near his property; he moved it around to a different spot to protect his area. I think it is that local input that we need to get all the way across Victoria and ensure that it is there.

We are obviously hoping that this bill will improve the response planning and preparation across the state. We are hoping that it creates a uniform approach in some areas. We are hoping that it has all of the emergency services in each area. And we are hoping that it can look at not just current emergencies but also future emergencies — that it can look at the new emergencies that will emerge over time, whether that is an expansion of fires or higher density fires, more in-depth floods and obviously, as I said, the new asthma thunderstorms, which was the big one that came through. We have raised particularly what the concerns of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria were. I think that was a big thing.

I will, as I finish off on my contribution, really restate that I think the government need to go back and have a genuine hard look at what they are pushing through with the MFB EBA. They are the same conditions that

they want to push through with the CFA EBA, which effectively give many veto powers to a union and take away powers from the chief fire officer. It is not us saying it. It is not a political thing from our side. It is people like Lucinda Nolan, the member for Brunswick and Danny Michell, who left. The list goes on, including board members and members of the MFB who have all left saying it is a bad deal. They were not talking about money. They were not talking about conditions. They were talking about the power for the chiefs and the management of these organisations to ensure that they can use their skills. The reason we employ them is that we trust them. We trust them to go into those positions and best use their skills to protect all Victorians.

If you put in place a piece of legislation which effectively says that new state legislation or commonwealth laws that come into place will not affect those firefighters unless they agree, you are creating a recipe for disaster when it comes to proposals like the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill. If they do not get on board or they do not agree, you are going to create major problems through the fire services in the future, and you are going to create major issues with the memorandum of understanding between the fire services and other organisations like Ambulance Victoria, the SES and Life Saving Victoria.

The memorandum of understanding goes from EMV down to the fire services. You may as well just rip it up and throw it away if you are going to give power to the firefighters to overrule legislation. It cannot happen in our state. It should not happen in our state. I will continue to stand up and say why it should not happen in our state, and the reason I do that is that community safety must come first. Volunteers can never be forgotten. They are the heart and soul of our community. They are the ones that have protected us for many, many years. They have developed our fire services and created the fire service that we have. Our fire service is that good. Whilst some might say it is from the 1950s, it is that good that New Zealand are bringing the current model of the CFA over to their country. They know that we have got a system that can work exceptionally well.

Ms Thomson interjected.

Mr BATTIN — I will take up the interjection. They say, 'You want to refer to the boundaries'. Can anyone explain it to me? Dandenong CFA — I know the member for Dandenong is here — which has obviously got fantastic career firefighters, has also got volunteers. If you move the boundaries and make that an MFB

station, you do not change the response into Dandenong at all. It will remain exactly the same as it is now. The safety will still be there. The only thing is, you will remove the volunteers. If you can tell me how that is fair, I would not understand it.

Mr Eren interjected.

Mr BATTIN — It is a CFA. If you moved the boundaries and made it an MFB, there are no volunteers in —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — Order! Through the Chair! No interjections from the Minister for Veterans.

Mr Eren — I'm just saying there is a way through.

Mr BATTIN — You are wrong. There are no volunteers in the MFB, and I would not, if I was minister, stand aside while any volunteer is pushed out of the fire services. They are the ones that have protected us for many, many years, and we will make sure that they remain. When you start to talk about the MFB, which has zero volunteers in it — no volunteers in the MFB — if you want to move those boundaries and create MFB stations in Dandenong, you do that at the jeopardy of our volunteers. You will see a service that does not have the surge capacity required for our state, and then if you have not got the surge capacity required for our state, you may as well get rid of the emergency management planning, because you cannot plan if you do not have the resources to fight the emergencies.

So we will not oppose the legislation, but we want the government to take into serious consideration some of the things that they are putting in place, particularly around this EBA that will remove powers, will put at risk the powers of the emergency management commissioner and the chief of the fire services and, in the long run, will put at risk the very people whom it is supposed to protect, which are the firefighters and all our emergency services workers.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (10:35) — I am delighted to join the debate on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. Contrary to what the opposition lead speaker would have you believe, this bill is not about an enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA). It is not about shafting volunteers. It has come about because we have taken responsibility as a government to address the concerns and to address the findings of the inquiry into the Hazelwood mine fire. That was the primary initiation of this. Those opposite would want to paper over their appalling response and lack of oversight to that fire and that major health risk

in the Latrobe Valley. You had ministers going down there and offering vacuum cleaners and mops and completely underestimating the breadth of the problem. This was a problem that impacted on the whole community as well as our first responders, which included volunteers and career staff.

I am pleased that the opposition said they would not oppose this bill, but if they were actually courageous and if they actually wanted to front up and acknowledge that we need better responses and better planning for events like the Hazelwood mine fire, they would have stood up and said that they are supporting this bill. There has been broad consultation. Even if they did not want to acknowledge their own failings, they could actually get up and support the bill and say, 'Do this better', but instead they want to continue the war that they are fanning and promoting — the political war within our fire services.

This bill replaces the outdated emergency management planning arrangements in the Emergency Management Act 1986 and the Emergency Management Act 2013 with a new integrated framework to strengthen Victoria's emergency preparedness.

One of the criticisms that the opposition lead speaker has made about the EBAs is that they are way too prescriptive, that they will impede volunteers' involvement and that they will impede the chief officer's powers. Given the sorts of proposals that were coming from the lead speaker from the opposition, his proposals and his prescriptions would be unworkable for this emergency management framework. It will continue that local government will lead local planning. This side of politics actually respects local government as an independent tier of government, and Labor federally actually wanted to change the constitution to recognise it in that way. Local government will continue to lead those planning committees, so it is a complete furphy and a complete misrepresentation for the member for Gembrook to try to present that volunteers would be shut out from those planning committees. What a load of rot. I see he has walked out because he does not want to listen to the facts.

In the areas that I represent — the Shire of Nillumbik, the City of Whittlesea and the Shire of Mitchell — and with other management plans that exist in the area, such as the Plenty Gorge fire prevention committee, I see that there would be no reason why volunteers would be excluded by those local governments. The truth is that they would not be. In terms of regional areas of the state and in the many small shires, it just beggars belief that the member for Gembrook spent a long period of his time saying that farmers would be shut out of these

committees because career staff from some evil fire organisation or a member of an evil union would stop farmers being involved in their own municipal planning committee by having the meetings during the day. What a load of rot.

It is just a continued nonsense that has come from the other side and a disrespect to volunteer firefighters and to career firefighters. I am sure that the volunteer brigades that I have been a member of — the Diamond Creek brigade and the Doreen brigade — will still be requested by the City of Whittlesea and by the Shire of Nillumbik, as will Diamond Creek be asked by the City of Banyule, to provide representation on municipal emergency management committees. I think that along with staff from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and Parks Victoria in my local area their expertise will continue to be requested.

I did not hear all of the member for Gembrook's contribution, but I do not believe that he said much about giving greater independence to the important role of the inspector-general for emergency management. Is he seriously trying to say that if the inspector-general for emergency management has greater independence, that is going to lead to the inspector-general for emergency management being the one that would exclude volunteers? I think that that is just a ridiculous proposition.

And I do not believe that he mentioned the clarification for statutory compensation arrangements for Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers. These volunteers need to have a fair system so that they can be recognised if they suffer injury when they are undertaking their duties across the state. I apologise to the member for Gembrook if he did mention it, but certainly in the last 20-odd minutes of his contribution I did not hear it once.

I think that that is consistent with the actions of those opposite — their inaction — in responding to the Fiskville crisis. They were left wanting in that they did not respond and did not take action for those volunteers and community members that were terribly exposed in the poisoning there, along with career staff. The member for Gembrook could not even remain on the parliamentary committee to investigate what had occurred to career staff, to volunteers and indeed to members of the community, including children.

There is a smaller aspect of the bill that facilitates the proposed relocation of the Broadmeadows SES unit, whose current site has been sold by the local council. I really wanted to give a shout-out to the Broadmeadows SES. I was really pleased when a previous minister,

Tim Holding, and the following minister, Bob Cameron, assisted me in establishing for the first time an SES unit in the growing municipality of the City of Whittlesea. I do not believe those opposite set up any units in new communities.

I really want to thank the Broadmeadows SES unit, who mentored, trained and partnered with the Whittlesea SES volunteers based in Mernda. Gary Doorbar, the controller, and the fantastic volunteers there do a really good job. I want to give a shout-out to one of their youngest members, Emilia Sterjova, who also contributes to her community as the local ward councillor in the north. I want to congratulate her as well because she stood up to the previous council in the City of Whittlesea when they cut ongoing funding to the Whittlesea SES unit despite the fact that they protect and respond to emergencies dealing with a whole lot of municipal assets.

Thank you so much to the Whittlesea SES unit. Thank you to the Broadmeadows SES unit for the great work that you have done in supporting that new unit. Thank you to those who provide other support — the Nillumbik SES unit, the Kinglake SES unit and the Kilmore SES unit — to communities within the Yan Yean electorate. I am really glad that this bill will provide additional compensation and protection for those volunteers when they are doing the difficult work that they do. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (10:46) — I rise to speak on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, and as the shadow minister has foreshadowed, the opposition will not be opposing this bill. I rise as someone who farmed with my partner at Willaura for 10 years, and one of the very first things that happened to me when I got elected to this place was the Moyston fire. The Moyston fire occurred in early 2015. It went over a couple of days, and over those couple of days it threatened our farm. As a result I was actually very involved in both the actions on the day and then in the clean-up, and I attended all of the emergency management meetings that went on around that fire.

I can say that there is really strong coordination around our region between the local government area, which in that case led a lot of that emergency management response, the Country Fire Authority (CFA), the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) and other agencies.

I think this bill has some good elements that build on what is already there, and that is one of the reasons we will not be opposing it. The new regional emergency

management planning committees and the municipal emergency management planning committees are existing bodies in many regions, including my own. They are now being formalised by this bill, and I think that is a good thing. I do think it is very important that local knowledge is retained on these committees and that the regions are not too big. I understand the municipal ones will be the size they are, and I will come to those in a minute, but it is really important, in my mind, that the regions are structured appropriately and have opportunities for the CFA and particularly the volunteers within country CFA regions to participate in those bodies.

I have got to say that the member for Yan Yean displayed a great lack of understanding of the impost put on local CFA captains and group officers during times like cropping when there are meetings. They will turn out when there is a fire, but they are often complaining to me —

Ms Green — On a point of order, Speaker, the member for Ripon is being offensive in that she has completely misrepresented what I have said. I in no way impugned farmers in that way; I was responding to a previous debating point that was also incorrect. So get your facts straight.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — I do not see there is a point of order. I ask the member for Ripon to continue.

Ms STALEY — I know that it is a problem already when meetings are called by local government people in particular who work during office hours. If they are called during cropping or during harvest, which is less likely, people just cannot get there. It is really important that when we formalise structures in the way this bill does that we recognise that volunteers have times of the year where they just cannot get there. There does need to be some flexibility in how that is put out.

The other thing I wanted to talk about was resourcing for the local government side of this. We are currently in a rate-capped environment and most of my eight local government areas are really under significant financial pressure. Whenever there is additional legislation that formalises or puts an additional burden on local government there is no resourcing attached to that. This is another case where local government is being asked to do something which in a lot of ways they do already but it ups a bar and they are not getting resourcing for it. We need to just recognise that governments have been doing this sort of thing, I have got to say federal and state, putting things onto local

governments and not resourcing them. I do have some concerns that this is yet another example of that.

I do not think in this week we can go past the fact that the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) is in the news and around. It certainly does affect this bill because there are clauses in the MFB EBA, and there are certainly clauses that want to be in the CFA EBA as well, that require any coordination committees such as these, which the MFB is a part of, to be subject to the consult and agree clauses — the veto clauses. Therefore for the first time the United Firefighters Union (UFU) will have a role in these things.

Ms Green interjected.

Ms STALEY — I would not mind some protection, Chair, if that would be all right. I do think the member for Yan Yean has had her go and she continues to try and prosecute her failed argument. That is fine. This week we have a situation where we have got an MFB EBA that explicitly includes —

Mr Pearson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — Order! The member for Essendon!

Ms STALEY — as part of it, within months of the EBA being certified, all of these coordination agreements and memorandums of understanding, and all of them have to be redone. This goes absolutely to the core part of this bill.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — Order! I need some silence on the government benches, thank you.

Ms STALEY — It is fine that we bring together all of these services. Like I have said, we agree that there is a role for coordination. I know in my part of the world that that works really well. We have the CFA, the SES, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Victoria Police, all of those services, coming together, whether it is fire, whether it is flood or another natural or man-made emergency, and getting done what needs to be done. Now we have an additional layer being brought in here which is not mentioned in this bill. Of course it is not mentioned in this bill. It is part of an EBA that just happens to have some effects. And this is one of the bills that it will affect. I do think we need to recognise that there are some issues here with the way that the traditional structures where volunteer organisations have had a considerable degree of

autonomy are having that autonomy curtailed. That happens in multiple little ways — all sorts of little attacks on volunteers and on voluntary participation that this government has relentlessly pursued for years to pay off their mates in the UFU. We are back at it with this bill. And that is a real shame, because I do think that there are parts of this legislation that are very worthy indeed.

Yesterday I spoke on the matter of public importance and I spoke on a similar topic. I must say that it has been brought to my attention by the member for Wendouree that I made a mistake, because I asked any of the Labor members to mention the name of the secretary of the UFU, Peter Marshall, in this place. It turns out that the member for Wendouree had in fact done that. She has won the prize.

Ms Green interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — Order! The member for Yan Yean!

Ms STALEY — The member for Wendouree is quite happy to stand up here and express concerns about the secretary of the UFU. She did it yesterday in a member statement. She is the only one who is prepared to say, 'Look, there are some problems here'. Her great friend, the member for Brunswick, was of course sacked, left the ministry and is no longer a minister because of the actions of the secretary of the UFU.

Ms Green — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Ripon is quite obviously straying from the content of the bill and is just trying to prosecute a completely different argument. I ask you to return her to the content of the bill, which has nothing to do with the MFB or the UFU.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines) — I do not uphold the point of order.

Ms STALEY — So we come to a situation where, whenever anybody on this side of the house gets up to talk about the MFB or Peter Marshall, suddenly there is a lot of action and excitement from those opposite who are trying to shut us down and shut down debate. I think that says quite a bit about how beholden they are. Once again, on this bill, I say we do not oppose this bill but we do have some concerns and would like the government to address them.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) (10:56) — It gives me great pleasure to speak on this important bill.

Ms Staley interjected.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — Member for Ripon, I was born ready. As I say with every bill, we are being true to our promise to the Victorian people. We made a commitment and are delivering on that commitment, and on this occasion it is in relation to the implementation of key recommendations of the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry and specifically recommendation 3 about improved planning.

Although it is probably not worth responding to some of the drivel from the other side, I will respond to that drivel a bit later on. Principally, I think it is important to restate the problem — that is, the problem that was picked up by the inquiry but also just broadly about the need for strong and effective planning. Obviously in emergency management planning there are operational guidelines and protocols. There are also legislative measures to support better planning and cooperation between a whole bunch of important agencies and individuals.

This bill seeks to strengthen that planning. It seeks to elevate the role of the commissioner to one of an independent officer to strengthen his or her independence. Specifically the problem outlined by the Minister for Emergency Services in his second-reading speech is:

Victoria's current arrangements for emergency management planning do not provide a comprehensive or holistic approach to planning. There is also a lack of clear, consistent and transparent governance mechanisms to underpin emergency management planning.

That is what this bill seeks to address.

The opposition spokesperson, the member for Gembrook, stated that volunteers have started raising concerns — his words were that they have started raising concerns. I was surprised to hear that because we have known for years that the Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers and others had raised concerns under the previous government's watch. I have an article here from the *Herald Sun* dated 5 September 2012, which is clearly a period under the Baillieu-Napthine-Shaw governments. The article is headed 'Fears CFA funding cuts will hit firefighting capabilities'. That was under their watch, so for the member for Gembrook to stand up here today and say volunteers are just raising concerns recently — no, they are not, they have been doing so for years.

We are actually doing something about it — and we are not cutting their funding as the previous government did. As we have said many times in this chamber over \$60 million were cut. The article says:

Less than four years after Black Saturday, the issuing of ration packs to feed firefighters —

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:01) — I advise the house that the Treasurer will be absent from question time today and that the Minister for Finance will answer questions on his behalf on Treasury portfolio matters and the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change will answer questions in relation to the resources portfolio.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Metropolitan Fire Brigade enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:01) — My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. A key recommendation of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission was the creation of Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and a joint agency approach in responding to emergencies. Clause 24 of your Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) states that no emergency response policy can be changed without approval of the United Firefighters Union (UFU). Minister, why have you agreed to an EBA that directly contradicts the community safety recommendations of the bushfires royal commission?

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Emergency Services) (11:02) — Here we go again. Once again the Leader of the Opposition is completely wrong. There is nothing in the EBA that impacts the powers of the chief officer of the MFB to direct resources and personnel in regard to an emergency, and there is nothing in the EBA that impacts on the emergency management commissioner or EMV to coordinate emergency services right across the state.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I warn the member for Kew and the member for Hastings to stop shouting across the chamber.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:03) — The UFU has a long history of opposing critical operational decision-making of the MFB's chief fire officer, including denying a request to increase resources in the

CBD following the Lindt cafe siege, denying a request to have assistant chief officers on call during the 2015 heatwave, and refusing to allow additional MFB resources to be placed on stand-by for emergency medical response to the 2014 heatwave, despite being requested by Ambulance Victoria. Minister, how can you assert that this MFB EBA is in the interests of community safety when the firefighters union continually opposes critical decision-making by the MFB's chief fire officer?

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) (11:04) — Two points: first of all, there is nothing in the agreement that impacts on the MFB chief fire officer directing resources and personnel in regard to an emergency — nothing that impacts on the powers of the chief officer. The second point I make is that those opposite refer to the union. Well, the union are our firefighters — the men and women who rush into burning buildings to save lives and to save property. The only thing that compromised community safety in Victoria is when you cut their budget, like those opposite did — \$66 million for our fire services.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — I warn the member for Warrandyte, the member for Frankston and the member for Eltham.

Ministers statements: International Women's Day

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Women) (11:05) — I rise to update the house on International Women's Day around the Andrews Labor government's commitment to women's equity, and to remind the house of our success in achieving gender equity on paid boards across government. We are extending that achievement to apply a target of inclusiveness and equity to include the chairs of those boards from today on. Women make up half the population, and we deserve an equal seat at the table. Indeed they deserve half the seats, and under this government that is what they are going to get.

As the Minister for Women in this state I stand proud of the policies and reforms that we have made and delivered whilst in government: the \$1.9 billion commitment to eradicate family violence, the rollout of family violence leave across the public service enterprise bargaining agreements, the establishment of the Equal Workplaces Advisory Council to advise us on the best ways forward to tackle equal pay for women, making local sports more accessible for women, investing in leadership programs such as the Joan Kirner leadership program, providing funding for

women's health services, and of course the jobs that we have created for women.

These things are possible because we make an effort to value women's voices in this Parliament and certainly around our cabinet table. I will not embarrass those opposite by comparing numbers of women on this side to the numbers of women on that side, but what I will say is that the Liberals have as many members called David on their front bench as they do women.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister will come back to making her ministers statement.

Ms HUTCHINS — It is quite embarrassing —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:06) — The member for Frankston will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Frankston withdrew from chamber.

Ms HUTCHINS — On International Women's Day it is quite embarrassing, and it will not come as a shock to learn that the Leader of the Opposition is likely to miss his own targets for the number of women to be increased by 10 per cent.

Metropolitan Fire Brigade enterprise bargaining agreement

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (11:07) — Given some of the comments across the chamber, I would just like to clarify for the member for Narre Warren South that this is perhaps the girly question of the day.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Lowan knows the correct form to ask a question in this place.

Ms KEALY — My question is to the Minister for Women. With the equal opportunity commissioner finding that the proposed Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA), which has the support of your government, contains deeply sexist clauses that entrench workplace discrimination, what actions have you taken to ensure that your government is not endorsing an EBA that entrenches workplace discrimination against women?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Hawthorn is warned.

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Women) (11:08) — I thank the member for her question, and I refute the premise of the question. The EBA that has been agreed to between the board and the MFB, that will be taken forward to the Fair Work Commission for certification, will have to meet national employment standards. There is no doubt about that. Some of the clauses that have existed for 10 and 20 years as arrangements in this sector, in fire services — yes, some of those clauses have been discriminatory and it is this government that is taking that on. We are taking that on. We are putting our money where our mouth is by investing in cultural change.

Sexism against women in the workplace is not just bound by EBAs. It requires cultural change, and diversity needs to be put front and centre. That is exactly why this government has committed to quadrupling the number of women firefighters in this state. Can I congratulate the Minister for Emergency Services for his work in this space. The recruitment advertising that is going on is showing many generations of women that they can step up and be firefighters. What we are doing is putting in place progress and processes to protect and encourage more women into leadership roles in fire services.

Ms Kealy — On a point of order, Speaker, I ask you to bring the minister back to the question. The question was specifically around what actions she took. The commissioner has said this EBA breaches discrimination law; what has she done to stop that? What has she done to influence this government to not endorse something that entrenches discrimination against women? That is what it is about. What actions did she take?

The SPEAKER — I thank the member for her point of order. I do not uphold the point of order. The minister was being relevant to the question that was asked.

Ms HUTCHINS — I am not sure why those opposite do not respect our firefighters and continue to attack them and their reputation. I am proud of the fire services in this state. I am proud of the firefighters, both men and women, who go to the front line to protect our lives, to protect our communities and to protect our households, whom obviously those opposite do not respect.

Supplementary question

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (11:11) — With the government-endorsed MFB EBA allowing the United

Firefighters Union (UFU) veto power over discrimination law that has been passed by this and the commonwealth Parliaments —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Footscray and the member for Warrandyte are warned.

Ms KEALY — Given the Premier's own industrial relations adviser, Mr Blandthorn, had previously stated that the UFU's Peter Marshall's behaviour had 'crossed the line' when it came to workplace bullying — the same Peter Marshall who was accused of threatening to put an axe through the female minister's head if she did not do what he wanted — given all the evidence to date, Minister, how can you guarantee a safe workplace for women in our fire services, free of bullying and discrimination?

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Women) (11:12) — I thank the member for her supplementary question, but I do need to say that this government has probably done about 20 times more work in the short time we have been in government to take on the issues of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. Quite frankly I am outraged at the question —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Hawthorn has been warned. The Attorney-General is warned.

Ms HUTCHINS — When I stood in this house to talk about reporting of sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace, the shadow Minister for Women did nothing but scream me down in this place during that debate.

Ministers statements: West Gate tunnel project

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:13) — I am pleased to update the house in relation to the West Gate tunnel project. I am very pleased to inform the house and every single Victorian that planning approvals are now back in place and work will resume on that critically important project later on today. We will not be stopped by those opposite in delivering the infrastructure for road and rail that is so important to jobs and to our economy and communities right across the state.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr ANDREWS — We all know that there was a very serious incident on the West Gate Freeway this

morning, and we are very grateful that there were no injuries sustained by anybody in that very nasty incident. It would appear that a truck jackknifed, blocking all of those lanes and causing chaos. It comes a day after some in the other place decided that we do not need a second river crossing. But it is not just the truck that jackknifed on the West Gate. The Leader of the Opposition's leadership has jackknifed as well, because he was out on the steps today pretending that he supports the project that he voted against yesterday. A second river crossing is desperately needed, and it is being delivered by this Labor government for people in the west of Melbourne, people in Geelong and people across the entirety of our state. It does not matter what opposition, feeble as it is, is put forward by this bunch of do-nothing hypocrites. We are getting this done.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Warrandyte, the member for Malvern and the member for Hawthorn have already been warned. They will not be warned again.

Metropolitan Fire Brigade enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (11:15) — My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. In a formal submission to the Fair Work Commission, the United Firefighters Union (UFU) stated that introducing part-time firefighters would compromise firefighting proficiency and impact on the welfare and safety of employees in the fire services. Clause 43.3 of your EBA states that getting new part-time workers into our fire services cannot happen with the consent of all parties, including the UFU. Minister, how do you intend to increase the number of operational part-time firefighters from the current number of zero, given the UFU is on the record opposing part-time operational staff?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Attorney-General has already been warned.

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Emergency Services) (11:16) — They do not want to talk about much else, do they? I wonder why. You are not having a very good week, are you, Matthew? It has not been a very good week.

I had five questions on emergency services yesterday, but not one from the shadow minister, so what does he do? He repeats the question from yesterday and asks it today. I will repeat the answer for the benefit of the member for Gembrook. As the Minister for Industrial

Relations has outlined yet again today, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) agreement will be subject to the national employment standards, which provide the right for any employee to seek flexible working arrangements.

That is the answer in terms of flexible working arrangements. We have also set a target of quadrupling the number of female career firefighters in the MFB and the Country Fire Authority (CFA). I can tell you that the applications have gone through the roof. There has been a 42 per cent increase in women applying for career roles within the CFA, and that is a great thing.

Supplementary question

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (11:18) — The United Firefighters Union applied to the Federal Court in early 2016 to stop part-time work in the CFA EBA. They said that part-time firefighters threaten safety at emergency incidents. Somehow part-time police and part-time ambulance officers manage not to threaten the safety of their colleagues and the community. But Peter Marshall and the UFU want to continue to shut out part-time workers, particularly women. Isn't it a fact that all your words about increasing firefighters' diversity are worthless as long as Peter Marshall and the UFU retain a veto over the employment of part-time firefighters?

