

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**Tuesday, 4 September 2018**

**(Extract from book 12)**

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The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

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(from 16 October 2017)

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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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)

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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

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*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**

<b>Member</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Party</b>
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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 <sup>2</sup>	Polwarth	LP
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Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John <sup>5</sup>	Morwell	Ind
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Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
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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

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

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

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

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

<sup>5</sup> Nats until 28 August 2017

<sup>6</sup> Elected 14 March 2015

<sup>7</sup> Died 23 August 2017

<sup>8</sup> Elected 31 October 2015

<sup>9</sup> Resigned 2 February 2015

<sup>10</sup> Elected 18 November 2017

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

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

### **Legislative Assembly committees**

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

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

### **Legislative Assembly select committees**

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

### **Joint committees**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Tuesday, 4 September 2018

**The SPEAKER (Hon. Colin Brooks) took the chair at 12.04 p.m. and read the prayer.**

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

**The SPEAKER (12:04)** — We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to them, their culture, their elders past, present and future, and elders of other communities who may be here today.

### CONDOLENCES

#### Hon. William Desmond McGrath

**Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:04)** — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable William Desmond McGrath and places on record its acknowledgement of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral districts of Lowan from 1979 to 1992 and Wimmera from 1992 to 1999 and Minister for Agriculture from 1992 to 1996, Minister for Corrections from 1996 to 1999 and Minister for Police and Emergency Services from 1996 to 1999.

It is not always thought of, but there are some very real parallels between politics and football. Both institutions, for example, are built on absolute tribalism, both draw strength from their one-eyed supporters and both are prone to more than a little bit of heckling from the sidelines. And every so often, in both politics and football, there is a competitor whose integrity, whose constancy, whose sheer grit you cannot help but admire regardless of whether that person is on your team, wearing your team colours or not.

Bill McGrath was one such competitor. He was in every sense a team player. A straight talker, he never lost his focus. He worked hard without fanfare, and he was relentlessly loyal to his club and to the community that he loved. It is perhaps no surprise then that in his early days Bill played VFL footy for South Melbourne. Then, the late 1950s, was a very different time in so many different ways. As Bill once explained, he would leave the family farm in Minyip on a Thursday at lunchtime, drive his ute down to Melbourne. He would go to training, he would play, and then he would drive back to the farm on Sunday afternoon. He played a total of 15 games and kicked 18 goals — a very decent output I would think by any measure.

From the great highs of the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Bill went on to a coaching career in country football. It yielded him a handful of premierships and a reputation

as a real local leader. It was no surprise then, except perhaps to Bill himself, when he was approached and asked to stand for the seat of Lowan. He was, I am told — and you can imagine that this would be absolutely accurate — reluctant at first, but, as Bill put it, he relented and decided to throw his hat in the ring. It was a gamble that paid off, and in 1979 he was elected to this place. He held his place in our Parliament for some six terms, serving his community as a committed, passionate and genuine voice. Bill would later go on to have the considerable honour of serving our entire state, not just his local community, as Minister for Agriculture and then as Minister for Corrections and Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Even post-politics Bill's work did not stop. Instead he devoted himself to many different things, of particular note: the Wimmera Football League, the Wimmera chapter of Legacy and to so many other community organisations that he was passionate about, that he was committed to — that continual service, that sense of improvement, that sense of being a voice and a supporter and using his skills and abilities, all that he had learned in his public life — to continue to lead in those voluntary capacities. It was in every sense a life lived in the service of others, a life lived in that profound and important task of being dedicated to making your community and your state a better place, and Bill McGrath leaves that legacy behind.

On behalf of our Parliament we extend our deepest condolences to Bill's wife, Ivy, to his children, his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and to the communities in western Victoria which he so faithfully served, so profoundly loved, and so enriched by his service, his commitment and all that he was able to achieve over a long and distinguished life, a long and distinguished life of service to others.

**Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:10)** — I join the Premier in the condolence motion on William Desmond McGrath, more commonly known to all of us as Bill. Bill was born on 3 December 1936, and at that time his family lived at Swanwater, near St Arnaud. He was the sixth of seven children. He was born to a devout Catholic family, a faith that he maintained his whole life. The McGrath family moved to Minyip while Bill was still at school and he completed grades 7 and 8 at the Dunmunkle East School, where he met Ivy Smith, who he was later to marry and spend his whole life with.

At 14 Bill left school to work on the family farm. As everyone knows, farm work in those days was a lot more physical than it is today. Lumping bags of wheat and shearing sheep — something that was a passion of Bill's — helped him to develop the phenomenal

strength that he was known for, particularly throughout his football career. Those early years on the farm taught Bill much about the cycle of good and bad seasons as well as how to manage the risks of farming and maintain something as a reserve for the bad years. He had a theory of a seven-year cycle of agriculture between good and bad seasons. It was this knowledge and his ability to seize the moment, which he did a number of times throughout his life, that saw him expand his farming operations during a series of poor seasons when others would not dare expand, which led to his very successful business career as a farmer. He took particular pride in his wool clip. He loved his sheep, and he won the Wimmera district champion merino fleece in 1975 and 1976.

Like many country people, sport played a big part in Bill's life — tennis in summer and football in winter, and later golf and bowls. He represented the Wimmera in A-grade tennis at Kooyong, and he teamed with Charlie Krelle and Max Woodward to win many, many doubles championships throughout the Wimmera. Such was their prowess at that time, which was well before professional sport, that the Dunlop sports company provided them with free rackets for a number of years as a promotional tool. What is interesting about Bill is that he was a right-handed tennis player and he wrote right-handedly but he was left-footer at football and a left-hander at golf. Some people would have found that challenging.

Bill started his football career in 1953 at the age of 16 with the Minyip reserves. At that time there was no junior football, and players started in the reserves. Ex-North Melbourne coach Laurie Icke was his coach at that time, and Bill credits Laurie with his development as a footballer and also his big opportunity in football. In 1957 Laurie was selected to play for the Wimmera against a visiting VFL team at Horsham. But Laurie manipulated it: he warned Bill that he was going to pull out at the last minute and that Bill could play in his place, so Bill took his gear along that day and got to play in the match. As I said before, he was someone who seized the moment and always made the most of any opportunity. He played well that day and the next morning as he came out of church, Melbourne Football Club officials, including Ron Barassi, were lined up to ask him to come to Melbourne and play with Melbourne.

In 1958 he played two practice matches with Melbourne but felt his commitment had to be to the farm. He went home again and promised to come back in 1959 and do a pre-season with Melbourne. In the intervening time he had a change of mind and ended up in 1959 at Albert Park oval playing for South

Melbourne Football Club, as the Premier said. The very first match he played was the first match of the 1959 year. Collingwood had won the 1958 premiership. Bill said that he went there for the unveiling of the premiership flag and that the Collingwood crowd was very loud. He said it was one of his football highlights that South Melbourne actually beat Collingwood that day. There will be a lot of people in this room who are very happy that Collingwood got beaten that day.

He played that season with South Melbourne but felt that his farming commitments meant that he should return home to the farm at Minyip. Many would say it was also that he wanted to return home and marry Ivy Smith, who he did marry that next year and who Bill described as the best person he had ever known.

He had a very successful coaching career, including a double premiership at Donald, with both the seniors and the reserves winning that particular year. He coached Watchem to two premierships out of three years. He coached Minyip, Warracknabeal, the North Central Football League, the Wimmera Football League and the Victorian Country Football League team. I actually met Bill when he had his second stint coaching the Watchem Corack Football Club as a 16-year-old when I played my first senior games of football. I can tell the house that he was a formidable footballer. When Bill's chin was out and that determined look was in his eye, not too many people stood in his way and got away with it. He was a very, very vigorous footballer, and very tough, and he made sure his physical presence was felt on the football field.

He was a life member of the Minyip football club and a life member of the Wimmera Football League, and he was actually selected in the Donald hall of fame as their coach for that particular hall of fame. Those who know the football league there would understand that Alan 'Darky' Dunstan, who was the mayor of that particular area and a passionate Donald supporter, was the person who actually recruited Bill to come to Donald and win those premierships. Darky would have been looking down on the service the other day and would have had a smile on his face about what Bill did for Donald.