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Emergency Services) (11:18) — No.

Ministers statements: West Gate tunnel project

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (11:19) — I would like to update the house today obviously on the importance of the West Gate tunnel and the need for this second river crossing. This morning very much highlighted how important that is. But there is some very good news: this morning the Minister for Planning has redone the planning scheme amendment and work will continue. We will not be blocked by a two-bob stunt in the upper house. This morning —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:19) — The member for Kew will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour. There is way too much shouting in the chamber. Members will be removed without warning.

Honourable member for Kew withdrew from chamber.

Mr DONNELLAN — This morning I had the opportunity to go on site at Whitehall Street and meet the workers, which was great, just to give them confidence that this project is proceeding. The one thing they did ask me about was what the position of the Liberal Party and the Greens is. That is pretty hard to decipher. I had to say the deputy leader said they are not saying do not build roads; David Davis, the leader in the upper house, is saying this is a bad project, that it is a dud project that does not stack up; and then we have the Leader of the Opposition having an each-way bet by saying he supports a second river crossing but not a blank cheque for Transurban. All I could really say was that they are all over the place like a pack of demented monks. They cannot actually lie straight and give everybody a straight answer as to what they are going to do in relation to this.

As we know, those people coming in from the west this morning found it very difficult getting in because there is no second river crossing.

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, the language used by the minister is clearly unparliamentary. I am extremely disappointed that you have not even told him that he should not be using language like that. You are the Speaker and you are responsible for the standards in this house.

The SPEAKER — Order! I will not have the member reflect on the Chair.

Mr Watt — That fact that he is allowed to call people demented monks in this place is unacceptable.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Is the member seeking that the minister withdraw comments?

Mr Watt — I am seeking that the Speaker uphold parliamentary standards.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr Watt — You should not be allowing a member to use language like that. It is unparliamentary language. You should pull him up. I should not have to call a point —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:22) — Order! The member is entitled to make a point of order, but I will not have members shout at me while the member is making that

point of order. The member for Warrandyte will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

The SPEAKER — The minister will use appropriate language in this place, but I remind members that in question time there are many things said in this place which I do not think are particularly parliamentary.

Mr DONNELLAN — Those workers were very keen to get back to work, so I was down there, as I was saying, giving them confidence that we are proceeding with this second river crossing, and this morning highlighted the absolute need for that. Coming in from Whitehall Street took a long time because the whole area was gridlocked from one end of the city to the other, and that is why we need this second river crossing.

Duck hunting season

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (11:22) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, the recent Pegasus Economics review of the Game Management Authority (GMA) found that breaches of hunting laws during duck season are widespread and commonplace and that the GMA was incapable of enforcing those laws. Given your regulator's own incompetence, will you now stand with the vast majority of Victorians who oppose duck shooting and cancel this year's duck season, due to start in 10 days?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:23) — On a day when we were all convinced that there was nothing that separated the coalition from the Greens, it seems that there is at least one thing. I thank the member for Pahrnan for his question. He is smiling. A lot of people on the West Gate are not smiling, because while some people were out taking their pet unicorn for a walk this morning or eating their quinoa with their almond milk on it, there were people who could not get where they needed to be because of projects being opposed by the Greens.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:24) — Order! The Attorney-General will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour. He has already been warned.

Attorney-General withdrew from chamber.

Ms Sandell — On a point of order, Speaker, we did not ask about quinoa and we did not ask about the West

Gate tunnel; the member for Pahrnan asked about the duck shooting season and whether the Premier will now cancel it. I ask if you could perhaps direct the Premier to answer the question.

The SPEAKER — I uphold the point of order. The Premier will come to answering the question.

Mr ANDREWS — I do apologise, Speaker. It would almost certainly be kale cereal with almond milk, not quinoa. I was asked about a serious matter, though, in relation to —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — No, it is about ducks. It is about ducks, Matt. It is about ducks. It is not about geese; it is about ducks. The Leader of the Opposition is not having much of a day. It is not about geese; it is about ducks.

The review that the member for Pahrnan cites is an important matter, and it does highlight that there were some compliance failures during opening weekend last season. In light of that report the government has taken significant steps to boost our compliance capacity — the capacity out there in local communities — ahead of this year's opening weekend. Beyond that we have also made some important regulatory changes so that it is easier for our officers to detect anyone who is doing the wrong thing. Those additional personnel and the expertise and the training that they have been given will be in operation in communities across the state. We have no plans to make changes beyond that, other than to respond to the recommendations to improve compliance and improve training and resources, but if the member for Pahrnan is expecting me to make a change to our broader policy, well, that is not happening.

Supplementary question

Mr HIBBINS (Pahrnan) (11:26) — The Pegasus report found that not only was the Game Management Authority unable to enforce the hunting laws but it was hopelessly conflicted in its role as both regulator and promoter of hunting, something that the Greens actually pointed out five years ago when we opposed the creation of the GMA. Premier, how can you have any confidence that we will not see more of the same killing of threatened species that has occurred every single year under your government?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:27) — It would seem that we perhaps should not have bothered to have the review. We could have just listened to the commentators-in-chief sitting up there in the cheap seats. We could have just done that. Instead, as I made

clear in the answer to the substantive question, there has been a review. People are open and very clear about the fact that there have been compliance failures in relation to opening weekend last year. That is why we have taken steps, practical steps — you know, real action instead of commentary — to deal with those issues. It will be more than interesting; it will be real. It will actually happen, member for Prahran. We will not be sitting around commentating about it. We will review again and see what happens this coming weekend, and if there are further steps that need to be taken to deal with compliance, we stand ready to take those.

Ministers statements: road safety

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) (11:27) — I want to provide to the house an update on what we are doing to improve road safety outcomes in Victoria. This morning I joined the assistant commissioner for road safety, Doug Fryer, to outline the operation that is going to be undertaken over this long weekend — Operation Arid — which will see thousands of extra police hours out there on our roads detecting speed, drug and alcohol use, and distraction on our roads, all focused on saving lives.

I also had the opportunity to speak with the assistant commissioner this morning about the accident that happened on the West Gate, because of course police are really at the front line of these accidents in terms of both prevention and saving lives as well as clearing up and investigating road accidents. The West Gate has always been a massive issue for police. It is an issue both of accessing those accidents but also of getting the balance right about how quickly you clear traffic while having to investigate a massive issue like that. They know the gridlock that occurs on the West Gate when an incident like this occurs.

As a regular user of this road I know the gridlock that can occur when you have an incident like this, and it makes it even more incomprehensible what happened today. Those opposite yesterday denied a second river crossing to the communities of Geelong and to South Barwon, to Geelong, to Lara and to Bellarine residents, who actually use that road and know exactly what it means when you have an accident of this kind. They know that a second river crossing would be safer and more reliable. It will be quicker. This is a slap in the face to the Geelong community. Geelong residents will not forget those opposite denying them a second river crossing. I want to thank all those police officers who today were out there in large numbers making those roads safe, clearing those roads and getting Victorians to work.

5 Little Grey Street, St Kilda

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) (11:30) — My question is to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. Violent crime happens in and around the Regal apartments community housing in St Kilda on a daily basis, and the locals are desperate for help. At a 16 February community meeting these residents asked you directly to help them by placing a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week security guard at the location. You refused, telling your own constituents that the location was too dangerous for a security guard. With more locals assaulted in the last 48 hours, Minister, do you stand by your statement that the Regal is too dangerous for a security guard and that the locals of St Kilda will have to deal with this violence all on their own?

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing) (11:31) — I thank the honourable member for her question and start by saying she is wrong in fact. Of course I certainly will not be taking advice from a party that cut \$300 million out of public and social housing when it was in government. The Port Phillip Housing Association has been operating in our wider community for over 30 years and houses a whole range of community housing facilities right across the state. They generally do a very, very good job. There have been serious issues at the Little Grey Street facility basically for about the last four or five months — serious safety issues — on which we have been working quite closely with Victoria Police, the City of Port Phillip, the Sacred Heart Mission and a range of other service providers.

Ms Victoria — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance. I asked directly as to why the minister will not do what the constituents have asked him to do, or what the public have asked him to do in that area, and that is place a security guard there 24/7. They are afraid for their lives. I do not want to know what is going on in the area; I want to know what he is doing about the Regal apartments.

The SPEAKER — Order! I understand the information that the member seeks. The minister, though, is being relevant and responsive to the question.

Mr FOLEY — To clear up the facts, the Regal apartments are an up-market apartment block on Fitzroy Street, St Kilda. The Little Grey Street apartments, the one the honourable member is actually trying to refer to, is a separate facility. Let us just be clear about that. The Regal apartments are a very different facility to the rooming house in Little Grey Street. The honourable member's information is wrong.

But back to the issue at hand. Late last year Port Phillip Housing Association submitted an application to government to completely refit the Little Grey Street apartments, not the Regal apartments in Fitzroy Street the honourable member is referring to, and that process has come to a successful conclusion. As I informed a few of the constituents earlier today, I am pleased to announce here for the honourable member's information that the Victorian government is backing that \$6 million application to close this particular troubled facility and instead rebuild, at a cost of \$6 million, dedicated self-contained housing for women over 55, the fastest growing group facing —

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

Ms Victoria — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance. If I can restate my point of order —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Victoria — I have every right to take a point of order, as does everybody. I will not be bullied, especially not on International Women's Day, by this Premier.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Bentleigh will come to order. The member for Bayswater is entitled to take a point of order in silence.

Mr Richardson interjected.

The SPEAKER (11:34) — Order! The member for Mordialloc will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Mordialloc withdrew from chamber.

Ms Victoria — Misogynists do not have the right to speak. No, don't point to our side. I am the one on my feet.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Victoria — My point of order is to the minister and I refer directly to my question —

Ms Green interjected.

The SPEAKER (11:35) — The member for Yan Yean will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Yan Yean withdrew from chamber.

Ms Victoria — I refer directly to my question around the community's request to have a security guard and the minister's comment that it was not safe to place a security guard in that area. That is the question that the people of this area would like an answer to.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! As I have said in this place, I do not have the ability in this place to direct the minister on how to answer the question, only that he is meeting the standing orders. He is being relevant and responsive to the question.

Ms Neville — On a point of order, Speaker, I have sat through this question time with those opposite yelling and screaming throughout the contribution of the Minister for Women. Every time a woman gets up, there is yelling and screaming. I am sick of those opposite calling us bullies and misogynists. I expect an apology because that is absolutely not the case. I want the member for Bayswater to withdraw those comments. They are wrong, I am offended by them, and it is absolutely not appropriate on International Women's Day. We put up with that bullying all the time. We do not call it out. But I am not going to put up with them misleading the house, and I ask the member for Bayswater to withdraw.

Ms Staley interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Ripon will come to order. The member for Bayswater has been asked to withdraw her comments. I ask the member to withdraw.

Ms Victoria — On the point of order? It was a point of order.

The SPEAKER — Order! When a member is asked to withdraw comments, they must do so immediately without qualification.

Ms Victoria — I believe a withdrawal is about a person, not a general comment. I would seek your ruling on that please.

The SPEAKER — Order! I am not debating this as a point of order. The standing orders are very clear. The practices of this place are very clear. When a member takes personal offence at comments —

Ms Victoria — Personal offence.

Mr Burgess interjected.

The SPEAKER (11:37) — Order! The member for Hastings will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Hastings withdrew from chamber.

The SPEAKER — Order! I will not have members shouting at me when I am trying to make a ruling.

Mr Guy interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition knows that I have asked to be able to make rulings in silence. When a member raises a point of order and asks for comments to be withdrawn because they found them offensive, they are entitled to do so. The practices of this place are very clear. The member who has been asked to withdraw should withdraw unconditionally.

Ms Victoria — If, in my understanding, it is directed at a member.

The SPEAKER — Order! I apologise; I take the member's point. There is no need to withdraw when those comments are made collectively.

Ms Victoria — On a point of order, Speaker, I am just restating my point of order that the minister is not answering the question that was asked of him.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is being responsive and relevant to the question.

Mr FOLEY — At the very start I said the member was wrong. No such comment was made. But to return in the final time available to me, in addition to funding dedicated self-contained housing for older women, the fastest growing group facing housing crisis in the state, we will also fund CCTV for the entire precinct to be fed straight into the St Kilda police station to ensure the safety of all in our fantastic St Kilda community.

Supplementary question

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) (11:39) — Minister, since you met with your local constituents, more than 50 documented incidents have been reported at this location. Minister, your constituents are desperate. What has to happen before you do anything to protect these families from ongoing violent crime from these apartments?

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing) (11:39) — Given the honourable member got the actual apartment block wrong, I am going to take those assertions with some grains of salt. Having said

all of that, I would simply refer the honourable member to the fact that I have just announced that the facility will close and that we will completely rebuild the facility and rehouse that facility, with CCTV protection going straight to the St Kilda police station. We need to make sure that our women, the fastest growing group who are over 55, have secure housing. This is an outcome that has been widely sought and called for by the community —

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

Ms Victoria — On a point of order, Speaker, given the fact that there are two lots of apartments with similar names and the minister knows exactly which one we are speaking about and which one he said it was too dangerous to put a security guard at, the fact that the facility will be closed gives no assurance to those people right now. Will the minister put a security guard in place? What needs to happen before that happens?

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

Mr FOLEY — I know the difference. It is pretty clear that the honourable member for Bayswater has no idea what she is talking about, so with the greatest of respect, this is precisely what the community has called for and I am proud to deliver it.

Ministers statements: West Gate tunnel project

Mr CARROLL (Minister for Industry and Employment) (11:42) — I rise to update the house on the number of jobs on the West Gate tunnel project in the balance thanks to the grand coalition over there between the Greens political party, the National Party and the Liberal Party — 6000 new jobs, 500 apprentices, 400 jobs for Melbourne's west and 150 jobs for ex-auto workers. I urge all of these members on the other side during their lunch break to go down like the Minister for Roads and Road Safety did this morning and speak to those 700 workers and tell them to tell their families tonight why their jobs do not count.

Over the weekend we saw the emergence of a grand coalition in the German Parliament. We are seeing the emergence of a grand coalition over here. There is only one thing the Greens political party are missing: a bloke called David. There is the Metro Tunnel's 7000 jobs and 4500 jobs on level crossings.

The Leader of The National Party wants to go up to Benalla and tell those workers — the up to 400 workers at the precast concrete facility — they do

not matter at all. But why don't you talk to Colin, who wrote on Facebook:

What a great thing for Benalla ...

Or Graham:

At last some good news for Benalla. Bring it on! #benalla #jobs #northeastvic #westgate

Or Toby on Facebook, who says:

Brilliant work, Jaclyn Symes, and everyone else involved in building a brighter future for Benalla ...

The National Party, the Greens political party, the Liberal Party — who are having a great day today — cannot wait for the weekend to come, can they? I think they read the morning press.

We are getting on with it. We have a \$50 billion infrastructure program. The Andrews government is building manufacturing, building jobs for tomorrow and making sure we build a better future for Victorians.

Ms Ryall — On a point of order, Speaker, I again rise on my point of order for an adjournment debate request raised on 21 September last year — 13 154 to the Minister for Health. It is absolutely disgraceful that she is defying your request to answer this adjournment request which goes to the very heart of dental care for the disadvantaged in my community. It is absolutely disgraceful, and I request once again that she comply with the standing orders and the sessional orders and that there be consequences if she fails to do so.

The SPEAKER — I thank the member for raising that point of order. We will follow that matter up.

Mr Wells — On a point of order, Speaker, on 14 November last year I raised two matters with the Minister for Police: 13 478 and 13 477. These are important issues affecting the constituents in my electorate, and they are still unanswered.

The SPEAKER — We will follow those matters up.

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, there are quite a number of questions on notice or unanswered questions that have come from ministers on that side. I think it is quite disgraceful that they ignore you as the Speaker. I know that you have chased it up for these two members who have raised points of order. I know that there are a number that are outstanding, and it is quite disgraceful, the behaviour of members of Parliament who ignore you as the Speaker, particularly members who are required under the standing orders to actually do their job, and I would ask you to actually —

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

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Croydon electorate

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (11:46) — (14 122) My constituency question is to the Minister for Ports. My constituent wishes to know how much money the Andrews government has allocated in this term of government to boating infrastructure, namely the boating safety and facilities program, the BSFP, and specifically, how much money has been allocated to the BSFP this current financial year.

Yuroke electorate

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (11:46) — (14 123) My constituency question is for the Minister for Police. What information can the minister provide on how Yuroke residents are benefiting from the Andrews Labor government's investment in new police and additional resources to prevent crime? From Craigieburn Neighbourhood Watch to the Highlands Community Residents Group, many organisations and individuals in the Yuroke electorate have expressed a strong interest in ensuring our community is a safe place for their families. I am pleased that this government has listened, providing local police with the resources they need. I also know that our local police are working hard and doing an outstanding job, and I thank them for these efforts. I look forward to hearing from the minister and sharing this response with residents in Yuroke.

Ovens Valley electorate

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (11:47) — (14 124) My question is to Minister for Mental Health, and I ask it on behalf of Yvonne Millsum, owner/operator of the Cobram Willows Caravan Park. Mrs Millsum has expressed concern that their caravan park, which is primarily a holiday tourist park, is becoming a drop-off point for people with mental illness through PARC, which is Prevention & Recovery Care. She requests more transparency when PARC clients are staying at their caravan park. This business is not opposed to anyone who chooses to stay, but it appears that once clients are dropped off they become the responsibility of the caravan park. I ask the minister to become more transparent when using private businesses for accommodation to support what is primarily a governmental issue.

Geelong electorate

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (11:47) — (14 125) My constituency question is for the Minister for Sport. I ask the minister to consider the submission that has been put forward by the Geelong Touch Football Association and to consider it in the context of lifting sport participation and health outcomes for my community. The Geelong Touch Football Association is seeking funding to install floodlights on its home reserve, King Lloyd Reserve in Newtown. The floodlights would allow the association to run winter competitions for 30 teams, which is almost 300 players. This includes 120 females and 50 juniors, with the numbers expected to increase to over 450 over the next year. Due to the lack of lighting, the club has been forced to use other venues, which has meant fewer matches and less game time. The club has missed out on City of Greater Geelong funding six times in the past four years. The Geelong Touch Football Association has been named as a finalist in the 2017 Victorian Sports Awards in the Victorian Outdoor/Active Recreation Initiative of the Year category.

Bayswater electorate

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) (11:49) — (14 126) My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. When will you intervene in the longstanding union dispute with SP AusNet which, among other consequences, is seeing businesses being without power at peak periods rather than on weekends? On a number of days recently, often hot days, businesses in the Bayswater shopping district have been advised at short notice that they would be without power during peak trading periods. For a long time in Victoria electricity disruptions for businesses have been planned to occur on weekends. Most of the businesses in Bayswater are at their busiest Monday to Friday. Sunday is their quietest day, with most businesses closed. Traditionally, planned power outages for power upgrades were happening to basically not have as much disruption. However, on a number of occasions recently the outages were there and then they were not there, and nobody seems to be able to get things done. We made a few phone calls and found out that in fact a lot of the reasoning behind this is the ongoing dispute between Labor's Electrical Trades Union and SP AusNet, and I would like this to come to a halt.

Macedon electorate

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (11:50) — (14 127) My question is for the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education. Minister, last year the Andrews Labor government announced that Taradale Primary School

would receive \$281 000 for a much-needed facility upgrade, an announcement that was warmly received by this fantastic school community. Minister, can you now advise when the school should expect works to commence? The community of Taradale will never forget that its school was under threat of closure from the former Liberal government back in 2013. The local MP, the member for Bendigo West, and Chris Burgess would not give up on this little school, and I am delighted that under the leadership of Chris and with support from the Andrews government the school is flourishing, with an enrolment of 60 students and growing. We look forward to receiving your response.

Ringwood electorate

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) (11:50) — (14 128) My constituency question is to the Minister for Public Transport. The land opposite the Heatherdale railway station in Heatherdale Road, where so many have to park to catch the train, is currently for sale. If the minister does not buy the land, where will these people park?

Ivanhoe electorate

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (11:51) — (14 129) My constituency question is for the Minister for Police, and I ask for an update on the implementation of the traffic safety cameras on Rosanna Road at the two locations of Banyule Road and Darebin Street. I also would like to quote one of my constituents, a school crossing supervisor, who emailed me to say:

I am writing to you as I hear and have heard the good news that they are putting speed cameras in at the corners of Rosanna Road/Banyule Road where the osteo clinic is as well as on the corner of Douglas Street both ways.

I am and have been the school crossing supervisor there for the past year and a half and are highly commending you for this to be put in. Well done!

As I've also seen a lot of near misses as well as some people not using their own common sense and using the lights provided there at the crossings.

If there is anything else I can do ...

Can I just say that I want to commend our crossing supervisors for Banyule Primary School and also for Heidelberg Primary School. School crossing supervisor on Rosanna Road is one of the gutsiest jobs you can do. To put in those safety cameras is going to save lives, and we are going to get on with it.

Eltham electorate

Ms WARD (Eltham) (11:52) — (14 130) My question is to the Minister for Local Government. Minister, the Andrews government has invested over \$16 million in Nillumbik council over the last three years thanks to the Growing Suburbs Fund. In addition to this, we have provided nearly \$5 million for a sports precinct at Eltham High School to be used by the community; \$2.5 million at St Helena Secondary College for community shared sporting facilities; \$2 million for new pavilions at Eltham North Primary School; as well as \$10.5 million for Bolton Street, shared between Nillumbik and Banyule councils, saving Nillumbik considerable money. Of course additional funding has also been provided to Nillumbik for female-friendly changing rooms, lights for ovals and so on. A number of projects the Andrews government has invested in in Nillumbik appear to be either not commenced or significantly delayed. Minister, what is going on with Nillumbik council to cause the delay with these projects?

Caulfield electorate

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (11:52) — (14 131) My question is to the Minister for Planning. Minister, many residents in Elsternwick have expressed concern over the impact of overdevelopment on their local amenity and livability. The Elsternwick structure plan projects a 20 per cent increase in population and responds to the expectation in your government's *Plan Melbourne: Refresh* that will require 22 000 residents to be accommodated in Glen Eira in the next 15 years. The plan, which has been approved by the council, will now go to a planning panel and ultimately you as the minister will be responsible for any changes in the Elsternwick precinct. As the structure plan outlines no measures to cope with this densification and will lead to the loss of established houses in the area, Minister, what is the government doing and what are you doing to prevent local families losing their homes and to protect the livability of Elsternwick and surrounds?

Mr Katos — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, just with regard to constituency questions, the member for Geelong, in my opinion, has asked a constituency question that was out of order. The member for Geelong asked the Minister for Sport to consider a submission by the Geelong Touch Football Association. Now that is clearly asking for an action and is outside the remit of a constituency question. I ask you to rule that out of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — I will refer that matter to the Speaker to consider and he will report back.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) (11:54) — Just before the break in proceedings I was reminding the member for Gembrook that the concerns he was suggesting were only being raised recently have been raised for a long, long time and his government did very little to meet those concerns. I am reading from a *Herald Sun* article of 5 September 2012:

Less than four years after Black Saturday, the issuing of ration packs to feed firefighters who spend up to 18 hours in the field is under review — and first aid training will be limited as regional CFA stations try to make ends meet.

That was under their government.

Leaked CFA documents reveal the service also wants to cut the cost of fire-spotting towers, used to identify major infernos.

And in a bid to claw back much-needed funds, it has vowed to apply 'less tolerance' in waiving charges for false alarms —

which had led to fines.

Opposition leader Daniel Andrews —

obviously now the Premier —

said it raised safety concerns for firefighters and Victorians in bushfire-prone communities.

This is a disgraceful attack on the very people that are on the front line protecting Victoria's homes and businesses ...

When will Ted Baillieu and Peter Ryan realise that these harsh cuts are putting the safety of Victorians at risk?

My question is: what did they do to add any substance to their confected concerns around Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers and the CFA community, which does an absolutely extraordinary job? What they did was they botched the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry. We had to come into government and reopen it. They botched that inquiry, they dismissed the valid concerns, they truncated some of those concerns, and they took far too long to respond to Fiskville and the legitimate concerns of the firefighting community around Fiskville. We came in, we closed Fiskville, we treated the matter of contamination and health impacts extraordinarily seriously. They cut \$66 million from

the budget of the CFA. These affected pretenders rock up to CFA stations around Victoria in their Range Rovers to meet and greet the CFA volunteers, wearing their badges saying 'Save the CFA'. That to me is the equivalent of a wolf wearing a badge saying 'Save the chickens'.

People do not want badges. They want budgets. You do not cut the CFA budget and then wear a badge saying 'Save the CFA', like you have for the last 12 months in this place. It is all show and no substance. Do not talk to me, shadow minister, about volunteers and respect for the community, because where was that respect during your term in government?

Our commitments in relation to the fire services are absolutely, demonstrably clear. In this particular bill they are about implementing a very key recommendation of the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry, which is about better planning and better coordination both at a statewide level and also at the local municipal and regional level. That is what this bill seeks to do. But it is not just that; it is a genuine commitment to an integrated, efficient and well-resourced fire services community.

I am reminded of the Minister for Emergency Services' press release on 13 October 2017, in which he talks about Fire Action Week, which has been held each year since 2009. It is a reminder of 'a time for households to increase their understanding of local fire risks' and a bit of much-needed education and promotion. The minister reminds us that:

The Andrews Labor government is investing a record \$29.4 million in Victoria's biggest ever firefighting aircraft fleet, providing a mix of water-bombing aircraft including fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters to help keep communities safe.

At the same time, the government will roll out a range of initiatives from the fire services statement to continue supporting our firefighters this fire season.

A \$60 million investment will deliver the training, equipment and facilities Victorian firefighters need. Activities to increase the diversity of Victoria's fire services will be progressed along with a volunteer recruitment and retention drive.

That includes culture change in the fire services, including the quadrupling of female recruits in our fire services.

It is not just this bill. It is what I mentioned earlier in terms of reopening the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry to really get to the bottom of community safety concerns and the presumptive rights legislation that only this government, which actually cares about workers, introduced. We closed Fiskville. We also, through this

current bill, are seeking to extend the no-fault compensation scheme to Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers so that it is consistent with other emergency services workers. In my own community the SES has received over \$100 000 in equipment and grants from this very government, so when the member for Gembrook comes in here and pretends to care about regional communities and volunteers, I say to those regional committees, 'Just look at his record and look at the record of the previous botched government'. Their concern and care is very, very clear; they do not have much. Regional communities can only rely on Labor governments in terms of their commitment to fire services. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (12:00) — I am speaking on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I am not sure which bill the member for Oakleigh was speaking on when he was talking about saving chickens. I am just not sure what the point of all that was, and that is the problem when you have a metropolitan member of Parliament trying to talk about something to do with emergency services and the confusion around that. I just want to pick up on a couple of points by the member for Oakleigh —

Mr Dimopoulos — It is called an analogy, Kim.

Mr Nardella — Which country seat do you represent?

Mr WELLS — There we go. Which country seat do I represent, having grown up in the country — point number one — but where did you tell Parliament that you live? You told them you were living down in Ocean Grove —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — Order! Member for Rowville, I ask you to direct your comments through the Chair. When you say 'you', you are speaking to me. So if you would please direct your comments through the Chair, rather than taking up interjections.

Mr WELLS — The member for Melton is a crook.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WELLS — Well, here he is talking about country members —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — Order, member for Rowville!

Mr Nardella — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I ask that the member withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — Member for Rowville, you have been asked to withdraw the comment. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr WELLS — You want me to withdraw the word ‘crook’?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — Withdraw unconditionally.

Mr WELLS — I withdraw the word ‘crook’.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — No, that is not what I asked you to do. I asked you to withdraw the comment unconditionally.

Mr WELLS — I withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — Thank you. Continue.

Mr WELLS — It is interesting how all the Labor members were quick to defend him. I am just making the point. It was just fascinating that they were all very quick to get in and defend him. I just find it amazing.

The other issue I want to pick up on by the member for Oakleigh —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WELLS — The only point I want to pick up from the member for Oakleigh is that the now Deputy Premier said that he would have presumptive rights legislation in here within 100 days. Within 100 days he would have proposed presumptive rights legislation — where is it?

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WELLS — Where is it? Within the first 100 days, the presumptive rights legislation —

Ms Hutchins — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member at the table is not even referring to the bill, and I ask you to bring him back.

Mr WELLS — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I actually made it really clear that I was responding to comments made by the member for Oakleigh. I was responding directly to those comments when he mentioned the issue of presumptive rights legislation.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — I do not uphold the point of order. The member was responding to comments in the previous member’s contribution.

Mr Noonan — You buried the Monash report. That’s what you did. You did — you buried the Monash report on presumptive rights.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — Order, member for Williamstown!

Mr WELLS — It is interesting that the coalition went to the 2014 election promising presumptive rights legislation. We promised presumptive rights legislation. We made it very clear that we were promising that. It was part of our election platform, and we were wanting the Monash report to be released. To have the accusation — I love it how Labor —

Mr Noonan — Oh, come on, rewrite history. You’re rewriting history.

Mr WELLS — Rewrite history — they just love to rewrite history. But let us just make the point that the Deputy Premier said that he would have presumptive rights legislation in within 100 days. So if I could just talk about —

Mr Noonan — You are on record saying there was no leaking.

Mr WELLS — I will pick up the interjection again. We had it as an election commitment in 2014 that we would bring in presumptive rights legislation — very clear. So let me just go to the bill.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WELLS — I could say a few things, but I will hold back about you. I will hold back.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence) — Order! Member for Rowville, I have already asked you to direct your comments through the Chair. Again you are using the word ‘you’. I would ask you to not continue doing that and please direct your comments through the Chair.

Mr WELLS — In regard to the bill, can I start off by saying I want to thank all of our emergency services and our support services: Victoria Police, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB), the Country Fire Authority (CFA), the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES), Life Saving Victoria, the Salvation Army and the Victorian Council of Churches for the amazing work they do in emergency services as well as

Ambulance Victoria, the Red Cross and every single person who supports our emergency services.

I also thank Emergency Management Victoria. I make the point that it was actually the previous government that set up Emergency Management Victoria. The reason we set it up was to coordinate all of the emergency services — the MFB, the CFA, the police, the SES and all these fantastic services — to make sure they were working in coordination, whether it be planning, attending fires or floods, or a health issue. It was actually the previous government that set up Emergency Management Victoria, so I found it a bit odd that the member for Oakleigh would say that we did nothing when we actually set this up. The basis of this bill was mentioned by the Deputy Premier when he said that in 2014 the Victorian emergency management reform white paper, which is actually the basis for this bill, was put out by the previous government. The idea of putting out that white paper was to ensure that the coordination and the planning of all of our emergency services was going to be improved. We put this paper out to ensure that everyone in those country areas and every one of those agencies were talking and planning together on committees. That was the very basis for it.

But I do have a concern, and it was raised by the member for Gembrook. It is the issue of who is actually going to be on these committees in those country areas. If you have an issue in Bruthen, Buchan or Omeo up in the East Gippsland area, we need to make sure that good, hardworking volunteers are part of that committee. In part 4 of the bill, on page 32, new section 54(1)(a)(iv) says:

- (iv) in the case of a region that includes part of the country area of Victoria (within the meaning of the **Country Fire Authority Act 1958**), a person, or the person holding a position or role for the time being, nominated by the Country Fire Authority ...

Now, that could be, in theory, a person from Melbourne. A career firefighter from Melbourne could be nominated by the CFA, and to me that is wrong. It needs to be someone who has that local knowledge. Whether it be a planned burn, for example, or they are actually attending fires, there is no-one better than a local CFA volunteer in those far country areas to understand what needs to be done. The other issue that bothers me is, of course, in subparagraph (iii) of new section 54(1)(a) on the same page:

- (iii) in the case of a region that includes a metropolitan district or part of a metropolitan district (within the meaning of the **Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act 1958**), a person, or the person holding a position or role for the time being, nominated by the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board ...

Now, the problem we have got is that with the latest enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA), which is going to go to a vote, that paragraph is actually contradicting the EBA. The EBA quite clearly allows the United Firefighters Union (UFU) to actually veto any role or position that has been put forward by the MFB board. It may be a position where, in the outer eastern areas or the outer western areas which are covered by the MFB, the chief fire officer may nominate a particular person and then that particular person is overruled by the UFU. They cannot abide by this legislation because it actually contradicts the EBA. That is just blatantly wrong.

So we would need to ensure, before this bill is voted on and signed off by the upper house, that we have clarity around part 4, 'Regional level amendments', and subparagraphs (iii) and (iv) in new section 54(1)(a) on page 32. We must have better clarity to ensure that the MFB chief fire officer has the right to appoint that person without any interference of the UFU and that CFA volunteers can be appointed to these very important committees. Obviously the concern of the opposition coalition members is that we need those two positions clarified — that volunteers are going to be included as part of these committees, not excluded.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) (12:10) — I am certainly pleased to add my comments with regard to the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 before the house. I note at the onset that, in my time representing the people of Ballarat East and now Buninyong, sadly I, like so many other members within this house, have experienced serious emergency situations in my electorate. I could just about sing from that James Taylor song, 'I've seen fire and I've seen rain'.

We know that these are events that, sadly, happen all too often. I have seen floods in my electorate. I have seen some serious fires too in a number of parts of my electorate, both in the urban area of Ballarat — in Mount Clear — and in Daylesford, in the Wombat Forest area in particular. We know that issues of emergencies do not only include those areas and that authorities that are responsible for caring for our communities are alert to all of the possible emergencies that can take place in our communities and are prepared for any emergency.

Of course we know that since Black Saturday and the fires in the Hazelwood mine and in other areas we keep getting more information that helps us review what we did right at the time and what we may have done wrong at the time. Most recently, in 2014 the Victorian emergency management reform white paper came out,

and it advocated further reviews into the way our emergency management planning goes.

The bill before the house clearly tries to take into account new information that has come forward about how planning has worked in the past and tries to clarify how that planning needs to be guided into the future. The bill starts by noting that the key objective of any emergency planning is to recognise that we are looking at all communities across the state and all kinds of emergencies and that communities are the centre of our planning. In doing that, this new legislation clearly focuses on that new objective and then sets out how planning can be improved. It certainly looks at how we can ensure we integrate. We know there are so many different authorities that are involved when an emergency takes place. We think firsthand of the Country Fire Authority — or I do, in my electorate — and the great work they have done when we have fires or other emergencies. There are a range of others including the Victoria State Emergency Service and Victoria Police.

Having lived through an example of a significant fire happening in the Daylesford area, I remembered afterwards how the local council, the Hepburn shire in that case, took on a major role in helping to bring together the resources that were needed to support people. We know that there are so many other bodies, as others have recognised — other welfare organisations, the Country Women's Association and other bodies — that come in to provide food for people who might need it, whether they be emergency service workers or people who are displaced from housing, hopefully temporarily. We need to ensure that all those different groups that are involved in dealing with that emergency are alerted and understand their role when the emergency takes place and that we can move forward.

We have set in place in this legislation the issue of looking at state level planning and then recognising that at a lower level in regions and country areas there need to be separate bodies established to review, in particular municipalities, how that emergency management planning will work. We are working with emergency management planning committees. The legislation clarifies who should be core members of those committees, so there will be a list specified in the act of the key bodies that will form the core groups on these planning committees. We all know, especially looking at regional and country areas, that there are others who might not necessarily have to be part of the core team of the planning for an emergency, but there might be other individuals and groups who might have particular expertise in particular emergency situations. They could be additional representatives brought onto a planning

committee at various stages to recognise particular risks that are identified in particular areas.

These are going to be very soundly managed and need to look at the opportunity to be flexible in their operation. As new information comes to hand, as further experiences are brought to bear or as further feedback comes to those planning committees, they might see perhaps that a plan they put together a few years ago might need to be varied or might need to be made flexible to meet variations in perceived needs. Once we have these plans in place that are put together at a regional level as well as at the state level, then they need oversight to see that, yes, they have identified all the key issues and they have thought things through. The inspector-general for emergency management will clearly have a significant role in this situation of appraising those plans that are put in place and assuring those plans. The State Crisis and Resilience Council will also have a role — this new body that will be put in place — in overseeing that and tying all of those emergency management plans together.

I think this government is clearly doing the right thing, recognising that we need to be ahead of the game as much as possible. While of course we cannot predict into the future, we know that there are a range of emergencies that can happen and that we clearly need to be alerted to to ensure that when anything happens we do not have people unsure of their roles, that we do not have bodies doing the wrong things and that there is a clearly designated line of authority in terms of who takes control in particular situations and how various support agencies, whether they be the emergency services support agencies or the range of other groups that will have a role to play, know exactly how they will fit into place in this.

This bill clearly does try to ensure that the communities across our state — across my electorate and across the broader part of Victoria — can be confident that there are people planning ahead for future potential emergencies and that, if those emergencies take place, the right people will be in place to act in a coordinated manner to meet their needs. I commend this bill to the house. Clearly consultations have taken place in developing the bill, and the feedback has helped to further vary the final wording within the legislation. We have had, for example, feedback particularly from local government bodies that recognise they have a significant role to play in their own municipalities. We have tried to recognise that in the bill. It is always important when you are doing this that you hear from all the people who have been working in emergencies in the past, to understand where they have seen problems in the past and to ensure that we overcome

those in our planning and that we are alert and ready for any major concerns.

I trust that when the next emergency happens, as, sadly, we know it will, whether in my electorate or with other emergencies across the state, the authorities will have planned for it. This bill will act as the central planning guidance tool for the authorities involved, and they will know exactly what to do when particular emergencies hit. Those who take senior responsibility will understand their role, and others who have a role to play will know how they fit in, who their contact people are and so on. I am very pleased to see this bill come before the house to further refine our emergency management, and I commend it to the house.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (12:20) — I rise to speak on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. This was born out of the 2012 white paper that was initiated by the Liberal government after the Black Saturday events, which led to the reform being discussed and the royal commission recommendations. Quite proudly, we think this is a good action. We will not be opposing this bill, but there are some concerns that we may address.

This bill is about making sure there is good coordination right across the state of Victoria at state level, regional level and municipality level. There will be a staged approach to its implementation so that the state can get, at a high level, the operational elements required so that it can unfold at a regional and municipality level without any hiccups. The regional level people and the municipality level people can follow the guidelines at a state level so it is a very smooth transition. What we will see is an improvement in the interoperability that needs to be streamlined so we will have more coordination capacity between organisations that respond to emergency events such as the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, the Country Fire Authority (CFA), lifesavers, the coast guard, and even industry will be playing a part in this — as they should be — as well as the Bureau of Meteorology, departments, councils, the Country Women's Association (CWA) and even vets. As we know, in some events such as fire and flood there needs to be vet attendance for some animals to be put down, unfortunately.

What we will see is work being done in the area of planning, mitigation, and response and recovery for events such as fires, floods and many other events. I am really pleased to see this because what we really want to see is those regional responses coordinated well. I think we need to stop for a minute here and say we are doing a very good job already but can always improve.

A continuous improvement cycle is something we should always embrace.

I want to take the time to thank people who operate in the emergency services space. Every single one of them is a person who plays an important part, and we are talking about the people who come and give their time, both paid and volunteers. In Warrnambool, when I first took on this role, I met a lot of people who, in typical local western Victorian style, are very embracing and welcoming. I remember being at a Bunnings sausage sizzle with the CFA and both the paid and volunteer guys and girls, together raising money. I remember talking to them about the enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) on that day. Most of them did not understand what it was really intricately about. They understood there was a pay rise and were quite comfortable with that and happy about that, as I would expect and I think is quite acceptable, but when I talked to them about veto and the like they were not aware and not comfortable with that.

A lot has come about since then, and it is making it really difficult for integrated stations like Warrnambool to have the relationship that we all value in the country, of respect between paid and volunteer workers. I commend the guys at Warrnambool, Portland and other integrated stations, who do such a good job. They get on and get the work done, all of them, and I congratulate them and thank them.

I also thank the CWA, the other lifesavers that I met this year on the beach. I went up and spoke to a few of the young guys who volunteer their time, and the coast guard, who I met with recently in Portland, Warrnambool and Port Fairy, who do a fantastic job. It will always be best to have improvement. I experienced some of the coordination issues myself when I was nursing at the Framlingham Aboriginal community. The town of Framlingham is quite near the Aboriginal community, so I always had a challenge when I called ambulances because no-one could figure out the difference between Framlingham Aboriginal community and the Framlingham township. It is things like that where we will see locals, if they are allowed a seat at the table — and this is where my concern is — in a volunteer capacity that is, because at the bill briefing that I went to on this bill it was not identified that volunteers like CFA volunteers would actually have a seat at the table. It was silent on that whereas the previous legislation actually specified that, so that is a real concern for me.

With my Framlingham example or the local farmer — who I have rung up many a time for a fire and had to direct through different paddocks because I know

where the drains are that have culverts in them versus a fire truck trying to get through a drain fully loaded with water, which can cause it to get stuck — having that local knowledge is incredibly important and mapping that out and having that plan for it is really vital. That is what this bill will see to.

We recently had an event in Warrnambool where a drowning tragically occurred, and the ambulance was called to the Cutting. Unfortunately, I am told, the ambulance went to Killarney Beach some 8 kilometres away. It is this sort of local knowledge that we understand at a local level, and often it is volunteers such as the lifesaving community who know the coast well or the CFA, who are often volunteer farmers out in the country, who really do know the topography and the geography very well. So I am pleased that we get the opportunity to really streamline that because we have got some great opportunities.

Port Fairy is a very good example of how we have got a fire station that is in desperate need of being replaced. We have a situation where the Victoria State Emergency Service — another fantastic group of mostly volunteers — work closely together with the CFA in Port Fairy, so much so that they want to coexist because it makes complete sense. Many of them wear the same hat. Currently in that fire station the women — and I note this on International Women's Day, when we see the token gesture behaviour of the other side who say they really embrace women, but the reality is they are happy to sign off on an EBA that says women working part-time do not have the same skill capability.

I am personally offended by that because I worked part-time in both accident and emergency and intensive care and that was often 0.5, so that was two days one week and three days the next. I am quite offended by the fact that somebody would say my skill set was any less than someone working full-time. I would disagree with that, and most women do manage to work very effectively part-time and maintain their skill set, which is a requirement of your registration, I might add, and do effective work within the home running the family as well. So on International Women's Day I am quite offended that I stand here and hear from the other side that they endorse an EBA that does not allow part-time work within the fire services.

I think Myra Murrilhy from Port Fairy would also be quite offended. She volunteers at the Port Fairy station and there is not even anywhere for her and her other female colleagues, who are growing in number, to change. So she actually changes beside the truck, and the men try to give her and her colleagues as much privacy as possible but at the end of the day you are in a

rush. You are trying to get out the door, you are trying to get changed, so I am sure she would be in compromising positions often and trying to do her best in that most disrespectful situation.

Also we look at the Portland situation where they have coexisted so well for years. As one firefighter from Portland said to me, 'We have had a divorce imposed upon our family, when we did not actually have any problems in the marriage'. That is them referring to the fact that the volunteers and paid staff were working so well together and were getting the right results despite the lies and the twisted statistics that are being put out at the moment. They have actually had a great record of fire responses and outcomes and they are all very offended. If they are serious about fire reform over on the other side, as they talk about, why am I having people like the Bolwarra team coming and telling me that they do not even have power in their fire station? They have to back their truck in when they come back from a fire, if it is dark, with their mobile phone with a torch on it.

That is how they back their fire truck in — their fire truck, which is ancient. You talk about reform. Let us start with infrastructure. Let us start with respect. Let us make sure that we show respect for the volunteers who do so much in our community, in the South-West Coast and every other region of this state, who are feeling so disrespected. Let us return that respect to them. Let us show them how valued they really are. Let us make sure they have a place in the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill by making sure that they are identified as having a seat at the table and that they are valued as volunteers right throughout the state of Victoria.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (12:30) — I would like to commence my contribution on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 by paying tribute to all of the emergency service workers in my electorate, both career and volunteer. On International Women's Day I also pay particular tribute to the Macedon Ranges Shire Citizen of the Year, Di Dale. Di is not only a Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteer, she is a Victoria State Emergency Service volunteer, and in her paid capacity she is a member of Victoria Police. I might also note that two CFA volunteers, Leanne Schomacker from Taradale CFA and Linda Krive from Malmsbury CFA, have this morning enjoyed an International Women's Day breakfast at Crown Casino. I heard last night that they were very much looking forward to it.

Of course this bill is part of our government's absolute commitment to implementing reforms in the emergency

management sector with a focus on community safety. That is what drives this government; that is what drives all of our reforms in this sector. We know that there are lessons to be learned from emergencies that have occurred in this state in the past, and we are very focused on learning those lessons and applying the lessons learned and delivering on that.

I did want to talk a little bit about the Hazelwood mine fire, because it is the Hazelwood mine fire that has driven so much of the work in this bill. This is part of our ongoing reform following significant events, including Black Saturday, the floods in 2010–11 and of course the Hazelwood mine fire. This bill also fully acquits recommendation 3 of the *Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Report* and action item 225 of the implementation plan.

The Andrews Labor government has made significant progress in responding to the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry. As members in this house know, the Hazelwood coalmine fire burned for 45 days in early 2014, making it the largest and longest running mine fire in the Latrobe Valley. The Labor government — only the Labor government — committed to reopening the hopelessly inadequate inquiry of the previous mob. We reopened the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry to get to the bottom of community health and safety and environmental concerns that were dismissed by the coalition government.

The way the Hazelwood mine fire was managed by those on the other side was nothing short of a disgrace. At a time when a vulnerable community needed decisive and compassionate leadership from those in government, where were they? We all know that the then minister for health was embroiled in a factional dispute in the Liberal Party, fighting for her political life against the now member for Kew. She lost that fight, and we have now had inflicted upon us the member for Kew. Mary Wooldridge, the former minister, is now floundering in the other place, having been booted out of a seat in this place despite the fact that the then Premier said that he needed her. That is what the minister was doing while the people of Morwell and the Latrobe Valley were facing one of the most significant disasters of the time.

Let me tell you what the Premier did. The contribution of the Premier of the time to the Latrobe Valley was the purchase of 150 vacuum cleaners. That is what the then Premier did. He purchased 150 vacuum cleaners for Morwell residents to borrow, and a free cleaning service was available for at-risk residents. That was the response of the then government to this significant environmental and public health disaster.

I might also point out that Morwell has a population of around 13 000, which means residents needed to wait up to four months to borrow one of the 150 vacuum cleaners so generously purchased by the former Napthine government. Let us be clear. The management of the Hazelwood mine fire by those on the other side was nothing short of a disgrace. I would go so far as to say it was their Grenfell moment. The now independent member for Morwell found out about it all right come election time. You cannot abandon the people of the Latrobe Valley in their time of need and not expect a backlash at the election.

Can I say what a contrast there was when Labor came in. We reopened the mine fire inquiry, and we committed \$50 million to implement the recommendations of that mine fire inquiry. We have adopted all the 32 recommendations, and we are making excellent progress on implementing those.

This bill also goes to the very important role of the inspector-general for emergency management, ensuring that he has the powers that he needs to hold us as a government to account for our commitments to people who are recovering from emergencies like the terrible Hazelwood mine fire.

Regarding the other points that I wanted to raise in relation to the bill, as I have said, it is a significant reform. It replaces the existing outdated emergency management planning arrangements in the Emergency Management Act 1986 and the Emergency Management Act 2013 with a new integrated framework to strengthen Victoria's emergency preparedness.

The bill also includes other emergency services-related amendments to give greater independence, as I have said, to the inspector-general for emergency management and to clarify the statutory compensation arrangements for Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) volunteers to promote fairness for those volunteers if they are injured or suffer property damage when undertaking emergency services. It allows the relevant minister to delegate the duty to give notice of vital critical infrastructure designations to other agencies to improve efficiency, and it facilitates the proposed relocation of the Broadmeadows VICSES unit, whose current site has been sold by the local council. I am sure the member for Broadmeadows will have something to say about that.

I started my contribution by acknowledging the fantastic work of the volunteers and emergency services workers in my electorate. I did also want to use this opportunity to remind the house that it is this

government — the Andrews Labor government and the Minister for Emergency Services in this place — who took decisive action to reopen the Australian Emergency Management Institute.

The Australian Emergency Management Institute is an icon in my electorate. It was a place of respite and refuge in the Ash Wednesday bushfires and then became the Australian Emergency Management Institute. In the federal budget of 2014 it was determined by the Abbott-Turnbull government of the time that the institute would be sold off — absolutely disgraceful. Up to 60 jobs were impacted as a consequence of that decision by the federal government. But do you know what happened? The Andrews Labor government stepped in to save the day and purchased the site. It was my pleasure, on behalf of the minister, to officially reopen the site as the Victorian Emergency Management Institute at Mount Macedon. I would like to use this opportunity to encourage all members in this place to go and visit the Victorian Emergency Management Institute and see what has happened as a consequence of the investment that we have made in this very important place to ensure that Victoria remains at the forefront of emergency management in the world, because, as we know, we live in one of the most fire-prone areas in the world, and it is absolutely imperative that we have the world's best emergency management services.

I might conclude by saying that it would really be terrific on International Women's Day to see those on the other side get behind this government's commitment to promote gender diversity, inclusion and leadership in our fire services. It is time for change. Only this government has targets to increase women's participation in the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. Only this government has targets to increase women's leadership in the Country Fire Authority. I urge members to support the bill and get behind our reforms.

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) (12:40) — I rise to make a contribution on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 that is before the Parliament. When it comes to emergency services and the importance of their roles in the communities in which they exist, you need look no further than my own electorate of Gippsland East. We have had certainly more than our fair share of natural events I will say — not all disasters, but natural events. Fire and flood? It is not a matter of if, but when. I will talk about a few of those events from the past.

We have major flooding of the Mitchell River and many of the rivers that flow into the Gippsland Lakes on record dating back to the 1870s. Of course our

traditional owners would have experienced much more over many, many thousands of years. We have had fairly regular flooding. In 1938 we had one of the worst ones that we have ever had. In 1998 we saw flooding and we have seen it again in even more recent years. Some of those events have resulted in the loss of life when they have occurred at locations around the state, but also in many rescues. We have had roads cut off and enormous damage bills. We have had homes having to be evacuated — I have seen a couple of homes floating down the Mitchell River; it was a bit of a sight. We have had a lot of stock losses.

We have a high beef area, a strong dairy area and our horticulture at Lindenow Flats, and they are heavily impacted. It has an enormous impact on our local economy and causes an enormous amount of general damage. In all of these instances our emergency services play a very, very important role not only in getting the message out but also in the clean-up when these events occur. Of course we also have our fires. They often have a far higher impact on our communities. With floodwaters you often know they are coming and you often get a bit of notice. With fires that is often not the case.