A lot of people talked about Bill's bent nose and when that happened on the football field. Unfortunately that is one of those myths. It was actually his granny who, when he was 18 months old, was dressing him when he fell off a chair in the kitchen. That is how he got that bent nose; it was one of those myths that grow up through football.

In 1979 Bill was asked by Bob King, the federal member for Wimmera, to run for the then Country Party

against the sitting Liberal member, Jim McCabe — and those were the days. His sporting prowess, his success in sport throughout the Wimmera, meant that he had a very high profile, and it was a very vigorous three-cornered contest for those that can remember three-cornered contests in country Victoria. Bill went on to win, with positive preference flows out of that, and subsequently went on to win many elections after that, increasing his majority. In 1979 he was elected as the member for Lowan. The seat of Lowan was in place until 1992 when it was abolished, and Bill was elected as the member for Wimmera at that time — from 1992 through to 1999 when he retired.

Some of the folklore about Bill that was spoken about at his funeral included how his ute always had a lot of dents in it. Bill was a very good sheep person but probably not the best machinery person in the world. Part of the folklore of Bill's election campaigns was that his children, particularly Shane, who was on the farm with him, were always very prepared to actually hand out cards for Bill to make sure he was re-elected and did not actually come back to the farm and start breaking machinery again. I am told — I am not sure if it is true — that there was actually an ad at one stage that Shane ran saying 'Please elect Dad so he doesn't come home to the farm'.

In that parliamentary career he was on the Public Bodies Review Committee for those of us who remember the Public Bodies Review Committee, the Conservation of Energy Resources Committee, the Natural Resources and Environment Committee and the Library Committee, and he was shadow Minister for Agriculture from 1990 through 1992. I next crossed paths with Bill when Ian Baker was the minister in the last years of the Kirner government and they were repealing what was then called the Tomato Processing Industry Act 1976. As tomato growers we were actually governed by legislation in how we set prices. Ian Baker was hell-bent on deregulating that, and Bill assisted us in trying to defeat that bill, unsuccessfully. I can remember spending many late nights in this place, when it used to sit until 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock in the morning in those dying years there, with Bill going through that particular legislation.

Bill was Minister for Agriculture from 1992 to 1996. One of the things that was also commented on at the funeral was that Bill's joke telling probably was not the best strength he had in making speeches. Again, part of the folklore is that at one particular stage his office actually dispatched someone down the street to buy a new joke book because they felt that Bill's jokes were a bit off at times and probably did not hit the mark correctly. At the funeral I was talking to Mike

Taylor, who was Bill's departmental secretary through that time. I said to Mike that I would blame him, as the secretary, for Bill's jokes, but he took exception to that and did not believe it was his fault through that particular time.

After being Minister for Agriculture Bill then served as Minister for Corrections and Minister for Police and Emergency Services. In his term there was the tragedy around Gary Silk and Rodney Miller, something he had to deal with, and also the burnover of the fire truck at Linton, where there were five fatalities. Bill, as most ministers have in those portfolios, had some challenges to deal with in those particular portfolios.

Can I thank Fr Peter Hudson and Fr Justin Driscoll for the service they ran. I think it was absolutely appropriate to Bill, particularly Fr Justin, who actually quoted from a book by Morris West, *A View from the Ridge*, which is about looking back in life and looking forward, and he spoke about how Bill would look back from the ridge. He had a very successful life. He was a great family man; he was very dedicated to his family, very dedicated to his community and very dedicated to his church — and looking forward from the ridge, he would be looking forward to spending the rest of his time with his God. I think that was a fantastic homily delivered by Fr Justin, who is actually a great-nephew of Bill's.

Bill is survived by Ivy. He is the father of Katrina, Shane, Simone and Alicia, and a loved grandfather and great-grandfather of many. He was a true champion of the Wimmera region, a true champion of the state and an absolute gentleman. Vale, Bill McGrath.