One of our benefits in East Gippsland are the Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigades that we have. In many cases they are the backbone of our local communities. The people who are involved in the CFA are also often involved in a number of other emergency services that we have, whether that be the Victoria State Emergency Service or ocean rescue squads and the like. They are people who dedicate large amounts of their time to support their local communities. They are very much our army that comes alive when required. It is critically important that we support them and we allow them to continue to grow in an era where when we look at some organisations volunteerism may be on the wane. It is important that we support our CFA brigades to maintain their strong memberships. Some like Mount Taylor, for instance, have increasing junior memberships, which augurs very well for the future.

In the last 24 months locations in my electorate like Dargo, Omeo, Swifts Creek, Bonang, Bendoc and Goongerah all been seriously threatened by fire on their doorsteps. They are all High Country communities that have been evacuated. We have lost some homes, but they live with this constantly every summer. I have spoken about the enormous efforts of our local brigades but they rely very heavily on the surge capacity of metropolitan-based volunteers. Possible changes to the Metropolitan Fire Brigade boundaries have been discussed. The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission mentioned that any changes to boundaries

may impact on the surge capacity if those volunteers are not there. Quite often when we have fire impacting our area we will see a number of trucks from the Barwon area and the Melbourne suburban area that come in to assist. We certainly do not want to see any changes to boundaries that may impact on that ability for surge capacity.

Apart from those townships I mentioned in the High Country — and I know that the member for Rowville in his contribution mentioned some of the more remote East Gippsland towns — some of our major population bases like Heyfield, Orbost, Cann River, Mallacoota and Bairnsdale have also come under fire attack in recent years. The fires swoop down from the Great Divide when we get a hot northerly wind, and they can travel enormous distances in very, very short amounts of time. We saw that with a fire just north of Buchan only last year that travelled an enormous distance very, very quickly. The year before, Heyfield was also under threat from a fire that travelled an enormous distance overnight. It really is a summer ritual.

In areas of rural and regional Victoria like mine we look at thunderstorms and their associated lightning strikes through a slightly different lens than perhaps someone who might be sitting on their balcony in the city. They have the capacity to absolutely light up our landscape. We had 16 000 lightning strikes in 6 hours in some regions of Victoria last year, many of which caused fire. While we have lost lives, a lot of infrastructure and a lot of stock around the state, it is because of our CFA in country areas that that is limited to what it has been and has not been much, much worse. It is important that we acknowledge and respect these men and women who are, in a lot of rural locations, the backbones of our community.

Given the importance of the CFA it is obviously with caution that we establish a new framework for emergency management planning, and that is what this bill does. It establishes new emergency management planning committees, and it transfers the responsibility for emergency management plans from local councils to these committees. That is something that will have a huge impact in our area, because in the past our councils, whether it be Wellington shire or Gippsland shire, have played a major role in bringing together these control centres and all the agencies within.

The potential concern is that whilst these changes are being made to improve outcomes and get some consistency, quite often we see things implemented at either a state or federal government level where one size does not fit all, particularly when it comes to rural and regional communities, and particularly when it

comes to remote communities. We need structures that work locally. We have had a structure that works locally, so we need to be very careful, if we are making these changes, to change that structure to something that I would hope would be at least as effective. But perhaps it may not be.

I repeat that there are a number of examples where, with good intentions and with goodwill, we introduced legislative change to structures and we sat back and we thought, 'Well, this is going to be just fantastic across the board. We'll roll this out everywhere. This will work everywhere', and in fact when it is rolled out on the ground, it does not work. I would like to think the pre-work has been put in to make sure that this process is streamlined. We have certainly engaged in consultation to make sure that all the i's are dotted and all the t's are crossed, not only with our councils but also with those emergency services involved.

I note that Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria has flagged some potential concerns with the new structure. They have made some points that have been documented. I do not need to repeat them here in this short amount of time. I know that when we have had fire in the landscape and I have walked into the incident control centres at Orbost, Bairnsdale and Heyfield with fire events over recent years, the agencies have been there working cooperatively. They have been sharing information under the right methods, and they are genuinely getting on top of things. Of course you have a few hiccups when you are dealing with natural disasters like fire, but generally speaking on the whole we have a system in place that works well.

Before these new planning committees are rolled out and before the powers are transferred from the councils to these committees as the groups that will organise and oversee our emergency responses, I urge the minister to make sure that we are getting something that is more effective than what has been there in the past. I am not sure how that will be done, but I would hope that all the positives from the previous structure will be incorporated into anything new.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (12:50) — I am delighted to make a contribution on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I have always believed that you learn from your lessons and that you should always look at continual improvement. Clearly the Hazelwood fire had a devastating impact on the Latrobe Valley, and it goes without saying that Black Saturday had a profound influence on peri-urban and regional communities. I think in many ways it changed the way we approach emergency management and safety in our communities.

I remember Black Saturday being an incredibly hot day in the city and feeling the cool breeze coming through at 5 o'clock and thinking, 'Well, I haven't heard anything about any fires, and the cool breeze has come through. Hopefully that's all going to be fine'. Then of course I woke up the next day and looked at the front page of the *Herald Sun* and it said 14 people had died. I was shocked. I did not realise the horror that had affected many people in our peri-urban and regional areas, and it still reverberates today.

I listened earlier today to the member for Yan Yean's contribution and the attempt by the member for Ripon to pick up on a couple of points she made. I have not been a member in this place for long, but one thing I sure know is that the member for Yan Yean is a proud member of the Country Fire Authority (CFA). She defended her communities on Black Saturday. She knows firsthand what it takes to protect a community from a major hazardous event like Black Saturday. I would defer to her views and her judgement any day of the week when it comes to those matters.

I listened earlier to the member for Gembrook's contribution, and I feel it is incumbent upon me just to make a couple of observations about that contribution. I think it is worth pointing out that an enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) cannot override an act of Parliament. Yes, there are consulting provisions within the EBA, but they relate to policies. They do not relate to overriding an act of this place. The other point I would make is that we already have volunteers involved in these committees, and that will remain the case as a consequence of the passage of this bill.

When we have instances like Black Saturday, when such instances are followed by instances like Hazelwood, and when you appreciate the fact that climate change is a reality and that we are going to have to deal with more of these events, we cannot have a laissez faire, hands-off approach. We cannot turn around and say, 'We had some bad fires in 1939, and then we had some bad fires in 1983, so at some stage we might need to think about getting better governance in place for a serious event in 30 or 40 years time'. These events will become increasingly common and frequent.

That is the reality of our lives. That is the reality of living with climate change. There is a need and a requirement to ensure that there are appropriate governance mechanisms in place to ensure that emergency planning is done effectively and appropriately. It is also about looking at recommendation 3, which came out of the Hazelwood mine fire, about having integrated fire management planning. It is about trying to find ways in which you

can look at working with local government and look at working with emergency management at the statewide level and covering that with specific local knowledge from CFA brigades to make sure that if it looks like we are having an event or we need to prepare for an event, we have got those different inputs that are brought in so that people can start to think about how they look at responding.

I note the member for Ripon in her contribution talked about rate capping as being a potential issue in terms of the ability for council to discharge their obligations under this act. I think I would point out to the member for Ripon that councils are not obliged to charge their rates only at CPI. They have got the ability to go before a tribunal and argue the case for an increase in rates if they see fit. That is entirely fair and appropriate. If a local government feels that there is a requirement or a need to turn around and say to their communities very clearly, 'Look, this is the new paradigm, this is the world we're living in, we need to make sure that we've got additional resources to be able to give you the services that you want and therefore we are asking that your rates increase by maybe 2.5 per cent or 3 per cent instead of CPI', then they should do it. They have got the power to do it, and if they passionately believe that is what their community needs, there is the ability for them to fight for it as the minister at the table, the Minister for Local Government, well knows and has said.

I think it is also worth pointing out that, in relation to the regional municipal emergency management planning committees, additional agencies and stakeholders will be invited to supplement the core membership. I think that does respect the fact that different areas and different communities have different issues, and there will be times when you will need to supplement and augment the skills and expertise on the committees. Indeed I think that, based on my experience working on a not-for-profit board, you do want to have people who have had different lived experiences — people who have got different qualifications, people who bring a different point of view to the table and have got the ability to advance that view in a respectful and professional environment so that you can then start to synthesise those various views and say, 'Well, based upon everyone around us today and based upon the different lived experiences that we have collectively around the table we think that our community needs to tackle these issues in this way'. I think that is the way forward and an appropriate way to try to deal with these issues.

It would be remiss of me indeed on International Women's Day not to make the observation that ASX-listed companies that have got a large proportion

of female non-executive directors tend to have a better return for their shareholders than those companies which are dominated by male non-executive directors. I think that goes to the point that when you have diversity on boards, when you have got a diversity of opinions in relation to committees like this, you get a better outcome. You get a much better outcome than just having the mono view or the analogue view of the world without that broader perspective. I think that is important.

The bill also ensures that the inspector-general for emergency management will provide an independent assurance role. Again, I think that is an appropriate thing to do, to have appropriate checks and balances in place just to be able to make sure that, yes, people have got it right. There should be that freedom for the regional committees to be able to tailor their plans in order to be reflective of their own local environment, but equally too you want to make sure that they do so in a way that is consistent with a broader statewide policy and is actually in the interests of the communities they are serving.

I was delighted to be briefed by the minister's office and the department on this bill very early on. It was a comprehensive and thorough briefing, and I do appreciate the minister's office providing me with that opportunity. One issue that I do not believe has been talked about by those opposite — but perhaps it was and I missed it — is in relation to tidying up the compensation arrangements with the Victoria State Emergency Service volunteers who might, for example, be injured in the course of their work. The bill will overcome a limitation in the act that precludes those volunteers from accessing common-law damages, so I think this makes sure that volunteers are placed on an even footing and they have got those abilities. We on this side of the house have always placed great store and emphasis on common-law rights for seriously injured workers and for having industrial compensation schemes. On that note, I am conscious the hour is late, and I commend the bill to the house.

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.04 p.m.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (14:04) — I am very pleased to make a contribution on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. There is so much enthusiasm amongst the members on our side to contribute to the debate on this bill that I had to muscle my way past the member for Sunbury. The member for Sunbury's enthusiasm to speak on government legislation knows no bounds.

The theme of this bill, I am told, and I believe this absolutely and utterly, is that our government is committed to implementing reforms in the emergency management sector because we always focus on community safety. It does not matter whether you are in the bush, whether you are in regional Victoria or whether you are in more of an inner suburban electorate like Ivanhoe; we understand the importance of emergency preparedness, whether it is our families or those who devote their lives to emergency services management. In parts of Victoria where I have had a lot of opportunity to work as Parliamentary Secretary for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, our forest firefighters and those who work in emergency management and in our Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning do a fantastic job in our community. I want to pay my respects to them and offer my thanks for the work they do on behalf of so many Victorians right across Victoria.

There are many lessons to be learned from the way we respond to and manage emergencies, and we will always make sure that we are making every effort to improve our emergency management system to protect community safety. I know that at different times, when I have had the opportunity to visit regional Victoria and meet our forest firefighters and Parks Victoria staff in particular, the understandings, the connections and the collaboration between different agencies is something that has evolved, particularly since Black Saturday, and has improved so much around our understandings and collaboration across government and agencies in the work that we do.

So many people in our community devote their professional working lives to the protection of our community and to make sure that in those different regions and cities our agencies are working together and giving confidence to local residents that we understand the challenges that different agencies face. We understand the significant resourcing that certainly our government has provided to those agencies so that they can do their jobs effectively. It is about understanding that when we work together, we get better outcomes, and we know that we can always learn from some of the difficulties, tragedies and challenges that we have had to face in Victoria over very many years.

I want to also touch on the fact that not only the Black Saturday bushfires but the floods in 2010–11 and the Hazelwood mine fire are examples that also go to the heart of fully acquitting recommendation 3 of the *Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Report* and action item 225 of the implementation plan. We may well recall that the Hazelwood coalmine fire burned for 45 days in early 2014, making it the largest and longest

running mine fire in the Latrobe Valley. I remember fully those opposite when they were in government sending teams of cleaners, sending vacuum cleaners, rags and associated items to communities in Gippsland, thinking that that somehow acquitted their obligations to people who understood very clearly the threats to their health from their anxieties and concerns about what had gone on.

What we have learned very clearly is that you have to be straight with the community. You have to give them the facts. You have to be clear in your understandings and take them into your confidence, because ultimately whether you are the chief health officer or whether you are the chief fire officer, your role in the community is to be straight with them and to give them frank and fearless advice. People are counting on us. They are relying on our agencies to do that.

The Labor government reopened the inquiry into the Hazelwood mine fire to get to the bottom of community health and safety and environmental concerns which were dismissed by the former coalition government. In the past I have worked as an adviser to governments and to our health minister. We have dealt with a severe acute respiratory syndrome outbreak and we have dealt with a range of different public health issues in our community. What we have always learned is that you need to resource our agencies, but you also need to make sure that you are clear, concise and factual in your communications with the community. If you do not know, you have to say that you do not know. If you do know, then you have to be clear with people and take them with you.

People absolutely and utterly rely on governments in times of crisis to give them the facts. We have also seen that in relation to the way people gravitate in a media sense, whether it is to the ABC or 774. When there are crises in the community, when there are disasters, if you look at the ratings you will see where people gravitate to for their information. They will go to some of the key news agencies, and all that is saying is that people have a hunger for information. They go to where they trust to get information. Certainly they need to not be undermined nor feel that their government is holding out on them in terms of the information that it gives them.

The latest report by the inspector-general for emergency management on the Hazelwood mine fire implementation plan, tabled in Parliament in December, shows that 187 of 246 action items had been completed. This legislation relates to number 188. The report also highlighted a number of key areas of progress, including increased investment in health services and programs for the Latrobe Valley region. Going way

back, we had Latrobe Valley task forces under the Bracks and Brumby governments. We realised that, as a Labor government, whether it related to public health issues, whether it related to employment and economic investment, the Latrobe Valley required concerted efforts and diligent work from government to turn around inequality and to turn around some of the difficulties and challenges that that region faces.

Certainly when you have a resilient community like we do in Gippsland, governments do have an opportunity to play a key role, but it is not about breezing in and breezing out. It is not about only showing up when there is a crisis. It is about a sustained effort over a long period of time to bring about support and change in a community.

What we saw with the formation of the Latrobe Health Assembly and the appointment of the Latrobe Valley mine rehabilitation commissioner was improved information for decision-makers before, during and after emergencies, including air quality monitoring and predictive data on smoke and fires; support for the rehabilitation of mine sites in the Latrobe Valley through significant increases in rehabilitation bonds; and the introduction of progressive rehabilitation milestones for coal mine operators. And we have learned the lessons from these events. The review into the Coolaroo recycling plant fire in July 2017 was released along with the most recent Hazelwood annual report. It examined how well the emergency management sector had put into practice the reforms introduced following the Hazelwood fire.

Understand very clearly, some of our suburbs out there in the member for Broadmeadows' electorate and the electorates of many of my colleagues in the western suburbs — and certainly out in Dandenong too — carry the load of a lot of the risk for the economic benefits that we all get to enjoy in our communities, whether that is recycling plants, whether that is waste management facilities or whether that is significant manufacturing plants that, while they also come with inherent risk, provide great employment and livability opportunities for Melbourne and surroundings suburbs.

But in taking on that load those communities also expect serious regulation that is implemented and affirmed by the government. We have seen that in terms of our review and reform in implementing a revised EPA, the Environment Protection Authority Victoria. We have also seen that in relation to this legislation on emergency management. As a former local government councillor in Banyule, I understand the value of the work that local government does in terms of managing the work in terms of natural

disasters and other issues that arise through emergency management plans and the role that local government plays in monitoring and managing those issues.

Can I say also that I am particularly pleased that recommendation 3 in the report of the inquiry into the Hazelwood mine fire highlighted a specific need to introduce more integrated fire management planning. That was not the first inquiry to make recommendations in this space. The state has enacted legislation to require integrated fire management planning. It has also authorised the emergency management commissioner to develop and implement regional and municipal fire management plans.

We can never stop learning in this space, both as legislators and as public policy developers. What I think is particularly important is that those opposite understand the value too of improving the confidence the community can have in the work that we do in this space and the way we implement it on the ground. We can never stop learning, and we can never stop building our confidence in the community. As legislators we understand the practices that we need to implement in relation to emergency management, and this legislation gives effect to significant recommendations that will change people's lives and give them greater confidence in the way in which we will manage these challenges into the future. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) (14:14) — I rise to make a contribution on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, and I can say from the outset that the opposition does not oppose the bill. Emergency management is something that we all need to take very, very seriously and always be striving to improve. New challenges are emerging all the time. New risks emerge from time to time. We see with the asthma thunderstorms an emerging risk there. There are changes happening constantly — new risks and threats are constantly emerging where we need to be responsive and need to have an ongoing improvement strategy in relation to our emergency management planning.

This bill amends the Emergency Management Act 2013 and other acts with the intent of creating a more integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to emergency management in Victoria. Under this bill new regional and municipal emergency management committees will be established with responsibility for emergency management planning. That is an obligation that currently sits with our local councils.

The bill also amends legislation in relation to Victoria's alpine resorts so that they are covered by the its provisions. Under the Alpine Resorts (Management)

Act 1997 alpine resort boards are considered municipal councils. Another key purpose of this bill is to clarify the compensation legislation arrangements in the Victoria State Emergency Service Act 2005 so that volunteers who are injured or suffer property loss can seek compensation under the law.

The amendments proposed by this bill are predominantly administrative in nature and are designed to establish and empower a statewide governance structure for emergency management planning and for the phased introduction of those changes. Under these new governance arrangements the emergency management commissioner will be responsible for the state-level planning and then the new regional and municipal emergency management committees will actually establish their respective regional and municipal plans in that context. The committees include representatives of specified agencies such as state government departments, local councils, emergency services and other stakeholders with the aim of creating a standardised framework for emergency management planning across the state and obviously incorporating the regional and municipal levels within that.

In terms of that, there are obviously some concerns in relation to the committees and they have been raised by others on this side. I want to also highlight issues about making sure that it is not so bureaucratic that it is difficult to develop and administer. Whilst the bill does allow for additional representatives to be invited to participate in these committees, we need to consider who those people will be. There are obviously considerable stakeholders involved that one would expect to be on these committees. For example, will local businesses in regional areas be on the committees? Will our Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers, who we love so much as Victorians, be involved in the committees in their local area?

We should think about our CFA volunteers in our non-metropolitan environments. Having lived in one of those areas for around six years, I know that you really depend on your CFA volunteers for guidance, for information and for protection. It is not just for people who live in those areas. So many of us might go on holidays on an annual basis or from time to time and absolutely depend on our CFA volunteers, because they have intimate knowledge of their communities. They have intimate knowledge of the topography, of the risks, of the conditions, of the roads and of relevant dangers. It is really important to make sure that our CFA volunteers are very much a part of these planning committees to ensure that those risks are covered off and those contributions are made.

I highlight the contribution of the shadow Minister for Emergency Services when he said that the emergency management plan must be a living document. That is absolutely the case. It is not a static document; it needs to be updated continually as a result of new risks emerging and being identified and therefore needing to be managed in the context of our state but also in local areas.

In terms of the concerns that have been highlighted regarding the need to genuinely look at the Premier's United Firefighters Union enterprise bargaining agreement that he has endorsed in the context of emergency management planning for the state, our chief fire officers and certainly the emergency management commissioner have explicit responsibilities in emergencies and in the planning and execution of addressing them. They need to be able to apply that expertise in their roles so that they can actually respond in a manner that is timely and appropriate for changing circumstances. In emergency situations, circumstances do change very, very rapidly and there needs to be that flexibility and ability to respond to those circumstances and changing circumstances in an emergency. They need uninhibited authority to be able to respond to protect Victorians. There cannot be hold-ups. There cannot be disputes about who can do what and who cannot do what in an emergency when those in authority know what needs to be done.

On that critical operational decision-making, we have seen it opposed, and it was highlighted in question time today. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) chief officer was opposed on a number of occasions, including in a request to have assistant chief officers on call during the 2015 heatwave and was refused to allow additional MFB resources to be placed on stand-by for emergency medical response for the 2014 heatwave, despite Ambulance Victoria requesting it. There has to be able to be that collaborative and significant and ever-changing response in emergency situations. There cannot be somebody opposing the response in an emergency situation. There is not the time nor the capacity for the protection of community to be provided if somebody can suddenly oppose a decision that needs to be made. When our emergency services under our emergency management plan need to respond immediately to changes in an emergency situation, they have the responsibility but they also need the authority and capability to act.

Likewise our emergency services and our emergency management plan need to be able to respond to legislative changes, whether they be commonwealth or state. We cannot have their legislative compliance held up simply because a union does not agree with a

legislative change. Our emergency services have to remain compliant with the law; that is a fact. We certainly know what happens and who ends up in the firing line, if you like, if they do not maintain compliance with the law. Ultimately the chief officers and the emergency management commissioner are the ones under the gun when it comes to compliance. They are the authority in emergencies and they will be the ones responsible for the outcomes. If others are making decisions or opposing circumstances or situations or requirements in an emergency situation, it will not be those people who oppose that end up with the responsibility for the outcomes of the emergency. It will be our chief officers and the emergency management commissioner.

We have had situations where their authority has been nobbled. We cannot have that situation where their authority is nobbled at critical times during emergency situations and circumstances. Unions absolutely have their place and their requirements, but I reiterate that it cannot be that they can nobble or diffuse the responsibilities and authority of our chiefs, whether they be chief fire officers; the chief of police; in relation to ambulance services, the chief executive officer; the emergency management commissioner; or any of those who are in authority. We must make sure that they are able to respond effectively, efficiently and promptly to an emergency situation and to the changing circumstances in that situation. They need to have the authority to act, and need to be able to do it and they need to have the freedom to be able to protect Victorians and keep Victorians safe. As I mentioned earlier, we do not oppose this bill.

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) (14:24) — I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (14:25) — To adjourn debate on this bill while members are still obviously wanting to speak on it so that the government can go where it would like to go and, as I said, while we have still got members on this side who would like to speak on it —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BATTIN — We had one who just stood up then. If we are going to adjourn this bill and we are going to be talking about a motion before the house, I want to say that we need to move to a motion that is specifically around the integrity within this place. The Labor member for Melton is sitting up with his mates right now — we need to go directly to that motion. If we are going to agree to a motion for an adjournment

and we are going to adjourn from a very important bill on Emergency Management Victoria, we need to start addressing the issues that have happened with the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. These are people in this Parliament who should be investigated, and the way to do that would be to go through the Privileges Committee.

The Leader of the Opposition put forward a motion in this place to make sure that all the documents to support the claims of those members were made public. That was to ensure that the claims that they had made were made public — the dodgy claims from the member for Melton, specifically around the caravan he had down there on the beach, a nice little sunny, sunshine spot, claiming more than \$100 000 from the Victorian people. What an absolute disgrace.

The Labor Party need to explain why they still accept him within their party whilst he is sitting on their side of Parliament right now. Obviously he is still friends with the Labor Party. I bet you he has not resigned from the Labor Party. And what a legacy he left. This is a man who was the deputy presiding officer in this place. He was the Deputy Speaker. He was the man who was going to oversee the integrity, with his rorting mate, the member for Tarneit. What a disgrace that this man sat in this place —

Mr Nardella — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I ask the honourable member to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — Member for Gembrook, I believe the member for Melton has indicated he was offended by the remark.

Mr BATTIN — I withdraw. And I will continue. While she has got the rorting member for Melton sitting up in his seat —

Ms Neville — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, this is a narrow debate on why we should not adjourn the motion. In this case, there were no more speakers on any side. The member needs to confine himself to that debate about why we should not adjourn, not stray beyond that issue.

Mr BATTIN — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, this is actually about the adjournment motion that the government has put, and we are saying that if you are going to adjourn from a very important bill, you should be going to a motion on an issue that is detrimental to the way that this place operates, and that includes —

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr BATTIN — We do know. You have left voicemail messages for where you are heading; you might want to think about that before you do. But this is directly in relation to what is going to happen with this in Parliament, and as long as the member for Melton and the member for Tarneit — both members of the Labor Party — are sitting in this Parliament —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — I would ask the member for Gembrook to confine his comments to the adjournment motion.

Mr BATTIN — I have a right to get up here and ensure that when we adjourn we go to the motion that is required.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — I call the member for Ivanhoe.

Mr Carbines — Thanks very much, Acting Speaker. I am very pleased to support the minister at the table's motion to move to other matters. Can I just —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Carbines — Well, you sat down.

Mr BATTIN — Yes, because it was a point of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — Member for Gembrook, would you like to continue?

Mr BATTIN — Thank you very much. In relation to the motion to adjourn —

Mr Nardella — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I request the honourable member to withdraw the comment that he made before the point of order by the minister.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — Member for Gembrook, I believe he is referring to the comment that you made a few minutes ago, and have made repeatedly, referring to him as the rorting member.

Mr BATTIN — I withdraw. But I will talk about the member for Melton. If we are going to adjourn, we should be going from the motion to adjourn to a motion that is directly about illegal activities that have happened within this Parliament and people who have taken money from the Victorian taxpayers and still expect to sit in here and still expect to claim their pensions. They still expect to claim their pensions, whereas the member for Melton should be considering exactly how he pays back the more than \$100 000 that he has taken from —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — Are you speaking on the motion?

Mr BATTIN — On the motion of adjournment, we want to make sure that if we are going to adjourn this debate, we go directly to this motion to make sure that we can ensure people in this place are people that are respected within the Victorian community. People like the roting member for Tarneit and people like the member for Melton, who has stolen from his own community, should not remain in this Parliament.

Mr Nardella — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I request the honourable member to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — Member for Gembrook, we have just had this discussion. The member for Melton has asked that you withdraw the comments.