**Ms KNIGHT** (Wendouree) (12:21) — It was an absolute privilege and honour to represent the Premier at the state funeral of William 'Bill' McGrath. I would also like to acknowledge Flight Lieutenant Christopher Francis, who represented the Governor of Victoria at that state funeral. It was really heartwarming to see how appreciative Bill's family was to have a state funeral; it was really incredibly important to them. From the moment I entered the church it was apparent just how loved and admired Bill was. The church was absolutely packed, and it was clear that Bill was a man who embraced every single moment of his life. He had a distinguished career, a deep faith and an absolute devotion to his family.

Bill was elected to Parliament in 1979 due to Labor preferences. In terms of Bill's career, there were no doubt many, many achievements, some of which the Leader of the National Party has talked about. One of the stories is that we would not have a tennis centre

today if it were not for Bill; the votes were against and Bill convinced his colleagues in the upper house to get the bill through. He knew how important the tennis centre would be to the state of Victoria — and boy was he right.

I got the sense, though, that his proudest achievements — apart from his family of course — happened right in the community in which he lived and the community that he represented so well and for so long. One story that really resonated was the story of a young deaf woman who was finding it difficult to get some work. Her mother rang Bill. She was very distressed and asked, ‘Is there anything that you can do to help?’. He made a call to the hospital, and they decided that they would give her a go. Thirty years later she is still there working away. Can you imagine the difference that made to her life, to her family’s life and also to the hospital? They would have missed out on a great worker if it had not been for Bill.

The job of a politician inevitably includes and impacts their families, and I would now like to acknowledge the family that Bill was so devoted to. Bill’s son and three daughters spoke lovingly about their dad and the contribution that he made to their lives. I did think of them all on Sunday, on Father’s Day. It must have been terribly sad. They would have missed him terribly, probably including his bad jokes.

Bill and Ivy had one son and four daughters. To Naomi: you are now together with your dad for always and forever. To Ivy, to Katrina, Shane, Simone and Alicia: there is no doubt that you would have provided inspiration to your husband and father, and it is without a doubt that you sacrificed your time with him as he moved around the electorate and as he did his great work for the state. Thank you all so much for your role in contributing to this state’s wealth and welfare. And thank you for giving Bill to the state of Victoria so that we can all benefit from his immense contributions.

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (12:24) — There have been many characters around this building over many years — maybe too few in recent times — but in the 1980s and 90s William Desmond McGrath, or Bill McGrath, was one of them and certainly one of the most liked. When I worked for the Kennett government I had plenty of contact with Bill and with his office. He was everything that people suggested. He was laid-back, easygoing, straightforward and quite unpretentious. He did not seem to have a worry in the world when you spoke to him, and that is how I found his demeanour. He presided over some of the most important portfolios in government — agriculture, police, corrections and emergency services — but I

always found that with Bill McGrath nothing seemed to faze him.

Bill McGrath was someone that we Liberals would describe as a true Nat. Having been born and bred on the land, he was from it, he was from a small town, and yes, indeed, he played country footy — perfect National Party pedigree; they always seem to play footy. Unlike those new Nats, many of whom only play local footy, Bill McGrath was a VFL boy and also played in the Wimmera league, playing an impressive 15 of 18 possible games with South Melbourne in the 1959 home-and-away season. He also kicked 18 goals. He returned to the Wimmera after a successful year of sport.

A proud Wimmera boy, Bill was from the St Arnaud and Minyip area. He was the sixth of seven children born to a devout Catholic family. They were close and remained that way his entire life. He worked on his parents’ — Tom and Eileen — Minyip farm and grew up on the 800-hectare property helping with the sheep. Leaving home in 1959 he did return to play local footy post his South Melbourne career and even coached locally. But Bill was more than a footy player. He loved golf, tennis and, I believe, even lawn bowls, but he also loved politics and, more importantly, the National Party.

In 1979 he was recruited by the Nats to run for the seat of Lowan. It was at that stage a Liberal seat, and quite handsomely too. The margin at the 1976 Hamer landslide election gave the Liberals an 11 per cent two-party lead over the Nats, 61-39. Bill was given the task of overturning that massive lead and making the seat green — National Party green. These were the days when The Nationals wore green, the Liberals blue and Labor red. Yes, The Nationals were the greens, but I am suspecting only in colour.