Mr BATTIN — I withdraw.

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr BATTIN — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I would ask the member for Melton to withdraw his comments, specifically the swearing within the Parliament, which proves the person that the member for Melton is. Not only does he rip off his own electorate, but he wants to come in here and swear at those who are the honest ones within this Parliament.

Mr Nardella — I withdraw.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (14:31) — I am very pleased to support the Minister for Police's adjournment motion so that we can move to other matters in the house. I do recall in particular, during the government business program earlier this week, the member for Ripon detailing why she did not think it mattered to have discussions about matters that relate to health in this place. She pointed out that she thought it was inappropriate that we would not be discussing legislation and that notices of motion in regard to health cuts by the federal Turnbull government should not be discussed in this place.

Can I say that they are very important matters in the electorate of Ivanhoe. We should be able to adjourn matters on legislation so that we can go to the heart of these matters and come back to the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 at some later stage. I think it is particularly important that we have some discussions about what is happening in terms of health cuts by the federal government. Can I just say that Austin Health in my electorate, which

those opposite under the Kennett government sought to sell and privatise —

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, it is not within the scope of this debate, which is about adjourning the debate, for the member to start debating the motion, which is what he is doing. The rules and precedents of the Parliament are very clear. It is not for him to start debating the motion that the government is foreshadowing it is moving to.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — The member for Ivanhoe is speaking to the motion on the adjournment.

Mr CARBINES — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I would like to seek some clarity on what the member for Warrandyte's point of order is and what in the standing orders his point of order is based on. What is it?

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — The member for Ivanhoe will continue on the motion for adjournment.

Mr CARBINES — The reason for the adjournment motion is there are several substantial matters that the government seeks to debate in this chamber. Amongst those are the health cuts of the Turnbull government that the —

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Ivanhoe is directly ignoring your ruling. You said to him very specifically that he needed to come back to the debate around the adjournment, and the member is going again to the issue of matters that the government are foreshadowing for their next motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams) — I understand that the member is able to reference the motion that the government is seeking to move to in his contribution.

Mr CARBINES — Thank you very much, Acting Speaker, for your ruling. Can I just continue in relation to the contribution I wanted to make. There are other substantial matters on the business program that we need to discuss this week.

Can I just state for the house's information that Austin Health supports more trainee cancer researchers than any other Australian medical centre. That is the largest number of students studying health professions on a single site outside of a university. It has the largest

veteran clientele of any Victorian public hospital and has the largest translational cancer research program in Australia. It is a health service in my community that those opposite under the Kennett government sought to privatise and sell, and for that their minister at the time lost his seat of Ivanhoe, never to return to this place.

That is the record of those opposite. They do not want to talk about what they did and tried to do to the Austin Hospital. They do not want to talk about the advocacy for the Mercy Hospital for Women in Heidelberg, which provides great services in my community. They do not want to talk about the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital and the great services it provides to veterans in my community, or the post-traumatic stress disorder clients and emergency services workers at the repatriation hospital, a program and election commitment provided and funded by the Andrews Labor government. They do not want to support the Warringal Private Hospital in my community in Heidelberg.

The health precinct in Heidelberg employs thousands of people. It is bigger than many country towns in Victoria. That is how many people work at the Austin and repatriation hospitals, the Mercy Hospital for Women and the Warringal Private Hospital in my electorate. These are places that provide great services in my community, and not only on the front line as health practitioners.

Tomorrow we will be out there with the Minister for Health opening the short-stay unit at the Austin Hospital, and we are able to do that because of the funds put forward by the Brumby government to redevelop and rebuild the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre. Such was the job we did in managing that major project that the funds that were saved from that project — thanks to the great work of the former CEO who is now the Australian chief medical officer, Dr Brendan Murphy — were then able to be used to build the short-stay unit expansion at Austin Health. I look forward to joining the member for Altona, the Minister for Health, at the Austin tomorrow to open that expanded short-stay unit. The emergency department at the Austin Hospital has been expanded. Again I am happy to provide advice about the work that we are doing to support the community.

Mr Battin — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, it is a very narrow motion in relation to the adjournment of the debate. It is not actually to discuss what motion they want to go to or to debate the motion. It is only about the adjournment and moving to the next topic.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Graley) — The member's time has expired.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (14:36) — I rise to speak against the motion to adjourn the bill that we are currently debating. I note that the member for Ivanhoe made some remarks about my comments on the government business program, where I noted that the bills had worthy elements.

However, I feel that what we should be debating is this motion of which notice was given on 8 February in the name of the Leader of the Opposition — to move that a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on all matters relating to the conduct of the member for Tarneit and the member for Melton in relation to their claiming of the second residence allowance and their subsequent resignations as Speaker and Deputy Speaker. We need to debate this matter. This is where we need to move to when we are finished debating the bill before us. The reason we need —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms STALEY — I have already spoken on that bill. Perhaps you were not in the chamber for my contribution.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Graley) — Would the member for Ripon please ignore the interjections.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms STALEY — You could ask the member for Yan Yean because she had some views on that.

Mr Carbines — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, it is disorderly to respond to interjections.

Ms STALEY — We need to bring some certainty and some process into this chamber by saying that we take responsibility for the actions of the members in this chamber. In particular when they are roting or misusing their allowances, it is up to this chamber to say that there are mechanisms within the Parliament to deal with such matters. It can be by establishing a select committee, as proposed by this motion, which is what we should debate, and if those opposite do not want to debate that because they want to continue to run a protection racket for the member for Tarneit and the member for Melton, they can say that in debate. They can get up in the debate and say, 'No, we do not want to refer these people to a select committee or to the Privileges Committee because we think that what they did was fine. We think what they did was absolutely just hunky-dory'. I do not think they want to debate that.

Once again we note that the members opposite have failed to stand up to their leadership. They are quite happy to have their leadership refuse to debate this motion while they are all tarred with this brush. They are all tarred with the same brush because they are not standing up. They are not saying that we need to have integrity of our own processes. They are our processes. It is our job to look into and to rule, if you like, on whether people's behaviour and their rorting of their allowances is appropriate. The views of those on this side are well-known; we want this motion debated. We want it debated because it is up to the Parliament to say, 'We take responsibility for the standards of the members within this Parliament. We take responsibility'.

Those opposite do not want to take responsibility. They want to hide and do anything but debate this motion. This motion is of course of great concern to them, because nobody on this side has been rorting their second residence allowance. There is nobody on this side that is under the gun for this. No, it is the member for Tarneit and the member for Melton. They are the ones that ripped hundreds of thousands of dollars out of their allowances and misused them. That is an established fact, but then what we do about that is up to those of us in this chamber, and we are trying to bring the debate on.

We are trying to get to a point where we can discuss that. Do they go to a select committee? Let the Parliament decide. Just let the Parliament decide if they should go there. Maybe the Parliament will decide. Maybe those opposite will stand up, find a spine and say, 'We do not think that we want the profession that we have chosen — to represent our constituents, our people — to be tarred further by those who seek to rort their allowances'. But those opposite do not want to say that. They are quite happy to be tarred with the brush of, 'We're all rorters together in the Labor Party', apparently.

They are not prepared to stand up and not prepared to say, 'We will debate this motion', even if they debate it and then vote it down. They will bring out any trick in the book to stop debating this motion, and they have been bringing that on now for weeks and weeks. Now we have got to a point where we could continue to debate the bill or, as there is a gap, it could be the perfect time to bring on this motion, have the debate, get some sense and look after it.

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (14:41) — What about the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Turnbull Liberal government is ripping out of Victoria, both from the health system and infrastructure? Let us

talk about that rather than the slackers over there that are opposing an adjournment motion —

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Thomastown is not on the debate. It is a narrow debate on a procedural motion about adjournment. The member has gone straight into a rant about health and the federal government in some such words. I ask you to bring the member back to the narrow parameters of the debate.

Mr Carbines — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I understand that previous Acting Speakers in the midst of this debate have received advice that matters on the notice paper in effect form part of the debate in relation to the adjourning of the bill. That has been the consistent practice of other Speakers, and I would ask the Acting Speaker to take that into account.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Graley) — The member for Thomastown to continue.

Ms HALFPENNY — Before I was rudely interrupted I was just about to say in relation to opposing the adjournment of debate on the current bill, which is the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, the fact is that the opposition could not provide enough speakers to speak on this legislation. The last three speakers in a row were Labor government-side speakers. So it is a bit of a joke for you to be saying that you need more time to speak on this bill. We have been debating this legislation since 10 this morning. We are now —

Ms Ryall — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I am not a ghost and I actually was here making a contribution, so I am not sure that the Government Whip understood that I was in the chamber and had made a contribution. She perhaps was not here, but I expect her to be truthful when she provides some commentary on this.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Graley) — Thank you for your commentary, member for Ringwood. It is not a point of order, and I call the member for Thomastown.

Ms HALFPENNY — I apologise. It may have been the speakers just prior to the member for Ringwood. So here we are: we have been debating the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill since 10.00 a.m. It is about time that we moved on with the government business program. We need to start talking about the health cuts motion that the opposition is obviously very unhappy about and doing everything in its power to stop, because they are running a bit of a protection racket for the federal Liberal government.

What they do not want to do is face up to the facts and face up to Victorians and say why it is that they are not defending Victorians' rights to proper funding on health, proper funding on infrastructure and generally getting our fair share of federal government funding to do the things that Victorians need in this state.

We have an enormously growing population. We need to make sure that we have the infrastructure and the services to provide for that growing population in the world's most livable city, Melbourne, and also in the rural and regional parts of Victoria. Of course we cannot do that if we are not getting the proper support from the federal government. Again, it is so important that we commence debate on getting a health system that is properly funded from the federal government. The state government is pulling all the weight here. They are doing all the innovation, providing all the support to Victorians, and I think it is pretty incredible that the Liberal opposition and the national opposition in this state cannot stand up for Victorians. Rather they would prefer to protect and support the Turnbull Liberal government. I really do not think he even knows his way around Melbourne, because all he knows is Sydney.

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) (14:46) — I want to speak against the motion to adjourn the debate on the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I understand that the government wants to move to the hospital funding motion, which was extensively debated in the last sitting week. What this house should be doing, to deal with the distasteful black mark that is hanging over this place and is tainting the reputation of every member of this house, is to deal with the actions taken by the former Speaker and former Deputy Speaker when they claimed allowances that they were not entitled to. We should be debating the Leader of the Opposition's motion that a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report all matters relating to the member for Tarneit and the member for Melton in relation to their claiming second residence allowances and their subsequent resignations as Speaker —

Ms Ward — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I respect your judgement on this. I recognise that there is always a bit of wideranging debate when we come to these issues, but I would ask the member to actually talk to the motion, which is that we continue to debate the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 rather than talk about alternative motions that we could be debating instead.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Graley) — There is no point of order.

Mrs FYFFE — The motion that I would argue —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Graley) — The member for Evelyn is speaking. I would like to hear what she has to say, please.

Mrs FYFFE — The motion that I would argue we should be moving to is the motion that has been given by the Leader of the Opposition. It really is a very serious matter, and as I said in my opening remarks, it is a distasteful black stain on this house and is tainting everyone's reputation who sits in here. This has continued for so long and it is hanging over all of us. This needs to be resolved. It needs to go to a select committee. We need to know what the documents were that they supplied to support their claims — whether any of those documents were false or misleading, whether the statements and documents and other materials they may have provided in relation to their claim were substantive and supported their arguments that they had not rorted the system. And yet we have the former Speaker, who we understand has made repayments. We do not know —

Ms Ward — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I again raise a similar point of order, which is that discussing the behaviour of other members of this Parliament is not within the scope of the motion. The motion is that we adjourn debate on the emergency services legislation. It is extremely indulgent of the member for Evelyn to continue to go down the path of not actually debating the motion but reading by rote her notes about whatever it is that she is speaking on that has no relevance to the motion before her.

Mr R. Smith — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the issues that the member for Evelyn is discussing at the moment have already been canvassed in the debate. The nature of a debate is to refer to issues that have been raised during the debate and to contributions by speakers who have already been on their feet. It is not called 'get up and make a contribution on a written speech' time. It is a debate, which means that the issues that have already been raised by members can be canvassed by the member for Evelyn, which is exactly what she is doing.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Graley) — The member for Evelyn is to continue but to narrow her focus to the motion in front of us.

Mrs FYFFE — Thank you, Acting Speaker. What I am doing is presenting an argument that we should not be moving on to the hospitality motion.

Mr R. Smith — Hospital motion.

Mrs FYFFE — I am sorry, the hospital motion. I am so incensed by what has happened in this place with the former Speaker and former Deputy Speaker that I cannot even get my thoughts straight, but we should not be moving to a motion that has already been extensively debated in this house. What we have is a motion that has not been debated but that should be debated for all of us. For the benefit of all of us this matter needs to be dealt with. It needs to be referred to a select committee, it needs to be dealt with. We are in an election year. Tempers will fray in this house, as they always do. This matter needs to be resolved. We need to know if those two members were roting the system or not.

House divided on Ms Neville's motion:

Ayes, 41

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

Noes, 38

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

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Debate adjourned until later this day.

FEDERAL HEALTH FUNDING

Debate resumed from 22 February; motion of Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health):

That this house:

- (1) condemns the federal government for a funding proposal that short-changes our hospitals by over \$2 billion;
- (2) condemns the Leader of the Opposition for failing to stand up to Canberra on Victorian hospital funding; and
- (3) notes the federal government owes Victoria \$104 million for hospital services already provided.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (14:59) — It is a pleasure to rise and speak on this motion related to hospital funding and particularly that this house condemns the federal government for the funding proposal that short-changes our hospitals by over \$2 billion. An extraordinary challenge for our state is the increased population and providing the highest quality care to people no matter where they live. That is what our system — our doctors, our nurses, our paramedics — strive to do: provide the greatest care for all Victorians. As we head towards 10 million people by 2050, that challenge will be felt significantly. The problem of being the world's most livable city — people want to live and work in Melbourne, in Victoria, in our regions — is to provide the greatest quality health care, but we have an extraordinary challenge when once again through the three tiers of government and particularly the relationship between the state and federal governments our state is being short-changed with the most devastating effect.

We have seen it in infrastructure. No-one in this place can stand with their hand on their heart and say we are getting a fair deal in Victoria — 9 per cent for Victoria as opposed to 45 per cent for New South Wales is not a fair deal. Anyone asked, hand on heart, whether they think that is a good deal for Victorians would say that it is not.

Another big challenge is something so critical as the health and support of all Victorians. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement on health funding is a direct cut to our health funding — \$2.1 billion will be taken out of our health system over the forward estimates and that will have a devastating impact on Victorians. We will see tens of thousands of elective surgeries put at risk. I have always had a problem with the term 'elective' surgery, because if you are waiting for a knee replacement or are waiting for a hip replacement and your quality of life is put at risk by these delays, by these blowouts in time, then it is not elective at all — you desperately need that. Our

government, the Victorian Labor government, has done so much to lower those waiting times. People are getting the care they need sooner because of the priority this government puts on that funding.

This goes to the heart of values, and it goes to the heart of what you focus on when you are given the opportunity to govern. You have 1461 days from the time you are elected to put into practice your agenda and what you want to put forward for the state, yet it only took the coalition government 21 days to inflict their first health cut, which would ultimately cost Victorians \$350 million and which had a devastating impact. That was an indication of the values of those opposite and how they would approach our health sector.

We saw their atrocious treatment of our nurses. Nurse-to-patient ratios are about providing proper care, getting people seen sooner and making sure they can get on the pathway to recovery. Those opposite walked away from our nurses, and we saw their devastating treatment of our nurses. The middle finger, both literally and figuratively, was given to the nurses during that campaign.

We saw paramedics pleading for extra funding and support. They pleaded that if they did not get the funding they needed, if they did not get the resources they needed, then lives would be put at risk. This is not about politics; this is not a union campaign. We are talking about lives being put at risk if those resources were not provided. Month after month after month, data was hidden. The former Minister for Health walked away from his obligations and turned his back on paramedics. Lives were put at risk, and waiting times ballooned.

The direct correlation is that now the Andrews Labor government is in government and it has recruited 325 extra paramedics towards its commitment to provide an extra 450 paramedics. Response times are the best they have been in nine years. Anyone looking at the empirical evidence can see the relationship between properly funding our health services and respecting our paramedics and nurses. It is about investing in the system, not making cuts and moving towards privatisation but having a safety net and supporting the people in our health services as they care for Victorians. That is the most critical thing. As I said, response times are the best they have been in nine years. Paramedics all across our state are being supported. That has been felt in my community because people are being seen by doctors sooner and people are being protected.

This issue goes to the heart of what we do as a sovereign state in our engagement with the commonwealth. Everyone should be pulling the cart for Victoria. We have had the Premier front up to the Council of Australian Governments, along with the other premiers, and say directly to the Prime Minister, 'These health cuts will have a devastating effect on my state, regardless of who is in government in the years to come. Victorians will suffer if you don't give the allocated funding based on our population numbers and based on our population growth'. That has fallen on deaf ears. That has not been acknowledged, and the support has not been provided.

Yet in the debate around the funding of the failed east-west link project that was committed to by former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, the Leader of the Opposition went up to Canberra and he was going to put it in a locked box. He got on the plane for the 45-minute journey. He could not get up there quick enough to do a press conference with the Prime Minister. I looked at the Leader of the Opposition's website, and there is not one mention of health funding, a systemic issue that is affecting our state.

We call on the Prime Minister to be bipartisan and stand with our Premier. We call for Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister of Australia, to address these funding cuts — to address the impact they will have on our doctors, on our nurses, on our hospitals — because that is the decent thing to do. Hand on heart, Victorians will suffer if we do not get a commitment from the federal government to return that \$2.1 billion. If you want to put your hand up and say that you are an alternative Premier, you have got to act in the interests of all Victorians, not put Liberals first and Victorians last. You do not put your political interests first and be annoying in Canberra. You have got to stand up and be counted. The decent thing for him to do is to finally have a backbone, have a spine and actually stand up to Malcolm Turnbull in Canberra and ask for that funding to be returned.

If he is not going to have the guts to confront Malcolm Turnbull, then he should put in his sat nav the address of the federal member for Flinders, which is about 60 kilometres south of my electorate of Mordialloc. He could swing by for a cuppa at my place. We could have a chat. Then he could head down the highway and go and talk to the federal Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, who is a Victorian and who has been utterly silent in this space. He has not acknowledged it; he has not put it forward. He has been silent on behalf of all Victorians about the health cuts. He abandoned the climate space, even though he wrote a paper on the emissions trading scheme. He abandoned his values in that space. It

seems now that he is abandoning his values regarding the health sector, and he has family members who have worked in the health sector. He needs to acknowledge that this situation cannot go on.

We have seen our work in the health space. I think of my local hospitals that support my constituents. A day procedure wing is being developed at Sandringham Hospital. The Monash Children's Hospital is just going to be absolutely extraordinary. To be there with the Premier to see exactly the support that we are providing to so many Victorians in the south-eastern suburbs with these funding allocations was truly extraordinary. The Monash Children's Hospital will be the second largest children's hospital in Australia; it is an incredible investment for our state.

We are doing all these things, all these wonderful projects, on our own because we have a federal government that puts its political interests before the interests of Victorians. We saw that with the Country Fire Authority intervention. When the going gets tough and the Prime Minister sees a few numbers move on the board, looks at the pendulum and thinks it is getting a bit shaky, he will get on that plane — he is Mr Sydney Prime Minister and when the pendulum looks a bit shaky there he is. But when something is fundamentally for Victorians and in their interests you cannot find him. He is not coming on the trams anymore. You do not see him on the trains down in Melbourne anymore. You cannot get him on the phone.

That is a real degradation in your responsibility to serve all people despite your politics and despite the colour that you line up with. Because the evidence shows that Victorians will suffer and our nation will suffer if we do not get the proper funding. This motion could not be any more serious, because whoever is in government in the 59th Parliament will be fronting up to COAG to have these discussions. At the moment Victorians cannot have trust and confidence in the Leader of the Opposition to stand up when it counts. He has not said anything publicly or privately to the Prime Minister about these devastating health cuts, so how can Victorians have confidence and trust in him that he will bat for them at COAG?

Ms WARD (Eltham) (15:09) — I have to say it has been a little bit of a circus performance by those opposite. We have people wanting to stop us debating this motion where we are talking about the health funding cuts of the federal Turnbull government. They want to delay this debate. They do not want us to have this debate. I have to say, Acting Speaker, it was interesting when I was in your place just before lunch and I had the speaking list in front of me. I have to say

there were a few of those opposite who had not actually turned up to speak on that bill.

But they are so passionate about this. As soon as there was a mention of us criticising the Turnbull government for its health cuts, bam, there they were, ready to step up. It is embarrassing that you have got those opposite who want to stand up and defend the Turnbull government and who do not want to have a debate about the outrageous cuts that the Turnbull government is inflicting on this state. They should be standing up for Victorians instead of being apologists for the Tory cost slashers of Sydney who want to take money away from hardworking Victorians.

Victorians expect and deserve better. Victorians work incredibly hard, and we contribute a great deal of money to the national economy. Our jobs growth is the highest in the nation. We are the powerhouse of what is happening in this country at the moment, thanks to the Andrews Labor government and the hardworking people of Victoria. They deserve better than the mealy-mouthed platitudes of those opposite who will not stand up to the Prime Minister for Sydney and who will not demand a better deal for this state, because they should. As was said by the member for Mordialloc earlier, those opposite should be Victorians first and Liberal Party members second, but that is not the case. They are apologists for Malcolm Turnbull, who is prepared to slash \$2.1 billion from health funding in this state.

That is on top of the fact that Victoria only gets 9 per cent of the infrastructure funding in this nation when in fact we are, as I have said, the actual economic powerhouse of this nation. Why are we not getting the investment that we deserve? Why are we being punished by Malcolm Turnbull and his Sydney-based cronies for being Victorian? Why does he hate Victoria so much? Why does the Prime Minister for Sydney not come south of the border, not cross over the Murray River and give Victorians the investment that they deserve? It is shameful that those opposite are prepared to run a protection racket around the Prime Minister for Sydney.

These guys, the Turnbull Liberal government, are proposing to short-change Victorian hospitals and Victorian families by more than \$2 billion. That is a lot when it comes to health care. Victorians have got every right to have good-quality health care that is an equal investment by the federal government and that is matched by the state government. But in fact the Turnbull government expects this state to pay even more. They expect this state to absorb 55 per cent of the costs, not 50-50.

I ask you: where is the equality and where is the fairness in that? There is none. It is a disgraceful coalition government that is in charge of this country, and their prejudice against this state is unconscionable. It should not be about politics. It should be actually be about the people who deserve and need the care. We have a lot of people living in this state and those people deserve quality health care. I ask the Prime Minister for Sydney: why are the people of Victoria of less value than those in other states? Why are the people of Victoria of less value than those living in New South Wales? Why are the people of Victoria of less value than those living in Sydney, and why are the people of Victoria of less value than those living in western Sydney?

The Prime Minister of Sydney is prepared to make this a debate about politics. He is prepared to use people as political fodder, just as we have seen those opposite use our paramedics as political fodder, our firefighters as political fodder, our nurses as political fodder, our teachers as political fodder and our public servants as political fodder. These people do not actually care about the people of this state. They do not care about the lives that they are affecting. All they care about is the actual political gain that they may get from their game playing. This is just absolutely shameful. How can you play political games with people's lives?

Health care is far more important than that. Health care deserves a good solid investment. Ripping over \$2 billion out of the Victorian health economy is absolutely disgraceful. I want Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister for Sydney, to come down and I want him to stand in those health queues. I want him to stand in emergency departments. I want him to stand in cancer wards. I want him to stand in birthing wards. I want him to stand there and explain to those people — those women giving birth, those men receiving cancer treatment, those kids with broken legs in emergency departments — why they do not deserve their fair share. Do you know what? I bet you he will not, because that man is a coward. He will not come to Victoria and tell Victorians why he is prepared to rip us off. He will not do that at all.

The Turnbull government is an absolute disgrace. What is even more disgraceful is that those opposite will not get up and join with us to demand a better deal for Victorians. Instead they will cower. They cower, and they do not stand up to him. They do not demand a better deal. It is absolutely outrageous.

Our hospitals will miss out on \$113 million in the first year of this hopeless agreement. The fact that those opposite are not prepared to jump up and down in outrage over this is an absolute shame. But is it any

surprise when they were prepared to rip the guts out of Victorian health care when they were in government? No, it is not. As we know, they have already flagged that the first thing they will do, should they be elected at the end of November, is start a commission of audit. We know exactly what a commission of audit means. A commission of audit means cuts, cuts, cuts.

Mr Edbrooke interjected.

Ms WARD — That is exactly right, member for Frankston. I ask the people of Victoria: how can you absorb the health cuts of \$2.1 billion from the federal Turnbull Liberal coalition government along with the cuts you are going to see from those opposite, should they win in November? Victorians cannot absorb those cuts because they are too much for anyone to absorb.

The commonwealth government should pay its fair share. It should stop short-changing Victorians. It should stop reaching its hands into the pockets of Victorians, taking out as much GST as it wants and then ripping us off when it comes to investment in this state. It is an absolute disgrace. For those opposite to not want to debate this — to not want to flag that Victorians are concerned about the fact that this much money is going to be ripped out of our state — shows how weak they are. They are the weakest opposition that this state has ever seen. They cannot stand up for Victorians. They cannot stand up for anyone. All they want to do is divide this state. They just want to create arguments where they do not exist. They want to vilify people who serve this state well. They cannot come up with a policy idea to save themselves other than cutting our services and cutting investment.

In fact I suspect that those opposite are well in sync with the Turnbull government for Sydney. When the Turnbull government says, 'Cuts', they say, 'Great idea. Let's get to it. We want to do the same thing, because that is the only way we think we can achieve a better bottom line — by cutting services'. They do not think that investment in infrastructure or creating jobs are ways to improve the bottom line. They think that if they just cut services and cut money from people, that is the way to improve their budget forecast. But it is not — all it does is hurt people.

Those opposite are incapable of putting people first. They are incapable of understanding what it is that people need in their day-to-day lives and how to support them as they go about their lives. They cannot put people first. It is only an Andrews Labor government that does that. It is only an Andrews Labor government that invests in the people in this state. It is only an Andrews Labor government that has created a

24-hour ambulance service in the Shire of Nillumbik — the first time this has ever happened. While those people over there spent four years at war with paramedics, four years vilifying them, four years saying no and four years not supporting them, in less than four years this government is not only rebuilding the ambulance station at Montmorency, it is also creating a new one at Diamond Creek and it has already announced a 24-hour ambulance service in Nillumbik, which has never happened before. The people of Nillumbik have never had this before.

Those opposite were asleep at the wheel for four years. They cut and they pillaged, and they want to keep doing it. They absolutely support the Turnbull government in its cuts to this state. If they did not, they would stand up with us and demand a better deal for Victorians. But they do not do that. They do not do that because they are weak, they do not do that because they are cowardly, and they do not do that because they actually agree with the disgraceful actions of the Turnbull government. They agree with them. They agree with health service cuts. They agree with cuts across the board. They sit there complacently while we absorb the 9 per cent disgraceful investment in our infrastructure from the federal government for Sydney.

Mr M. O'BRIEN (Malvern) (15:19) — I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

The reason I move that the debate be adjourned is that there is a very important notice on the notice paper standing in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, a notice that was given on 6 February 2018, a notice that deals with the rorting by the member for Melton and the member for Tarneit, a notice that needs to be dealt with urgently because the integrity of this house and its membership depends on a select committee being established to determine that rorting.

This is important because politicians have never been held in lower esteem than they are today. One of the reasons is that the public sees too many politicians as being in it for themselves — not to serve the public interest, but having their snouts in the trough. We have two prime examples of snouts in the trough, personified by the members for Melton and Tarneit. It is a matter of protecting this house's reputation. It is a matter of sending a message to the public that we hear their criticisms and we hear their concerns about whether politicians are doing the right thing and about whether politicians are acting in the public interest or their own personal interest. That is why it is essential that this matter be dealt with forthwith.

The notice standing in the name of the Leader of the Opposition proposes that:

- (1) A select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on all matters relating to the conduct of the member for Tarneit and the member for Melton in relation to their claiming of second residence allowances and their subsequent resignations as Speaker and Deputy Speaker ...

The motion also establishes a number of particular matters that need to be looked into. This is a matter of priority for this house because rorting amongst our numbers cannot stand. We heard the weak excuses from the Premier. We heard the absolutely pathetic excuse from the Premier that we have to wait until the police have investigated. The police have looked at it, and the police have now said it is up to us to deal with this ourselves.

So why are the Labor Party not prepared to deal with it? Why are the Labor Party not prepared to deal with rorting by their own members? They are happy to take the vote of the member for Tarneit. They are happy to take the vote of the member for Melton — tainted votes of two rorting members. Why are they not prepared to have their actions dealt with and assessed by a select committee of this Parliament?

There is no doubt that the Labor Party can establish a select committee with its own members as a majority. That can be done. In the previous Parliament, the 57th Parliament, when there was an allegation of rorting by a member — and it happened to be a government member at the time — we moved a motion to send the issue to the Privileges Committee. We were more interested in protecting the integrity of this house than we were in protecting one of our own. Why can't the Labor Party do the same? The fact is that they are a bunch of rorters protecting rorters. That is all they are. The same people who rorted with the red shirts want to protect the rorting of the member for Melton and the member for Tarneit.

The public is still owed money, for goodness sake. We are here debating alleged health cuts, but there is money to be obtained from the pockets of rorters and put back into the public treasury that could be spent on health in this state. Why are the Labor Party not interested in getting that money back? The answer is that they are more interested in protecting one of their own rorters than they are in recovering stolen money for the public, and that is a disgrace. That is a shame.

How does the Labor Party compare its actions in covering up this rorting, protecting this rorting and refusing to make sure that this rorting is dealt with by

this Parliament? Compare that to the actions of the previous government. It caused us great political difficulty — that is a matter of public record — but we did the right thing by the Parliament and by the people of Victoria. We were not prepared to stand by and to allow rorting to go on. It did not matter which side of the chamber they were on.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr M. O'BRIEN — The member for Mordialloc sits there with a big, smug grin on his face. He thinks rorting is hilarious, as long as it is done by the Labor Party and as long as it is a cover-up of one of their own. These people who rorted their way into government with the red shirts are covering up the rorting of the members for Melton and Tarneit. It is a disgrace. We need to deal with this. We need to deal with this now. We need to make sure that that rorting by those Labor MPs cannot stand.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) (15:24) — I have really heard it all now. Honestly the member opposite with his moral rectitude and fine upstanding character really has the heart of Victorians at the centre of what he wants to achieve here today with his motion to adjourn! Frankly I have heard better from the member for Malvern than that contribution. The fact is that we know what our commitments are to Victorians and we know the importance of the work that we are doing with motions such as this, putting Victorians' health at the forefront of everything we do, including advocating to and arguing against a federal government that wants to use political pointscoring and political ploys and games to deny Victorian families their just deserts in terms of a fair deal from Canberra. The member for Malvern ought to reconsider what he represents here in this place, because it certainly is not the ordinary hardworking Victorian families that we represent on this side of the house.

This motion is a vital motion for the health and the security of Victorian families, and this government has a very strong agenda of rebuilding our health system and rebuilding the health services that families deserve no matter where they are living in Victoria. Whether it is in metro Melbourne, whether it is in the suburbs or whether it is in regional and rural Victoria, our money is going to where it is needed the most, and that is to make sure that families can have the health care that they deserve. What is letting them down? What is letting them down is a federal government that puts politics ahead of the health of families, and this is what is at stake here today.

Those opposite want to go down a hole where they are not motivated by the interests of Victorian families, by the importance of this motion calling to account a federal government that does not care about the health system that we have got in Victoria or by the fact that the commonwealth need to make good on their commitments and make sure that Victoria gets its fair share. We do not do this lightly. We do it not because it is in the interests of the Victorian government but because it is in the interests of Victorian families. Those opposite ought to stop doing the bidding of their masters in Canberra and start acting like an opposition that actually wants to lead and wants to be a potential party of government, because from this angle I cannot see that happening, and Victorian families out there ought to understand the difference between those on that side and those on this side in terms of standing up for our fair share here in Victoria.

I only have to remind everyone that everybody on this side of the house wants to make a contribution on behalf of their communities in their electorates to such an important motion. Let me remind those opposite in this house what this motion is about: condemning the federal government for their funding proposals that will short-change our hospitals by more than \$2 billion. That is \$2 billion Victorian families are now missing out on. What that buys you is better health services and better care for them and their families. Absolutely it is wrong for the opposition leader to basically fail to stand up and represent the interests of Victorian families in this house. I challenge those opposite to change their minds and change their position on this motion and to actually start to come to their senses and put the priorities and health of our community ahead of doing the bidding of their mates in Canberra.

The federal government owes Victoria \$104 million for hospital services, and that is what needs to come to us. This is absolutely an important point here. For too long on a whole range of measures the federal government has been actively penalising Victorian families in terms of what they deserve in funding for particularly important, vital services. Health is one of those critical ones that we pride ourselves on here in Victoria. We do not want to go back to the old days when Liberals equalled cuts. Liberal governments equal cuts in Victoria when it comes to health services, and that is what those opposite — they will not say it today, they may not say it tomorrow, but it will be borne out between now and the election — represent: more cuts to health services. That will mean not only that Victorian families will be left behind by the federal government but that they will have no friend, they will have no advocate and they will have no champion in those opposite.

Mr WATT (Burwood) (15:29) — I rise to support the motion put forward by the member for Malvern that the debate on the useless motion put forward by the government be adjourned. The reason why — and I have contributed to the debate on the actual motion and argued very strongly this fact — is that it achieves nothing. What we on this side want to do is move on to a motion which would actually achieve something. What we have in this house — we do not have them here at this moment — are two members of the chamber who have rorted their second residence allowances. They rorted the people of Victoria. They are two members of the Labor Party who are rorters and who need to be brought to account. The motion that we on this side would like to move on to is a motion that was put forward by the Leader of the Opposition on 6 February 2018 that:

- (1) A select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on all matters relating to the conduct of the member for Tarneit and the member for Melton in relation to their claiming of second residence allowances and their subsequent resignations as Speaker and Deputy Speaker, including ...

And there are a bunch of points there. I will not read through the entire motion, because I am sure every member of the Labor Party understands the motion and every member of the Labor Party understands that when we were in government — and it is great to see the member for Frankston here, because this is going to be pertinent — the former member for Frankston was referred to the Privileges Committee by the Liberal and Nationals government. We referred a member to the Privileges Committee because of accusations. Contrast that with the current government, who will spend hundreds of thousands of dollars and will bury their heads in the sand to try to make sure that no rorts are uncovered.

We know there were rorts. We know that they rorted, because they had to resign because of these rorts, but instead of getting to the crux of the problem and trying to expose the problem that we have, what we have is a protection racket. We have the Premier and the Labor Party providing a protection racket for the member for Melton and the member for Tarneit. There is the charade about the member for Melton not being a member of the Labor Party and sitting on this side of the chamber, but we all know that he is still one of the family. He is still in there. Every time I walk into Strangers Corridor, there is the member for Melton. He is there having a nice cup of tea or a cup of coffee with his good mate the member for Footscray, and —

Ms Spence — You're a disgrace.

Mr WATT — I'm a disgrace? I am not one that is endorsing rorting. Maybe you should stand up and have a look behind you and talk about rorting. Apparently I am a disgrace because I am calling out people who have been rorting. People are trying to pretend that they do not support rorters, but what they do is they go into Strangers Corridor and they have a nice morning tea, a cuppa, with the rorting member for Melton, who they like to pretend is not a member of the Labor Party. But we all know the rorting member for Melton is still a member of the Labor Party. He is still a friend of the Labor Party, and he is still supported by the government.

What we need to do is make sure that we get to the bottom of it. The Premier has talked previously about how the standard you walk past is the standard you accept. What we know is that the Premier accepts — the Premier clearly condones — rorting. What we need to do is make sure that the people of Victoria understand that the Parliament should not accept this. The Parliament did not accept this four years ago, when there were accusations around a member of the government, keeping in mind those accusations were over sums of about \$1200. What we are talking about with the member for Melton's claims is somewhere around \$175 000. We are not talking about \$1200, we are talking about \$175 000, yet we have a government who refuses to hold him to account. They say to him, 'Oh, you can pay back some when you want to. When we get past the election, you might have to pay it back or you might not have to pay it back. Don't worry about that. Look over there, look over there. Let's talk about the federal government'. No, what we need to do is make sure that members of Parliament are held to account.

As a member of Parliament, it is quite distressing to see what the public thinks of us because of the way the government will not hold members of Parliament to account. We should not accept rorters. But the member for Melton and the member for Tarneit think that rorting is acceptable. What we know on this side is that Labor equals rorters. We will continue to hold them to account. We will continue to hold the government to account.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (15:34) — I rise to firmly reject the motion to adjourn this extremely important debate this afternoon, because the members opposite are spineless and gutless. We stand firm in condemning the federal government for their pitiful funding changes which will cut \$2.1 billion over five years out of Victorian health care. For the people in my community of Frankston this means \$90 million from Peninsula Health's budget over five years. That is 303 fewer doctors, 14 553 fewer elective surgeries and 722 fewer nurses. The question we really need to be

asking the house today is: why are Victorians worth less than people from other states?

We have 10 per cent of federal funding coming to Victoria, when we have 25 per cent of the population. Yet New South Wales gets 46 per cent of federal funding, and Queensland gets 25 per cent of federal funding. Let me tell you about a little excursion Malcolm Turnbull made three weeks ago. He came to Frankston. He got out of his car and looked around and tried to find a project he could invest in. He could not find one. There is a reason for that: federal Liberals do not invest in Victoria. Mr Turnbull then stepped out of his car in the middle of a \$13 million street, a brand-new street. He looked around, puffed his chest out and appreciated how good it looked. He then proceeded to look over the road at the \$75.9 million Chisholm project — Chisholm TAFE—state government co-funded. Then he looked up at the Overton Road project, probably about \$60 million worth of level crossing removal, and he stood there with a sign behind him that read, 'New Frankston station under construction'. His words were, 'Look, this state government really need to get on with doing something'. That is a quote. He actually said that.

These are people who have no idea. I think we need to go back to the question: why are Victorians worth less than their counterparts in communities in New South Wales and Queensland? Why are the federal Liberals so weak? Why is the federal member for Dunkley so weak? He just tags along with state government projects; he just comments on state government projects. But he needs to fight for funding like state members do. He needs to look his Prime Minister in the eye and say, 'I just can't survive here if you don't give us funding'. He needs to get funding. He needs to help Frankston and he needs to help the state government build Frankston. They have made no investment in Frankston at all. When you look around, all there are are cuts. We have recently heard that there could be cuts to occasional care at the neighbourhood house. It is an absolute disgrace. But what is even more disgraceful than that is sitting in a room opposite those who are beholden to their federal counterparts and will do absolutely nothing. With that, I reiterate that I reject the motion to adjourn this extremely important debate and I will let some other people voice their opinion on it.

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (15:37) — I rise to support the member for Malvern's motion to adjourn this debate and instead deal with something that this Parliament has not dealt with for well over 12 months, and that is the behaviour of the member for Melton and the member for Tarneit who have brought great shame on this Parliament, great shame on the

Labor Party, yet they are being protected by those opposite who still refuse after all this time to even let us debate a motion to refer them to a select committee.

I was looking at the reference to a select committee that the Leader of the Opposition put on the notice paper some time ago and again on 6 February. I am reminded that, as the member for Malvern pointed out in his opening comments and as the member for Burwood also made very clear, when there was a question mark over the former member for Frankston in the previous Parliament, it was the government of the day, the government he was a part of, that referred the matter to the Privileges Committee. Yet this government will not even establish a select committee.

I was reminded of that select committee this morning when I saw a press release from the Parliament about a select committee heading to Ballarat next week for their inquiry into penalty rates and fair pay, which as everyone in this chamber knows are not even issues directly under the purview of the Victorian state government. Penalty rates are a matter for the commonwealth government because we referred our powers many, many years ago. We can have a select committee that is travelling all around the state to look into a political issue that the Labor government wants looked at, but when it is the issue of what has been accepted and admitted as the rorting of the second residence allowance by members of this government, it is a case of, 'No, there's nothing to see here. We don't want to talk about it'. That is just a disgrace. It is a blight on this Parliament. But most particularly, it is a blight on the Labor Party.

Victorians are angry about the rorting that has gone on. I can tell you that when this first came out in the media and was developed in this Parliament through question time, people in the streets in my electorate were angry about it. I have to say that I am angry about it too, because what the members for Tarneit and Melton did raised a question mark over the entire second residence allowance that those of us in country Victoria need. We do not get the luxury of going home at night to our families when Parliament is sitting. We have to go and stay somewhere because we are too far away from our communities. That is fine, but that is what the second residence allowance was for.

When the Premier finally came out and said that we are going to have to have some changes to the second residence allowance, and announced that the government will introduce a regulation that says it can only be claimed by country MPs, how bizarre and ridiculous was that? Only a crook, only someone so deceitful, so greedy and rorting would have thought

otherwise. Some may have thought, ‘Well, I can actually move my principal private residence out 80 kilometres beyond the city and then I can claim this allowance’ — \$25 000, or in their case, because they were Speaker and Deputy Speaker, \$40 000.

What sort of person thinks like that? ‘Here is a little way I can rot this whole system’. We had to have the Premier of the state say, ‘Oh, we’d better change it so it is only available to country MPs’. How ridiculous is that? It is just absurd that we had to go to this extent, and that is why we should be debating the Leader of the Opposition’s reference. That is why I support the motion of the member for Malvern to adjourn this debate. I might just take up some of the comments made by those opposite.

Mr Richardson — That is disorderly.

Mr D. O’BRIEN — I am not taking up interjections, I am taking up some of the comments that were made. There were lots of claims about apologists for the Turnbull government and so on. Let me repeat to you what the Leader of the Opposition said when asked about this health fight:

Well, I’m ... sceptical of when Daniel Andrews claims there’s figures that dud Victoria ...

We all agree with that because we know they are not good with figures or the truth. The Leader of the Opposition went on to say — this was on Thursday, 8 February:

Having said that, our state is entitled to its fair share and population pressures are greater in Victoria than any other state. So Victoria is entitled to its fair share and I would hope that that will be any determining factor when it’s health or infrastructure funding for our state.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (15:42) — What a cop-out that last contribution from the member for Gippsland South was — ‘Oh, he did put something on the record. He put it on the record. Don’t worry. He’s not Malcom’s mate’. That is completely and utterly weak.

When you think about this motion before the Parliament, a motion on hospital funding that goes to the key grid support that the state of Victoria provides to its constituents, a fleeting two sentences from the Leader of the Opposition does not cut it. That does not cut it when you come into this place and you want to be an alternative leader. It does not cut it because the people of Victoria will be looking in the next 37 weeks at who will represent their interests across the board, whether that is at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) or whether it is in dealing with

the difficult issues that will challenge our state like population growth, health funding growth and infrastructure challenges. They are seeing who will stand up beyond party political lines and ask, ‘What will happen to future funding?’. So far the Leader of the Opposition, if you are looking at it in all truthfulness, has failed that test. He has not stood up.

When it was about the political east–west link contract he went up there, he got on a plane, he paid his \$600 — probably a bit more, first class, 1A — and he went up there to Canberra and he said to Tony, ‘Lock it up. Locked box: east–west link money — we’re not going to give it to Victoria’. That was the first sign of putting political opportunism before the interests of Victorians.

The Leader of the Opposition has not said anything on infrastructure funding. It is a cop-out to say, ‘Well, if it is true’. It is true. It is on the record as being true. It is a cop-out to say about the hospital funding ‘If it is true’. It is true. Over the forward estimates, over those long-running agreements, Victoria will be duded \$2.1 billion. That goes to the heart of this motion. We need to continue debating it, and the Leader of the Opposition needs to speak on this motion and at least clarify whether he will act in the interests of Victorians, because in 37 weeks there is a big choice to be made. Victorians want to know whether the Leader of the Opposition has the ticker, has the temperament to stand up to the Prime Minister, look him in the eye and say, ‘Victorians have been duded’. That is the question because our Premier goes each and every time to COAG defending the interests of Victorians. It does not matter if it is the current Prime Minister. It does not matter if it is the federal opposition leader, Bill Shorten. The Premier stands up for the interests of Victorians.

The question Victorians are asking is: will the Leader of the Opposition grow a spine and stand up to Malcolm Turnbull? That is the question, and so far the evidence of more than 1000 days says that it is politics first — it is the Liberal Party first and Victorians second.

House divided on Mr M. O’Brien’s motion:

Ayes, 38

Angus, Mr	O’Brien, Mr M.
Asher, Ms	Paynter, Mr
Battin, Mr	Pesutto, Mr
Blackwood, Mr	Riordan, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Ryall, Ms
Burgess, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Crisp, Mr	Sandell, Ms
Dixon, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Fyffe, Mrs	Smith, Mr R.
Gidley, Mr	Smith, Mr T.
Guy, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Hibbins, Mr	Staley, Ms

Hodgett, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Katos, Mr	Thorpe, Ms
Kealy, Ms	Victoria, Ms
McCurdy, Mr	Wakeling, Mr
McLeish, Ms	Walsh, Mr
Morris, Mr	Watt, Mr
O'Brien, Mr D.	Wells, Mr

Noes, 42

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

Motion defeated.

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (15:52) — I am rising with the sad task of also having to speak on these hospital funding cuts. It saddens me because of course it really is a shame that we have to debate a motion such as this in the Victorian Parliament and we have the opposition, the Liberal-Nationals coalition, every step of the way opposing our raising the issue of the fact that we are being short-changed by the federal government and that people in Victoria are losing out because of a biased federal government that refuses to provide the proper share of funding to Victorians.

The motion that we are debating at the moment and that the opposition has been repeatedly trying to shut down debate on is:

That this house:

- (1) condemns the federal government for a funding proposal that short-changes our hospitals by over \$2 billion —

I know that that sounds incredible; it is a huge amount, \$2 billion —

- (2) condemns the Leader of the Opposition for failing to stand up to Canberra on Victorian hospital funding; and
- (3) notes the federal government owes Victoria \$104 million for hospital services already provided.

We are in a desperate situation where the state just cannot continue to carry the load of the federal government when it comes to health. We are already doing some incredible work, and in a minute I would like to go through some of the great work that is being done around health in the Thomastown electorate. On a more general scale, it is really a shocking indictment of such a biased, class-acting Liberal government federally that continues to deny Victoria.

It is of course the federal government that collects income tax, that collects most taxes to fund all the very important social services we need. The state government relies on some very small taxes like land tax and an unfair proportion of GST. The federal government collects all the Medicare levies, and yet here it is unable to provide us with what we need in our health system.

I really am proud to be a member of this Andrews Labor government when we look at things like the \$162 million that the state Labor government is investing in the Northern Hospital. It is building another seven levels that will provide further beds. We are talking about extra nurses and we are talking about fantastic new facilities around theatres for surgery for those people living in the north. These are all things that the Victorian government is doing, but of course we cannot continue to do them when the federal government is looking at taking out, for example, something like \$4.19 million from the Northern Health operating budget and making a total of \$2 billion in cuts across Victoria.

When you look at those cuts, I think it is hard to imagine what those millions of dollars mean. Let us look at them in terms of the health services that can be provided for the people in Thomastown and the northern suburbs. For example, these unfair cuts over five years would mean 13 477 less elective surgeries, 280 less doctors and a staggering number of nurses that cannot work — over 667 — if these cuts become effective and are ongoing.

As it is, even when we look at infrastructure, it has been so difficult to get the federal government to invest in projects such as the O'Herns Road project that is so vital to the growth suburbs of the north. Yet again, we have to force the federal government to spend a cent in the area.

In this case, it looks like it is not coming to the party, and I fear for the health of Victorians, especially those that use the Northern Hospital, when we cannot see where this money is going to be made up if the federal government refuses to provide it to Victoria. In the end,

it is Victorians that will suffer, not the Liberal opposition. They have probably all got private health cover. Those Victorians relying on the public health system will suffer immensely if these funding cuts go through. So we deplore the actions of the federal government and implore it to change its mind, act in a compassionate and decent way for a change and provide Victorians with the money they have a right to and deserve.

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) (15:57) — I would like to make a contribution to the motion before the house today. This is a very important motion, and I think it is imperative that the people of Victoria are made aware of what these health cuts will mean, not just for people in hospitals where we will see a reduction in elective surgeries, a reduction in nurse numbers and a reduction in doctors, but also particularly in the area of preventative health. For my contribution I would like to focus on preventative health.

The federal Liberals cut \$90 million from the national partnership agreement on preventive health. When you cut funding from preventative health, you are actually impacting more severely on people than you realise, and particularly people in regional Victoria, where we know services are not as available as they are in our metropolitan health services.

We have growing numbers of people in regional Victoria in particular who are suffering from chronic disease. We have seen increases in the number of people being diagnosed with diabetes and with chronic health problems associated with that and people with increasing obesity, and these issues are becoming more and more prevalent. When you cut funding from preventative health, you are actually making it more and more difficult for people of future generations to be able to live long and healthy lives.

On top of that, when you cut more than \$2 billion from our hospital budgets, that means our hospitals of course cannot treat the same number of people they would normally be able to treat. We have a growing population in regional Victoria, particularly in my electorate of Bendigo West. We need more services; we do not need less services. These cuts at Bendigo Health — which has a fantastic, brand-new hospital and we desperately need staff to work there — at \$56.8 million over five years will have a significant impact on people across not just Bendigo but the north of Victoria who use that service. In fact we have more and more women from the north of our state utilising Bendigo Health's maternity services, not just because they are fantastic but also because we have an increasing number of women who are having at-risk

pregnancies and are therefore required to attend Bendigo Health. On top of that we would lose 9155 elective surgeries, 455 nurses and 191 doctors, and that is just in Bendigo.

If you look at the Castlemaine area, which is also part of my electorate, Castlemaine Health would lose \$5.2 million; that is 834 elective surgeries, 41 nurses and 17 doctors. Then we have the Maldon Hospital, which is a brilliant, wonderful, homely hospital in Maldon. They would lose three nurses and one doctor, and while \$400 000 does not sound very much, the impact on that community would be very significant.

Of course these are important jobs. People who come to these health services to work do it not just because they love the work that they do but because they love the communities that they work in, and their contribution to our communities would be lost as well. We have invested significantly in preventative health, unlike the Turnbull government, and not just by re-introducing the whooping cough vaccine program back in 2015, which was so, so important. I myself had the whooping cough vaccine last year just before my grandson was born. We also introduced the no jab, no play laws, and we stepped into the commonwealth's role — and it was their role — to provide a \$7.1 million meningococcal W vaccine program. It is so important for our young children to have that.