With 32 per cent of the primary vote, Bill McGrath eked out a final 50.5 per cent two-party preferred win over the Liberal Party on, I might add, the back of Labor Party preferences. But Bill won the seat. He was a hero to the local Nats and began a long association for his party with that seat; with its eventual successor, the seat of Wimmera; and then post the 2002 election with the seat of Lowan when it was recreated. Bill set the scene for his party, The Nationals, to hold the seat comfortably ever after that historic win, with Hugh Delahunty from 1999 and the current member for Lowan from 2014.

As an MP, Bill had a distinguished career. Following the Liberals and Nationals forming a coalition in 1990, he served as the shadow Minister for Agriculture until the 1992 election, and then in the Kennett

government he served as Minister for Agriculture in its first term from 1992 to 1996. In the second term of the Kennett government Bill served as Minister for Corrections and Minister for Police and Emergency Services. He was also parliamentary spokesperson for sport and recreation.

Despite being a minister, he remained a fierce advocate for his home communities, the Wimmera and western Victoria. He secured funding for the Wimmera Base Hospital in Horsham; he ensured natural gas was extended from Maryborough through the towns of Ararat, Stawell and onto Horsham; and he was instrumental in the gauge conversation of the Dimboola–Yaapeet, Hopetoun–Murtoa and Ararat–Portland railway lines. In 1996 Bill worked closely with the federal government and other state governments on the sensitive topic of firearms reform to ensure that farmers had appropriate access to rifles for pest control and other farm needs, while supporting important changes.

Coming up to the 1999 election he announced his intention not to recontest after 20 years in the job. The National Party did Bill's legacy proud and preselected former footy player Hugh Delahunty. The Lowan legacy was in good hands as Hugh also went on to become a minister, something Bill was proud of. And I have no doubt he would be proud when the current Nationals member for Lowan also accomplishes that achievement. After his retirement Bill became a member of the Wimmera Racing Club, the local Lions Club and the Wimmera Legacy. He always gave back to the community he loved.

Bill met his future wife, Ivy, early in life when they were in grade 7 at Dunmunkle East School. They married in 1960 and had four children. From all accounts he may have been a tough sportsman and steadfast politician, but he was a devoted father and husband. Bill always made time for his children despite how hectic life was. Bill McGrath was part of a breed of politicians that now seldom come to this Parliament — straightforward, straight-talking and down-to-earth. There was no spin, there were no lines and there was an attitude of, 'Say what you think and do as you say'. That is my memory of Bill McGrath. To Ivy, to his surviving children, Katrina, Shane, Simone and Alicia, to his grandchildren, great-grandchildren and extended family, I send the deepest sympathies of the Liberal Party and offer his family my sincerest condolences. Bill McGrath, may he rest in peace.

**Mr HOWARD** (Buninyong) (12:30) — I also wish to offer my condolences for Bill McGrath. He was in fact my local state member, I found, when I undertook

my teaching time in Kaniva. Going out there as a teacher in the early 1980s, I also found that Bill had a connection with me in being a Minyip person. My mother was in fact born in Minyip as my grandfather was the Methodist minister there, having moved from England from the green hills of Yorkshire, and found his first placement in Australia was the warmer climate of Minyip.

In my time as a teacher in Kaniva I found that Bill, in his first term as it was at the time, was a well-respected new MP. However my particular memory of Bill came about in that first election when he was the defending MP. Clearly the Liberals were keen to take the seat back and had a Kaniva candidate selected as the Liberal candidate, a fellow called Neville Goodwin. Neville was determined to take it up to Bill McGrath to see if he could challenge to get the seat back. I as an enthusiastic young Labor supporter at the time threw my support behind the Labor campaign, and that made it three of us handing out for Labor at the Kaniva booth on the day. Needless to say Labor were not exactly in the race, but again Labor preferences helped Bill win his second term and go on, as we have heard, to be a very successful and long-standing member of the coalition government in later days.

By that time I had moved to Ballarat and watched Bill, as a former agriculture teacher, progress as an agriculture minister, where again he was a very sound minister and took many decisions to benefit agriculture across the state. Later as a police minister and emergency services minister I remember he had to deal with the Linton Country Fire Authority disaster, which clearly affected the community in which I lived.

I certainly pass on my condolences to Bill's family. He was clearly a very sound and respected member of this house, both in his earlier days but also as a minister.

**Ms ASHER** (Brighton) (12:32) — I wish to say a couple of words on this condolence motion, principally because I served in the second Kennett cabinet with Bill and he was a very, very fine minister. It is always very sad to speak on a condolence motion when you know the person who has died, and it is even more confronting as well as sad to speak on a condolence motion for somebody with whom you served in cabinet.

Bill gave 20 years of service to his community and to the Parliament of Victoria and, as has already been said, served two terms as a minister. He was agriculture minister from 1992 to 1996. I was elected in 1992 and clearly agriculture was not a portfolio where I was doing a lot of lobbying of ministers as a city MP, but in the second Kennett cabinet where he

was the Minister for Corrections and Minister for Police and Emergency Services from 1996 to 1999 I certainly saw him every Monday morning and worked very, very closely with him.

I found him to be incredibly thorough in his approach to cabinet, which is not a universal characteristic I have noted over the years. He was very, very well prepared and he was an excellent advocate for his portfolios. He was a man of principle and he certainly was a team player. He very much saw, in my opinion, the big picture of what he was doing. He also had a very, very good concept of service to one's community; he was not just doing this because he was on some political kick. He appeared to me to be a very strong supporter of the coalition agreement, and I think that came from his great sense of pragmatism in relation to the two parties.

However, I also have a very personal reason for my great fondness for Bill McGrath, and that is that Bill McGrath was responsible for recruiting my now husband, Ron Best, to the National Party and played a critical role in Ron's recruitment to this Parliament. I can say that I do not think I would be married to Ron Best if it had not been for Bill McGrath, so I am most grateful for this.

As I said, Bill had a very, very strong sense of giving back to his community. In the early 1980s, Ron tells me, Bill was the coach of the Victorian Country Football League side which has already been mentioned by the Leader of the National Party, and Ron was the captain. Bill asked Ron if he had thought about a political career. I gather my husband said no, and Bill suggested that it was a very, very good way of giving back to one's community and being involved in community service. Clearly, given my husband did not enter Parliament until 1988, he was not immediately convinced of this, although he did run against John Brumby in Bendigo at one stage.

Ron tells me that the conversation with Bill, with Bill always stressing community service, took place over many, many years. Even though I married a Nat, I do not understand preselection in the National Party, and I suspect no-one from either the Liberal Party or the Labor Party understands National Party preselections. But Ron assured me over a glass of wine the other night that Bill McGrath and Bernie Dunn fixed it so he did not have to have a preselection contest for North Western Province in the Council. I think the National Party has changed a little bit since those days, but this idea that you have a conversation with someone who plays football and you give them a preselection is a source of great amusement to me.

I thank Bill for all that he did for those of us who now reside in Brighton. He was a thoroughly decent man, an all-round good bloke, and he was not the worst joke teller in the Kennett cabinet, I can assure you — that was another Nat. He was just a lovely, lovely human being who certainly made me, as a very young member of Parliament and a very young cabinet minister, feel very, very welcome. My deep condolences, and Ron's also, to his family.

**Ms KEALY** (Lowan) (12:37) — Last week Victoria farewelled the Honourable Bill McGrath, former Nationals member for the seats of Lowan and Wimmera, former Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and Minister for Corrections, sporting legend — on the tennis court and the footy field — a fantastic Wimmera producer and woolgrower, loyal supporter of Wimmera Legacy and other community organisations and associations, but above all else a devoted family man.

I feel a little bit out of order in this condolence motion actually because Bill was famous, as has been recalled by other members, for always opening a speech with a terrible joke. I thought back to Bill's jokes and unfortunately I do not think I can really tell any of those jokes in the Parliament today, so I may skip over that —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms KEALY** — No, I think that is not appropriate today.