We opened our supercare pharmacies, which are so important in taking the stress off our hospital services. The supercare pharmacy in Bendigo is so popular. It is well serviced, people know about it and it is accessible 24/7 with a nurse on call. We know people are using it and we know that it is successful, and it is taking the pressure off our emergency department. There is no doubt about that. It has been an enormously successful program to run out. We also delivered a PrEPX trial to reduce HIV infections, and of course Australia's first medicinal cannabis laws have been passed.

There are a number of measures that we have implemented with Victoria's new cancer plan and funding to support an additional 10 000 breast cancer screens. Every year members of Parliament receive the BreastScreen report for their electorate which tells them how many women in their electorate have accessed BreastScreen over the last 12 months. I know that the majority of electorates are still well below the national average, so we want to encourage women to get out there and have those BreastScreens because we know that they save lives.

I remember when we were in opposition a few years back and I remember thousands and thousands of

nurses protesting on the front steps of Parliament House. There was a sea of nurses and midwives in their red shirts stretching as far as the eye could see. That was because for so long they had not been able to negotiate with the former Liberal-Nationals government a decent outcome for their enterprise bargaining agreement, so when we came to government one of the first things we did was to legislate nurse-to-patient ratios — so important and such a great move forward that I still have nurses coming up to me and saying that that was one of the best things that we have ever done.

I think when we talk about health cuts and we recall the \$1 billion that was cut out of our health system when the Liberals and Nationals were last in government that the consequences of those cuts were felt across the board. They were felt in regional Victoria and they were felt in metropolitan Melbourne as well. We saw hospital waiting lists blow out, we saw ambulance response times blowing out and we saw that people were indeed, sadly, losing their lives as a consequence. So we wanted to make sure that our investment in our ambulance services was improved significantly, and what we have seen as a consequence of that investment is much improved ambulance response times, particularly in regional areas where we knew there was a very significant problem.

We know that the Turnbull government has implemented these cuts. They do not realise, I do not think, what the consequences of those cuts will be, particularly on women and children. I think on this International Women's Day we should reflect on how these cuts will impact on women across our communities. Women actually live longer than men — we know that — but they also access their GPs and specialists a lot more than men do, particularly when women are having babies and undergoing the process around that but also through that whole perinatal period. Of course when their children are growing, it is generally, sadly, the women who take their children to the GP or to the hospital when they are sick. These cuts will significantly impact on women. They will significantly impact on children. They will significantly impact on the disadvantaged in our community, particularly those of low socio-economic backgrounds, on our culturally and linguistically diverse communities and also on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To finish up, I just want to refer to the *AMA Public Hospital Report Card 2016*, which refers to states and territories across Australia, as a consequence of these cuts, 'facing a public hospital funding black hole'. In

the report card Australian Medical Association President Brian Owler says:

Growth in commonwealth funding will be restricted to indexation using the consumer price index (CPI) and population growth only.

...

As a result, hospitals will have insufficient funding to meet the increasing demand for services.

We know this. We know that this needs to change, and we would encourage those opposite to get on the phone to their federal colleagues — to Greg Hunt and to the new federal Minister for Rural Health, Bridget McKenzie, who is a senator for regional Victoria — who should be pushing for these cuts to be reversed. I would encourage those opposite to support our motion and contact their federal colleagues.

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (16:07) — It is a pleasure to rise to speak on this motion, which condemns the Turnbull government for their more than \$2 billion in cuts to our health system here in Victoria. I do so thinking of Moorabbin Hospital in my electorate, where I was born, which these days is a very different hospital. It has Peter Mac very proudly offering world-class cancer services right in Bentleigh East. We are very fortunate that people who are unfortunately dealing with cancer in my electorate at least have that hospital very close to home.

It is a hospital that recently the Andrews Labor government invested heavily in. It was a \$16.2 million election commitment by Labor to boost the cancer diagnostic services at Moorabbin Hospital, as well as the outpatient services. I was pleased to be there late last year with the Minister for Health to open the new facilities at Moorabbin Hospital, which means that it is available to an additional 50 000 cancer patients. That is such an important thing and something that we are very, very proud of.

But while we are making those very profound investments in a hospital like the Moorabbin Hospital, which is known around the state and indeed around the country as one of the premier cancer centres, the federal Turnbull Liberal government's cuts to Victorian hospitals will mean \$35 million less for Moorabbin Hospital. That is 5647 less elective surgeries or 280 less nurses or 117 less doctors. These cuts are just devastating, not just for Moorabbin Hospital but for Sandringham Hospital nearby, where many of my constituents make use in particular of the 24-hour emergency ward.

The most reckless thing that you can possibly do is actually cut from what is the most important area of policy — that is, health. While we are talking about Moorabbin Hospital, it is also known for offering some very groundbreaking services in terms of breast cancer. We are very, very proud of that, which is why we are very concerned by what the \$2 billion in cuts are actually going to mean. With those few words, I just want to reiterate my support for this motion and condemn these cuts by the federal Turnbull Liberal government. I also condemn the opposition for sitting idly by and saying nothing, while their federal counterparts are making these savage cuts.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 7 March; motion of Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Industrial Relations).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Consideration in detail

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

Ms HUTCHINS — I move:

1. Clause 2, line 7, omit “June” and insert “November”.

Mr WAKELING — I wish to ask the minister a question with regard to clause 2(2), which is, I note, being amended from 1 June to 1 November 2018 in terms of the operation of this bill. Given the situation in the upper house and the fact that there is a significant backlog of legislation in the upper house — and I note that the date has been moved from June to November — what will happen in the situation where this bill is not passed by the Legislative Council?

Ms HUTCHINS — We have made this amendment specifically to be able to push the date out so that it can be a practical starting date. To consider hypotheticals about what may or may not happen in the upper house, I am not sure that I have a crystal ball to determine that in terms of their current workloads, but certainly we

believe that the amendment that we have put forward is an adequate one for us to have the timing in place.

Amendment agreed to; amended clause agreed to.

Clause 3

Ms HUTCHINS — I move:

2. Clause 3, page 2, lines 12 to 20, omit all words and expressions on these lines.

Mr WAKELING — I note that in the circulated bill within clause 3, ‘Definitions’, that the definition relating to ‘casual or seasonal employee’ is sought to be removed. I am requesting an understanding as to why the definition is being removed.

Ms HUTCHINS — Certainly the definition did not appear in the original bill when it was drafted, and after some consultation with industry, we felt it was best to follow the previous bill and omit it.

Mr WAKELING — Further, if I may, the reference to ‘casual or seasonal employee’ is contained in various clauses throughout the proposed bill, and I am happy to deal with those in due course. I would have presumed that the clause was drafted to provide a definition of the meaning of casual or seasonal employees for the purposes of those provisions throughout the remainder of the bill. I am seeking clarity as to what definition is to be prescribed to the term ‘casual or seasonal employee’ as it applies throughout the bill.

Ms HUTCHINS — Specifically, the common-law definition will be what is relied on. We certainly support that move, and after much consultation with industry groups, we believe it is best to go with the common-law definition.

Mr WAKELING (*By leave*) — If I may seek clarity, and you may wish to seek advice on this, is the fact that you are referring to the common-law definition as it applies throughout Australia with respect to casual or seasonal employment on the basis that the definition as prescribed in the clause in fact does not meet that test and is actually different?

Ms HUTCHINS — Why we removed this definition is because it actually then allows the common-law definition to take play and it probably just takes away any ambiguity that might have been created through trying to make another definition in this particular bill.

Amendment agreed to; amended clause agreed to; clauses 4 and 5 agreed to.

Clause 6

Mr WAKELING — With respect to clause 6, this is seeking to change the longstanding provision of long service leave entitlements, moving from 10 years to seven years. I am just seeking clarification as to the basis upon which the government made the decision to reduce the entitlement from 10 years to seven.

Ms HUTCHINS — That is a really good point. The reason that we talked about this in the review in the first place and came to this sort of conclusion is because the nature of industry nowadays is that having the ability to accumulate and take leave after seven years is more fitting with where a number of employees are across workforces in terms of the longevity of jobs. Quite frankly, when the original act was written back in the early 1990s, we did not have the levels of change of employment. We are just seeing a whole lot of movement between sectors and within sectors that make it more relevant to have this sort of entitlement after seven years. But I also think it is just as important to ensure that we have a system that is actually accessible and usable, and we have done that through some of the flexibility clauses that we put in here in order to ensure people are getting their entitlements in the workplace.

Mr WAKELING — On a further question, if I may, in regard to this provision, what consultation and what agreement was sought from particularly employers across Victoria and industry associations with respect to the implementation of this new provision from 10 years to be reduced down to seven years in terms of service?

Ms HUTCHINS — Certainly there was quite a lot of consultation. We actually went through a process of releasing a paper to consider these changes for the bill. There was extensive consultation, from roundtable meetings to actual written submissions. I think there was plenty of scope and opportunity for all parties to have input into this and for us to consider those views.

Mr WAKELING (*By leave*) — With regard to the provision reducing the time of employment from 10 years to seven years, Minister, can you provide an indication as to how many employees across the state of Victoria will now be in receipt of long service leave entitlements that they would not previously have been entitled to?

Ms HUTCHINS — I will seek some advice, but I am not sure we have that figure.

In terms of the technicalities of that question, the answer is zero. That is because people are already

entitled to and accumulating up to seven years now and can actually get it paid out now under the current existing laws, so in terms of the change there is no broad number affected. The answer is zero.

Clause agreed to; clauses 7 to 11 agreed to.

Clause 12

Mr WAKELING — I wish to draw the minister back to clarification of an earlier discussion with regard to casual or seasonal employees as referred to in clause 12(2)(d) and clause 12(3). Can the minister provide clarity as to what type of entitlement a casual employee would have in receiving long service leave?

Ms HUTCHINS — What is described and what is meant by the terms of conditional employment — I think that is what you were touching on — and the definitions of seasonal employment really have not changed. An employee's employment is still to be continuous regardless of casual and seasonal employment. In the case of casual and seasonal employees, if there is an absence that is caused by the employee taking paid or unpaid leave of up to 104 weeks, then this provision clarifies the rights of casuals and seasonal employees to take unpaid leave in accordance with the Fair Work Act and the commonwealth act. There is no substantial difference to the original bill in this.

Clause agreed to; clauses 13 to 15 agreed to.

Clause 16

Mr WAKELING — This is in regard to fixed hours or where there has been a change in hours. This provision seeks to introduce three separate assessments of normal weekly hours based on whichever is deemed to be the greater. The three tests are in relation to: (a) the previous 52 weeks; (b) the 260 weeks prior to the time of taking the leave; or (c) being the third option, which looks at the assessment of the entire period of employment. Minister, can I firstly ask, what was the rationale for introducing this new assessment?

Ms HUTCHINS — The clause sets out the averaging arrangements that are to apply if there are no fixed hours of work or hours of work have changed. Quite frankly, in the process of the discussion paper and the consultation across industry, there was an agreement that a formula needed to be reached and in fact my department put together a number of options for a formula to be calculated. This is the one that seemed to get broad agreement from the parties that were consulted through the process of consultation.

Mr WAKELING — Given the fact that this introduces a new formula, one which has never applied before, Minister, do you recognise that this new clause is potentially problematic in its application across the private sector in Victoria?

Ms HUTCHINS — We do not believe that this is going to be problematic, from the consultations that we had.

Mr WAKELING — (*By leave*) — The current Long Service Leave Act 1992 says at section 80, ‘Records’:

- (2) An employer must retain a long service leave record for at least 7 years after the employee to whom the record relates dies or stops working for the employer.

Minister, given that there is currently a requirement to retain records of employment for a period of only seven years and that section 535 of the federal Fair Work Act says records are only to be retained for seven years, is it not a fact that clause 16(2)(c) is a potential issue if in fact you are relying on periods of employment that are greater than seven years?

Ms HUTCHINS — Can I clarify that you are talking about clause 16, point (c)?

Mr Wakeling — Clause 16(2)(c).

Ms HUTCHINS — The current 1992 act requires employment records to be kept, as you said, under section 80, and this has not been limited to a particular period during the employee’s employment and records must be kept for the entire seven-year period. So there is no material change between the bill and the act in terms of record-keeping obligations, and it is clear that the records must be kept during the entire employment period and for seven years after. Employers already have record-keeping obligations under the Fair Work Act and we believe that this is consistent with that.

Mr WAKELING (*By leave*) — Just by way of clarification, the Fair Work Act only requires employment records to be kept for a period of seven years. Therefore many employers may in fact not retain employment records for any period greater than seven years, and you are going to have a practical situation if your employee has worked more than seven years to provide a real definition as to what the period of employment actually was if there were no records kept by that organisation.

Ms HUTCHINS — I think we disagree on this. The information required to be kept under the Fair Work Act is sufficient for the purposes of the long service leave legislation before us. An employer who complies

with the Fair Work Act will automatically comply with this act as well.

Mr WAKELING (*By leave*) — This is an issue that has been raised not just by me but also by industry associations such as the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and I believe they may have provided you with information in regard to this. If we presume that a business in Victoria has disposed of its records of an employee after seven years of employment on the basis that generally payment for long service leave is based on the current employment practice of that individual, if a dispute arises and there is no corporate knowledge to clarify what the employee is attesting to in terms of employment — say, 10 or 15 years prior — how will that be clarified?

Ms HUTCHINS — Similarly to my last answer, we believe that this is in line with the Fair Work Act and certainly the guidance and regulations that have been put forward by the Fair Work Ombudsman around this issue. If we are in the situation where there is a legal challenge around a person’s entitlement and the courts are hearing that case, they will of course take whatever evidence is available, but we are putting an obligation there that says you must keep the records for the entire period, not just the previous seven years.

Mr WAKELING (*By leave*) — I thank you for your advice and the advice from the advisers. I am not wishing to labour this point, but this is a very important and very contentious issue for many employers because they will have in good faith disposed of records because they had met their requirements under federal legislation but also because of what has been practice in industrial relations under both state and federal legislation for many years, which is to retain employment records for a period of seven years. If an employee is seeking to apply hours of work which applied 10 or 15 years prior, what is in a practical sense the solution? Will former management be subpoenaed to have to provide confirmation of the employment practices of those employees, given the fact that no records or employment contracts may still be within the company’s records?

Ms HUTCHINS — Just to clarify, we are getting down to where there is a dispute and it has gone to a court process. We believe that the intention behind the way these clauses are drafted is that it will still be incumbent on the courts to take the evidence that is available from the parties. Quite frankly, we stand by our definitions here around making it clear that records must be kept during the entire employment period and for seven years after that.

Mr WAKELING (*By leave*) — I thank you, Minister, for your comment, but I would have hoped that employers would have been able to avoid having to go to court in order to resolve an issue such as this in terms of clarification of an employee's previous hours of employment. The issue is that if an employee states that they worked different hours than they currently do and no-one in the organisation is in a position to confirm that, I am seeking an understanding from you as to what advice you will be providing to Victorian employers on how to deal with this issue, which I presume would be to avoid going to court to resolve it.

Ms HUTCHINS — To clarify, because it sounds from the questioning as if this issue is a complex one when it is not: quite frankly, the employer needs to keep records around the employees' details, names, their start dates and a record of the hours that they have worked during that time. My standing here trying to provide advice to lawyers about disputes that have not happened is probably not the best way forward, but I can say that it has been brought to my attention that there about 1000 cases of complaints a year of individuals that are not paid their long service leave in these circumstances. I guess part of the reason we are bringing these amendments to the Long Service Leave Bill is to try and prevent these things from occurring.

Mr WAKELING (*By leave*) — My understanding is this clause is not so much focused on ensuring that employees are paid their entitlements, because this is actually specifically focusing on the payment which an employee will receive when they take leave. This is primarily my understanding focused on providing for a more holistic approach to someone's employment period, taking into account that, say, a female may have reduced their hours after being on maternity leave. Under current arrangements, you are only paid at the period of your new employment arrangement, which does not take into consideration the whole period of your employment when you may have formally been employed as a full-time employee. That is my understanding of the reason why this has been introduced. All I am saying in a practical sense is you are going to have the situation where an employee will say to a manager or to payroll, 'I was a full-time employee for five years and then went part-time', and no-one in the organisation will have any information to confirm that. All I am saying is that there needs to be a process. There has got to be a process in place.

Ms HUTCHINS — Thank you, and you are right. The amendments and clauses that we are looking at today are certainly around removing discrimination by ensuring entitlements can be averaged out over the entire period of employment. It means that the

employee will be better off if the averaging is done over the last 12 months or up to five years. The example that you just gave of a working mother returning to work and changing her hours is a really live one. In fact, I received correspondence from a woman who had been with the same employer for 23 years. When she returned to work after having a baby, she had been 23 years full-time then returned to work part-time two days a week. Then when her long service leave was calculated under the existing act, she actually had her entitlements based on two days a week for those 23 years rather than five days a week and could not do much about that. That is what we are trying to rectify with this. We are not trying to add red tape for employers. But we are trying to say, 'You need to be in line with federal standards in terms of keeping those records'. Quite frankly if it comes to a matter that is disputed and needs resolution through our court system, it is quite possible that perhaps the employee might have the records as well as the employer.

Mr WAKELING (*By leave*) — Finally, if I may — and I do thank you, Deputy Speaker — can I also ask whether these arrangements will also apply where a transmission of business has also occurred?

Ms HUTCHINS — The answer is yes.

Clause agreed to; clause 17 agreed to.

Clause 18

Mr PESUTTO — I turn to ask the minister about clause 18 and the provision that long service leave can be taken for a period of not less than one day. I am trying to think back to the current act. It appears to be changed, but I do ask the minister whether that is a change from the current provisions and, if so, what the rationale might be for that change?

Ms HUTCHINS — Yes, it is a change from the Long Service Leave Act 1992 that requires long service leave to be taken and to be taken in two or three-lot periods. It is a substantial change, and we are doing that primarily to give flexibility in the workplace. It was something that we heard — we got a lot of submissions and had a lot of discussion around these changes in response to the discussion paper — out in the community. Certainly there were a lot of working women who felt, where they had accumulated long service leave entitlements and were able to take it, that by returning to work and utilising that long service leave for one-day periods they could potentially work four days but get paid for five rather than taking it in one lump. That was a way we could offer them greater flexibility in the workplace.

Mr PESUTTO — I thank the minister for her response. These questions are not about objecting to what is proposed. I just wonder whether any of the submissions and consultations that the government took into account considered whether there is a loss of benefit in the original purposes of long service leave which is to offer long-serving employees an opportunity to have a decent break after a very long period of service ending with shorter periods of leave.

Again I am not asking this to cavil with the changes, because I take the minister at face value that there must have been a good deal of support for this, but I just wonder, looking over the bill, whether we lose that opportunity to encourage staff to take a long and well-earned break after a long period of service.

Ms HUTCHINS — I relish the fact that we get to talk about the reasons why long service leave was ever invented and put in place. Of course you may know that it was originally put in place in order to be able to take a trip back to England and see the motherland back in the day.

Certainly we have considered the theories and reasons behind long service leave and why it was established. That is certainly why we did not heed the many calls that we got around being able to cash out long service leave entitlements. But we do recognise that our workforce is not the same as it was in 1992 or in 1902. We have seen a massive change in the workforce, with working parents that need to get the full benefits of their leave at times when they need to take it. Quite frankly the reason that some employer associations were actually supportive of this is that it helps to get the liability off their books sooner as well.

Mr WAKELING — I draw your attention to clause 18(2), which says:

An employer must grant an employee's request to take long service leave as soon as practicable after receiving the request unless the employer has reasonable business grounds for refusing the request.

Given it is generally within the control of the employer to determine when annual leave is taken — whilst an employee can make a request, it is up to the employer to determine it — I seek some clarity as to the provision that is presented in this bill.

Ms HUTCHINS — Certainly long service leave is usually taken at a time that is mutually convenient to both parties, and an employee cannot request long service leave expecting to go on leave the next day. I do not think that is the intention of the clause by any means. An employer can refuse a leave application on

reasonable business grounds. Obviously if it is an extremely busy or vital period for that business, then clearly they can refuse that leave. But I draw your attention to the definitions in the bill. There is a really good definition and explanation of 'reasonable business grounds'. It says:

... there is no capacity to change the working arrangements ... to accommodate ...

There are a lot of built-in mechanisms within the bill and in the explanations we have put together in the explanatory memorandum which go to alleviating some of the concerns that you are raising today.

Mr WAKELING — Minister, if I may — and I appreciate the fact that you have provided the definition of that provision — given that this is a new provision that has been added into the act in terms of the changes to the act, I am just seeking clarity as to why you have deemed it necessary to include this new provision when such a provision did not previously apply. What problems are you seeking to overcome by adding this provision?

Ms HUTCHINS — The arrangements that happen between an employee and an employer in the workplace are still being underpinned. Agreements about long service leave timing and application in terms of days can still be reached and are supported by this bill to be reached in the workplace. Really the reason we have gone down this track is to provide as much flexibility as we can around utilising this leave entitlement.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 19

Mr PESUTTO — Compared with the current provisions, which I know the act contains, in relation to disputes being determined by the industrial division of the Magistrates Court, I just wanted to ask the minister whether in its totality the bill widens the circumstances in which disputes may find their way into the Magistrates Court.

Ms HUTCHINS — I do not believe that clause 19 strays from the original act in definition, and I do not believe it will lead to that situation.

Mr PESUTTO — The minister may not be in a position to answer this, but I will ask it in any event. I am just interested to know whether recent data shows whether there has been a decrease or increase in the number of disputes over long service issues in the Magistrates Court. As I said, I appreciate the minister may not have data at hand on that.

Ms HUTCHINS — Unfortunately I do not have any data on that. All we do is take calls with queries through my department on this, not the data on the Magistrates Court.

Clause agreed to; clauses 20 to 28 agreed to.

Clause 29

Mr WAKELING — With respect to division 2, ‘Authorised officers’, I am just seeking some clarity as to the purpose of the authorised officers and their inclusion within the bill.

Ms HUTCHINS — Quite simply the inclusion of authorised officers is so that there is a mechanism by which we can uphold all of the regulations around this act.

Mr WAKELING — If I may ask, how many investigations does the department believe will be undertaken as a consequence of the requirement to have an authorised officer with respect to long service leave?

Ms HUTCHINS — Of course authorised officers under the act will be able to obtain information in investigating cases, which I guess is where the new function and power comes about, but certainly prosecutions have been able to be undertaken with the discretion of the department — and we have done that. In fact my department has been quite successful in some of the prosecutions that it has made on behalf of complainants in making sure that a few employers — they are not large numbers — that have tried to skirt their responsibilities under the act have been taken to task.

Mr WAKELING (*By leave*) — Minister, if I may — and I am mindful of the time — given the fact that the authorised officers will have a new function and many businesses in Victoria will be unaware of their role, can you please advise what information your department will be providing to Victorian employers of the fact that authorised officers may in fact be inspecting their workplace to ask for some relevant information?

Ms HUTCHINS — Of course we will be working with employer associations, and there will be information booklets going out once the act has passed. We have got some regulations in place to make sure that all parties are informed about this, but just let me clarify that the authorised officers will not have a right of entry into any workplace. They will need to work with the employers and be invited in as they do now with investigations.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 30

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — 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 31 to 62 and circulated government amendments 3 to 6 as follows agreed to:

3. Clause 31, page 34, lines 20 and 21, omit “performing a function under this Act” and insert “monitoring compliance with this Act and the regulations”.
4. Clause 32, line 16, omit “perform a function under this Act” and insert “monitor compliance with this Act and the regulations”.
5. Clause 33, page 35, lines 24 and 25, omit “perform a function under this Act” and insert “monitor compliance with this Act and the regulations”.
6. Clause 33, page 35, line 27, omit “the” and insert “that”.

Bill agreed to with amendments.

Third reading

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — As the required statement of intention has been made under section 85(5)(c) of the Constitution Act 1975, the third reading of the bill must be passed by an absolute majority. As there is not an absolute majority of the members of the house present, I ask the Acting Clerk to ring the bells.

Bells rung.

Members having assembled in chamber:

Motion agreed to by absolute majority.

Read third time.

**ELECTRICITY SAFETY AMENDMENT
(ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT SAFETY
SCHEME) BILL 2018**

Second reading

Debate resumed from 6 March; motion of Ms D’AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

**INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PUBLIC
INTEREST DISCLOSURES, OVERSIGHT
AND INDEPENDENCE) BILL 2018**

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 6 March; motion of
Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General); and
Mr R. SMITH's amendment:**

That all the words after 'That' be omitted with the view of inserting in their place the words 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the house has assurances from the government that every government department and agency is covered by the bill and no government agency or department will be exempt from the provisions of the bill by way of agreements with the government'.

The SPEAKER — The question is:

That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Those supporting the reasoned amendment moved by the member for Warrandyte should vote no.

House divided on question:

Ayes, 46

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

Noes, 36

Angus, Mr	O'Brien, Mr D.
Asher, Ms	O'Brien, Mr M.
Battin, Mr	Paynter, Mr

Blackwood, Mr	Pesutto, Mr
Britnell, Ms	Riordan, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Ryall, Ms
Burgess, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Crisp, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Dixon, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Fyffe, Mrs	Smith, Mr T.
Gidley, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Guy, Mr	Staley, Ms
Hodgett, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Katos, Mr	Victoria, Ms
Kealy, Ms	Wakeling, Mr
McCurdy, Mr	Walsh, Mr
McLeish, Ms	Watt, Mr
Morris, Mr	Wells, Mr

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER — Clause 111 of the bill directly amends sections of the Constitution Act 1975. This requires the third reading of the bill to be passed by a special majority. Government amendment 1 proposes to omit clause 111. If the amendment is agreed to, the special majority for the third reading will no longer be required. I will therefore put the third reading question separately once the government amendments have been dealt with. The question is:

That this bill be now read a second time, government amendments 1 to 7 inclusive be agreed to, and the bill be agreed to as amended.

House divided on question:

Ayes, 46

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

Noes, 36

Angus, Mr	O'Brien, Mr D.
Asher, Ms	O'Brien, Mr M.
Battin, Mr	Paynter, Mr
Blackwood, Mr	Pesutto, Mr
Britnell, Ms	Riordan, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Ryall, Ms

Burgess, Mr
Crisp, Mr
Dixon, Mr
Fyffe, Mrs
Gidley, Mr
Guy, Mr
Hodgett, Mr
Katos, Mr
Kealy, Ms
McCurdy, Mr
McLeish, Ms
Morris, Mr

Ryan, Ms
Sheed, Ms
Smith, Mr R.
Smith, Mr T.
Southwick, Mr
Staley, Ms
Thompson, Mr
Victoria, Ms
Wakeling, Mr
Walsh, Mr
Watt, Mr
Wells, Mr

Question agreed to.**Read second time.***Circulated amendments***Circulated government amendments as follows agreed to:**

1. Clause 111, omit this clause.
2. Clause 173, page 249, line 1, omit "154" and insert "153".
3. Clause 173, page 249, line 9, omit "164" and insert "163".
4. Clause 173, page 249, line 17, omit "164" and insert "163".
5. Clause 173, page 249, line 20, omit "164" and insert "163".
6. Clause 173, page 249, line 28, omit "153" and insert "152".
7. Clause 173, page 249, line 30, omit "164" and insert "163".

*Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read third time.**

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

*Second reading***Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr MERLINO (Minister for Emergency Services).****Motion agreed to.****Read second time.***Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read third time.**

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, earlier today the member for Clarinda's phone was ringing again in the chamber. This is not the first time that the member for Clarinda has answered the phone or had his phone ringing in the chamber. We all know that we should not have our phones on in the chamber. If it happened once —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Mr Watt — Mistakes do happen, but the member for Clarinda is a serial offender when it comes to having his phone on in the chamber. I would simply ask you to counsel the member for Clarinda when it comes to answering his phone in the chamber.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Yan Yean will come to order. I realise that some members may wish to be removed from the chamber at this point in the sitting week. I will not hesitate in doing so.

The appropriate time to raise that point of order would have been when the incident occurred —

Mr Watt interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I will not have the member for Burwood talking over me when I am trying to make a ruling. I take on board his comments and will discuss the matter with the member concerned.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.**ADJOURNMENT**

The SPEAKER — The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

East Grampians pipeline

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (17:16) — (14 132) On this International Women's Day I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the former Minister for Women, Fiona Richardson. Today it has been disappointing that we have not heard a lot about Fiona's achievements over the years —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Yan Yean!

Ms KEALY — She was an outstanding and tireless campaigner for gender parity —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Yan Yean will come to order. The Leader of the House!

Ms KEALY — and I think that it is appropriate that the Parliament does acknowledge all of the work that she did. I know there are people who would like to hear about Fiona today because she did do an outstanding job. Certainly from our side of the Parliament we do acknowledge her work.

My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Water, and the action that I seek is for the minister to join me to meet with landholders in the East Grampians region to hear their concerns about reliable water access and the need for the East Grampians rural pipeline. The rural communities of Ararat Rural City Council and Pyrenees and Northern Grampians shire councils are primarily reliant on rainfall run-off for their water supplies. During the prolonged droughts of the last decade water security and access have been severely impacted. A business case has been prepared by GWMWater, which investigated delivering untreated water to the East Grampians region. The proposed pipeline project would increase productivity and diversity across agricultural sectors, enhance community wellbeing, safety and resilience and reduce pressures on the already highly stressed natural catchments.

I invite the minister to come to the East Grampians region and to see my fantastic electorate, particularly the areas around Willaura, Mininera and Tatyoon and south of those areas that are impacted by an extreme shortage of water. When I was in Moyston in early 2015 I know they had a huge problem trying to fight the fires because their access to water at that time was extremely difficult. After that there was a lot of damage to stock. It was extremely stressful for local farmers not to be able to access water during that period.

This pipeline is an important project, and the water shortages have an impact right down to the Lake Bolac region and also Wickliffe as well. A huge portion of the Lowan electorate is impacted. I ask the minister to come to my electorate and listen to the locals so that she understands the impact on the region of this water shortage and recognises the benefits of the East Grampians rural pipeline.

Merrifield West P-6 school

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (17:19) — (14 133) On this International Women's Day I would just like to say that I hope the member for Lowan reflects upon the

comments that she just made and realises how offensive and disgusting they were.

My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the minister to consider funding for the acquisition of land in Merrifield West for a future P-6 school. Merrifield and other surrounding developments in the Mickleham area have only commenced construction in recent years, but they are already home to thousands of families, including many with young children. These developments will continue to provide homes for tens of thousands of additional residents in the coming years, making the need for community resources and infrastructure all the more vital. A future Merrifield West P-6 school would complement the many great schools in the Yuroke electorate and build on the Andrews Labor government's record of local investment in better access to education, including new schools and improved resources. I hope the minister positively considers this request, and I thank him for the great work that this government has done in ensuring that Victoria is the Education State.

Balaclava tram super-stop

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (17:20) — (14 134) I raise a matter for the Minister for Planning. The action that I seek is that the Minister for Planning review his decision to overturn the proposed super-stop near Balaclava station on Carlisle Street. This is a matter that we certainly raised when we were in government in August 2014. The proposed super-stop was something that Public Transport Victoria and the City of Port Phillip were then working towards. At that time many of the shopkeepers fought very hard to ensure that it did not get developed. There were lots of issues with that super-stop, including a number of car spaces that were going to be taken away, a lot of tables and chairs on the sidewalk that would be lost and the issue of the overall amenity of the area.

To my surprise in only the last few weeks we were notified that the super-stop would proceed without any consultation whatsoever. None of the traders were aware of it, and it first came to my attention when I had a meeting with the mayor, who informed me that this would be taking place again. What I was even more surprised about was that the Minister for Planning on 3 August 2017 had a planning scheme amendment, GC68, approved, which would allow Public Transport Victoria to run roughshod over any of these developments and not have to consult with the community and not have to seek approval from council. The original proposal had community consultation, but Minister Mulder, in the former government, ensured

that the project was scrapped. Now under this government there will be no consultation and many of the retailers will just have to live with whatever decision is made.

We are told now that it will go ahead in May, without any consultation at all. Certainly the likes of Mal from Ramsay Pharmacy, Dean from Sir John's Gifts homewares store and Naomi from the Little Lost Land boutique clothing and many others that I have met in the last week are very concerned that they are not being consulted properly about this new project. How many car spaces will be lost? What will happen with the issues already with congestion and the accessibility issues for emergency services vehicles travelling along Carlisle Street? There is also the design element of this project.

What we are seeking from the minister is for him to allow proper consultation and not to have a project like this put in place in such quick time without any ability for the community, for retailers and residents, to have a proper consultation about this important project.

VicTrack Ascot Vale land

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (17:23) — (14 135) I too want to express my outrage at the comments made by the member for Lowan earlier. I just find them absolutely offensive.

I direct my adjournment debate matter to the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is that the minister convene a meeting between the City of Moonee Valley, VicTrack and me to discuss converting excess land at the Ascot Vale railway station for local community use.

Hawthorn Road, Brighton East

Ms ASHER (Brighton) (17:23) — (14 136) The issue I have is for the Minister for Public Transport. I am hoping that the Minister for Public Transport is actually listening to my adjournment issue. Probably the least one could expect on International Women's Day is that an issue being raised by a woman in this chamber could be listened to by the female minister.

Mr Richardson interjected.

The SPEAKER — The member for Mordialloc!

Ms ASHER — The issue I am raising with her is the poor condition of the road along the tram tracks on Hawthorn Road, Brighton East, near the Nepean Highway.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ASHER — Again I feel obligated to make the point that on International Women's Day I do not even get a chance to raise my adjournment issue because the member for Mordialloc would like to speak over me, which is a very unusual circumstance.

I go back to the policy issue I wish to raise in the Brighton constituency. I wish to draw to the minister's attention that this area is unsafe. It is damaging vehicles, there are potholes next to the tram tracks and drivers swerve. The action I am asking of her is to fix it now. I first raised this issue with the minister in 2015. My constituents have raised it. The Brighton East traders association has raised it as well. The minister and I have been corresponding for years over this matter, but it is still not properly fixed. Some work was done in February 2016, and the minister has advised me that Hawthorn Road will be completely repaired in the financial year 2017–18, but I do make the observation this is way too long. I was previously advised by the minister that this stretch of road was on the Yarra Trams 2016 program, but it clearly was not on that program. This matter is now urgent. It has gone on for way too long, and I request that the minister fix it, please.

Broadmeadows electorate employment

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (17:26) — (14 137) My adjournment request is to the Minister for Industry and Employment. The action I seek is for his department to report on what support is available to create employment where it is needed in Broadmeadows and assist the locally established business Freedom Wheelchairs to increase employment, potentially through the Andrews government's \$68 million Jobs Victoria initiative. This project also has the potential to employ more ex-auto workers, which is significant for Melbourne's north.

The founder of Freedom Wheelchairs, Michael Buckland-Ware, is no stranger to overcoming a challenge and embracing the possible. After having his leg removed and requiring a wheelchair, Michael used his engineering know-how to design and build a chair that would give him back his dignity by allowing him to do as much as possible for himself. New activities included going places standard wheelchairs could not go. These included going to the beach to walk his dogs or up the hill between his house and his sheds to enjoy his beloved car collection. After building his own chair using tracks instead of wheels and seeing the response from others when he used it, he realised many more people could benefit from his ingenuity. This was the genesis of Freedom Wheelchairs. With freedom comes dignity and greater opportunity, the purpose underlying

this business. Since conceptualising the first wheelchair, called 'The Tank', Michael has been working to bring together local manufacturers, engineers and a business team to collaborate behind the vision that created Freedom Wheelchairs.

Freedom Wheelchairs opened a factory in Broadmeadows last month. They have contracted to employ 66 local people, including ex-auto workers, refugees from the war in Iraq and the slaughter in Syria, people with disabilities and Australian Defence Force veterans through Soldier On Australia. Their products are Australian made and manufactured, and they have ambitions to make Freedom Wheelchairs an export business.

On International Women's Day, I would like to acknowledge the groundbreaking work of the former Minister for Women, Fiona Richardson, who is greatly missed by all who support this cause — and fairness. Last night the Premier, who had the leadership to launch the first royal commission into this leading criminal justice issue that we face, family violence, acknowledged Fiona Richardson's achievements and her dedication — and so did all of the Labor Party. It is a commitment that will never be forgotten. It is a dedication from everybody. And it is about time — it is well overdue — for people to rise above partisanship, see the people who make a lifelong commitment, stand behind them, not play politics and really, actually, understand how important some of these breakthroughs are, the dedication that people bring and the courage of their commitment and what it means.

That is what today was supposed to be about. It angers me deeply and it riles so many other people who want the Parliament to actually be above this stuff. Can we stand together as one and just say, 'This is what we need to do to give people a fair go'?

Bass Valley Primary School

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) (17:29) — (14 138) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action that I seek is for the minister to review the speed limits outside Bass Valley Primary School. I visited the school during the peak morning period after receiving an email highlighting the dangerous traffic situation they face on a daily basis. The principal, Leanne Edwards, sent me a letter detailing the school's concerns, which she has raised with the minister's office, and the response she received from VicRoads. The school is disappointed, to say the least, that VicRoads was not convinced that changes were needed to the speed limits along Corinella Road out in front of the school.

As mentioned, I visited the school between 8.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. to witness firsthand the dangerous situation that takes place during school drop-off and pick-up times. I witnessed cars backing out into oncoming traffic, cars backing out onto the other side of the road, cars doing U-turns in front of traffic, school buses and delivery trucks — all blending at dangerous levels with parents and children. We need to act before there is a tragedy. The school is requesting, and I support, the introduction of a permanent 60-kilometre speed zone starting from the Bass Highway and extending west past the first bend. Further, the school zone lights should change to 40 kilometres during school times, not the current 60. Bass Valley Primary School students should be presented with the same set of road safety measures as students in more built-up areas. With the addition of the new Bass Valley Children's Centre this matter has become urgent and requires the minister's immediate attention.

Hurstbridge railway station car parking

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (17:30) — (14 139) I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport — again. I am always up talking to the Minister for Public Transport. This is an issue I have previously raised in this place and a matter that I understand she is very aware of. The action I seek is an upgrade to the Hurstbridge train station car park. There is an increasing number of commuters who drive to the station and use the Hurstbridge line on weekdays — and these are not just locals; they are people who are coming from Doreen, the Kinglake Ranges and the Nillumbik rural hinterland. The current overflow car park is on rail reserve land on the Greys Harps Road side of the line, and it is gravel. Commuters have been using the rail reserve for car parking for some time.

Last year the operator, Metro Trains Melbourne, put signs up with 'Authorised vehicles only', to restrict the parking there, following a report to Metro Trains and the transport ombudsman after an injury to a passenger, Lois Needham. Lois feels pretty upset that Metro Trains has put the signs up there, and she feels like she is being blamed for asking for safety measures there. At the time, and still now to be honest, I thought the response to prevent parking on the rail reserve was an overreaction, and I was also critical that the operator did not communicate it to commuters in an appropriate fashion.

I am very grateful to the minister's staff and to VicTrack for assisting me with advice over time on how we can try to attract the required funding to get this parking area fixed and operational. There is a dedicated competitive train station car parking fund which I lobbied unsuccessfully for last year, and I continue to

advocate to have this car park included in any future works from this fund, or funded any other way, for that matter. Of course pressure will be taken off the Hurstbridge railway line car parks because of the many Doreen and Mernda commuters that use them. That Mernda rail project, as the minister said only this week, is ahead of schedule and using Australian steel.

I do want to, while I am on my feet, just counsel the member for Lowan and ask her to understand that the former member for Northcote's children are old enough to read *Hansard*. Everyone on this side of the house was Fiona's friend. I was at the branch meeting when she joined the party more than 20 years ago. We are deeply offended by what the member said. She should never use the death of a member of this place, who was so loved by all of us, for politics.

Belfast Coastal Reserve

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (17:33) — (14 140) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and the action I seek is for her to meet with residents in my electorate who are concerned about the plan to ban dog walking and recreational horseriding from some local beaches. Minister, as you would be aware, the Belfast Coastal Reserve draft management plan has been developed following concerns about the use of beaches for commercial horse training in the area between Warrnambool and Port Fairy known as the Belfast Coastal Reserve. The draft plan proposes sectioning the reserve into two areas: a recreation and conservation zone, and a conservation zone. Much of the coast will be included in the conservation zone, which will ban dogs and recreational horseriding in an effort to protect the hooded plover.

Last week I joined the shadow minister for environment to meet with residents who live in the area, and they are rightly concerned that their existing use of the beaches has been completely ignored in the drafting of this plan. In fact they were not even consulted when it was drafted. These are people who use the beach every single day to walk their dogs for exercise and for their own health and wellbeing. They call themselves partners in the environment. They care for their beach and they look after it because it is their backyard. They notice if something is not right, they notice if somebody is doing the wrong thing and they report it, and they pick up the rubbish and plastic.

If the beach is locked up, who is going to perform this monitoring task? Will Parks Victoria have the resources? Will the dunes become overgrown with marram grass, weeds, feral cats and foxes, which will

present more of a threat to the shorebirds than a dog on a leash or a horse being walked on the hard sand at the water's edge away from the nesting sites? There is a real opportunity to embrace the locals and effectively work with them to ensure positive outcomes for all. If this plan is endorsed in its current format, it could have impacts across the entire state, and every member of this and the other place representing areas with coastline should be concerned.

Another anomaly in the plan is the stupidity of banning windsurfing in the area called Belfast Loch while allowing jet skis and 20-foot-long catamarans when no-one has been able to identify any environmental challenges that these cause. It is a shame that the minister, while she was in the South-West Coast electorate recently, accompanied by a member for Western Victoria Region in the other place who has been making a big deal about this in the local media, failed to meet with these concerned residents and others who hold deep concerns about the plan. I ask that the minister meet with these concerned residents as a matter of priority.

Rangebank Primary School

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (17:36) — (14 141) My adjournment matter is for the Premier and concerns Rangebank Primary School in Cranbourne. The action I seek is that the Premier meet with the international students visiting Rangebank Primary School from Bluebells School International, New Delhi, India. Indian philosopher and poet Rabindranath Tagore said:

The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.

In 2012 Rangebank Primary became the first government school in Australia to introduce Hindi as a language program. The school community has really embraced the program, with over 400 students from prep to year 6 now learning about the language and the culture of India. Indian culture is diverse, it is beautiful, it is vibrant and it is inspirational, and many of the students at Rangebank Primary School are now experiencing that and will be very excited to learn firsthand from the visiting students.

Rangebank has had Bluebells as its sister school for five years now. The two schools enjoy sharing teaching methods and resources, they participate in student exchanges and they conduct joint lessons via Skype. During the Premier's visit to India last year he visited Bluebells School International and participated in one of their joint lessons via Skype with Rangebank Primary

School, so I am sure he is eager to catch up with them and pick up where he left off with the students.

The Andrews Labor government outlined in its India strategy how much India and Victoria have to offer each other. On International Women's Day I want to acknowledge that one of the highlights in the India strategy is our commitment to education, and this means that we will be providing professional and learning opportunities to build the intercultural leadership capacity and professional practice of female school leaders in Victoria and in India. India's social and economic transformation and Victoria's vision for the future present opportunities and challenges for both of us, and these types of programs build strong personal connections that help bring India and Victoria closer together. We are both aspirational societies. We are tenacious. We believe in the value of education and supporting our young people in their pursuit of opportunities.

If I could just finish by offering my heartfelt advice to the member for Lowan. Many of us on this side of the chamber do not have to get up and talk about Fiona on a special occasion. Indeed that would be the last thing that Fiona would want. If you knew her well, you would know that would be the fact of the matter. There have been many occasions this week where we have celebrated Fiona's achievements, and the Premier especially has been very vocal on that. We do think about her. There are some of us who think about her a lot, I can tell you now, and we do not need a lecture from those in the opposition to say that we never cared.

Ms Hutchins — On a point of order, Speaker, I find the comments that were made by the member for Lowan very disturbing when she expressed her disappointment in our former member for Northcote not being appropriately acknowledged. I find that offensive, particularly because on today of all days there has not been a moment that Fiona has not been in all of our thoughts. I have been to numerous functions in this place where I have acknowledged Fiona and her work and continued on her legacy, so I ask the member to withdraw her comments.

The SPEAKER — Order! On the point of order, just to advise the house, it is not a point of order up for debate when a member seeks a withdrawal. I anticipated that a member might wish to raise this matter because the comments were bound to have that effect on members of this place, but there is not the ability —

An honourable member interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! There is not the ability for members to seek comments to be withdrawn where they find them personally offensive when they have not been made or directed to an individual member. There are very clear rulings in this place in relation to comments that have been directed generally towards one side of the chamber or the other and not towards a particular member of this place. I cannot ask for a withdrawal.

Ms Asher — On a further point of order, Speaker, my point of order relates to the behaviour in this chamber during this adjournment debate. I am not privy to the emotions that were coursing over the desk, and I do not need to be. All I can say is that it was more like a question time environment than an adjournment debate, and I think that is inappropriate. I am not even sure that the minister heard —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Ms Asher — That is symptomatic of the problem. I am not even sure that the Minister for Public Transport heard my issue, or at least all of it, and I am not sure the member for South-West Coast's issue was fully heard by the minister either. I would ask, Speaker, for your guidance on some pretty poor behaviour. The member for Mordialloc's conduct was disgraceful.

I have a right to raise an adjournment issue in relation to issues in my electorate. I could not even be heard despite the fact that I do not have a tiny voice and there is a mic in front of me. I expect a level of robustness in question time; I have been a minister twice. I expect that and I think it is par for the course, but I think this level of behaviour for an adjournment debate is a disgrace. I would seek your advice, Speaker, on whether you believe that this behaviour during an adjournment debate is an appropriate standard for the Parliament of Victoria to adopt.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, I agree with a lot of what the member for Brighton has just raised. Adjournment debates are usually a more temperate environment. They are usually a chance for issues to be raised in a more calm and generously spirited way. However, that spirit was broken when the member for Lowan made the comments that she made, and that is why those of us on this side are angry. We are palpably angry at what the member for Lowan said. What she said was that she was disappointed that the government had not appropriately acknowledged our deceased colleague, the former member for Northcote and former Minister for Women.

We find that deeply offensive. We are palpably angry at what the member said, and maybe anger and emotion has spilt over as a result of what the member for Lowan said, because we find it disgraceful. Unfortunately our current Minister for Women was not in a position, because of the requirements under standing orders, to get those comments withdrawn.

I can only hope, Speaker, that the member for Lowan has a long, long drive home. I hope she travels home safely. I hope she gets there well. I do hope, though, that on that long, long journey she takes the time to reflect on what she has done, that she takes the time to reflect on her actions and understand that her actions demean all of us.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Ms Allan — It is clear from the reaction of those opposite that they completely misunderstand —

Mr Burgess interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hastings!

Ms Allan — or are choosing to deliberately misunderstand why we are deeply angry, deeply offended and deeply hurt that our departed colleague — I will stand to be corrected, but I believe that we have not seen in history a government lose a minister while they were in office. Our loss of Fiona sits with this government. She has left a powerful legacy behind her, and that is what is being carried on. She has been acknowledged on a number of occasions this week —

Mr Hodgett — In the Parliament?

Ms Allan — In the Parliament and outside of the Parliament, yes. During members statements this morning she was acknowledged by a number of colleagues, and, as you have heard from those on this side who knew her best, those who knew her best know how Fiona wanted to be acknowledged and know that this is not how she would want to be remembered.

I just note, Speaker, in responding to the member for Brighton's point of order, that I agree with her on much of what she says about standards in this place. I do hope the member for Lowan reflects on this, that she reflects on why she has elicited this response from those on this side of the house, because we are deeply hurt. We are deeply hurt. The use of Fiona and her legacy as a political weapon is something that we will not stand by and accept. The Leader of the Opposition is wont to

say, 'The standard you walk by is the standard you accept'. We today stand up and condemn the standard that the member for Lowan has set in her disgraceful comments today.

Ms Staley — On the point of order, Speaker, I rise to support the member for Brighton's point of order, which was quite a narrow point of order. She recognised that there is significant emotion around this issue. However, she sought your clarification in relation to the longstanding right of people in this chamber to raise matters on the adjournment in relation to their electorates, to be heard respectfully and to allow the responsible minister or the minister at the table to hear those matters being raised.

It is a longstanding practice of this house, and in fact of other parliaments, that members have the right to bring questions and ask for answers and resources for their electorates. It is a core part of our job. The member for Brighton raised quite a narrow request, which was that you consider the ability of people to hear when adjournment matters are being raised. I do recognise that there is a great deal of emotion around this; however, I would support the member for Brighton's narrow point of order.

The SPEAKER — To be honest with the house, I have been personally affected by some of the discussion in the chamber tonight, so I am not going to rule on this matter at this point in time. All I will say is I think there is a need for a better standard of debate in this place.

Responses

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (17:47) — I will be brief. The member for Essendon raised a matter regarding the use of VicTrack land near the Ascot Vale railway station. I am very happy to have VicTrack meet with the member. I also believe the local council can discuss how this land can be best used to serve the local community. I thank the member for Essendon for his ongoing outstanding representation of his local community.

The member for Brighton raised a matter regarding the tram and road works on Hawthorn Road. I do acknowledge that the member for Brighton has raised this with me a number of times, and I also appreciate the way the member for Brighton continues to engage with me in raising this issue in the spirit of getting the issue sorted. I do acknowledge that this has been going on for some time, and I can understand that it is getting really frustrating for tram passengers and also for the local community. There is a history of some works that

had not been done properly which has caused this ongoing problem. The long-term solution is a full renewal of the track and road along this section.

The member for Brighton acknowledged that she has been advised that that will require a full closure of the road, which will also have an impact on the operation of trams. As a consequence of that impact on the road and tram network we have had to do some very careful planning for when those works can happen. I am advised that Yarra Trams and Public Transport Victoria are working with VicRoads to coordinate these works between 7 and 12 July. I have asked my office to keep the member well-informed should those dates change and about anything else that may arise through the course of this issue. I think the member for Brighton does a good job in representing her electorate as well — just to demonstrate that I say that about members on both sides of the chamber.

Can I acknowledge the hardworking and terrific member for Yan Yean, who raised a matter —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — We could do with the member for Brighton staying around, can I say? You could all do with the member for Brighton staying around.

The member for Yan Yean raised a matter regarding Hurstbridge railway station car parking issues. The member for Yan Yean never ceases to amaze me in how tireless she is in the work she does for her community. I am aware of the issues largely because the member for Yan Yean continues to raise them with me. I acknowledge that we need to address them.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — Really? You would have thought that after what we have just been through you would let all this go. Okay, just let us get through it.

I also want to inform the member for Yan Yean that I had conversations about this very issue yesterday with the CEO of Public Transport Victoria and that we are wanting to look at how we can address this issue. There is a budget process underway, which the member for Yan Yean knows well, and we will continue to work with her on this issue.

Another seven members raised matters for various ministers for their action and response; I will refer those matters to those ministers. I can only hope that everyone travels very safely home and has a very happy International Women's Day and long weekend with family and friends.

The SPEAKER — The house is now adjourned.

**House adjourned 5.51 p.m. until Tuesday,
27 March.**