Minyip was Bill's heartland; he had moved to the area as a young child and went on to establish a successful farming enterprise. Bill's connection to farming never really waned even though there was bit of pressure from his family for him to spend more time away from the farm so that he would stop breaking machinery or putting another ding in the car. In this past week I heard a story of one election campaign in which his son, Shane, was asking people to: 'Vote for my Dad, so we can get him off the farm and stop him breaking things'.

Bill entered politics in 1979, taking on the sitting Liberal Party member for Wimmera, Jim McCabe. While his local notoriety as a sportsman placed him in a good position to win the seat, there is no doubt that Bill's tireless grassroots campaign as a voice for the traditional working farmers of the region helped him out. Whether he was at the local agricultural and pastoral show, a local footy match — or his third for the day — community events or meetings, Bill shook the hands of as many people as he possibly could. This was advice that he passed on to me as I entered my election campaign.

Bill's hard work across the electorate in that first campaign did not wane after the election but continued over all 20 years of his parliamentary career. He worked hard for the people of the electorate and earned every single vote that delivered him strong electoral margins. He never took his privileged role as the local MP for granted, and he was renowned for making the effort to travel back to the electorate from Melbourne for a deb ball or other community event and then head back to Melbourne that night so he was ready for business the next day. It was this grassroots connection and devotion to the community that people admired about Bill. He was never pretentious and never so wrapped up in the world of politics as to take his eyes from the people that voted him into the position in the first place.

Bill's devotion to the people of the Wimmera and Lowan most likely earned Bill his reputation of turning over two parliamentary vehicles a year. This was a benchmark that I and my predecessor, the Honourable Hugh Delahunty, were held against very, very closely, Bill being of the firm view that if you were not wearing out two cars a year, you were not working hard enough. The cards were always skewed in Bill's favour though. Hughie and I could never, ever meet this benchmark of two vehicles a year, as rather than the 60 000 to 80 000 kilometres that we currently do in a car, Bill was turning them over at 40 000 kilometres. So even though we were doing the same kilometres or more a year, we never passed muster when it came to Bill's assessment of how much we were getting around the electorate.

Above being a highly regarded, approachable, accessible and respected local member, Bill was a fierce and highly successful minister. As Minister for Agriculture he led Victorian agriculture through one of its greatest periods of structural reform, with changes in dairy, the egg industry, barley marketing, the meat industry, tobacco and the Grain Elevators Board. He was passionate about making sure he was making a difference to farmers, with his mantra being that everything he did had to help a farmer make a dollar or save a dollar. As Minister for Police and Emergency Services he was faced with three significant events in 1998, being the waterfront dispute, the horrific murder of Sergeant Gary Silk and Senior Constable Rod Miller and the tragic deaths of five CFA volunteers at the Linton fire. This would be a heavy load for any minister, but Bill handled it exceptionally well. He dealt with all these events with respect, professionalism and integrity, and above all else as a true leader and a gentleman.

Beyond his parliamentary life Bill's loyalty to The Nationals never wavered, providing ongoing strong support to me and the Honourable Hugh Delahunty

over our time representing Lowan in the Victorian Parliament. His key advice to me was based on a football analogy. Given that my football career was one game where I was dragged at half-time, it was not that easy for me to get my head around. Basically it was that you have to take up an issue as if you have just got the football in front of a huge group of players: everybody will tackle you, they will be kicking you and punching you and, no matter what happens, as long as you get through to the other side still holding the ball, you have done the right thing. This is something he told me nearly every time I saw him, and I know that was also something that was drummed into Hughie as well. And it is the way that he played politics, he was someone who had integrity, and once he had made a decision and knew he was making the decision for the right reasons, he would proudly fight for that decision no matter what was thrown at him, and he would always come out with the right decision at the other end of the tackle.

Aside from Bill's footy analogies I also remember Bill's jokes — some terrible, others worse — but this was just part of the way Bill was always able to engage with people on any level, on any topic, from any background. This was reflected in the community remarks made to me in the past week following Bill's passing, and I would like to share some of those with you:

Bill did a great job representing those people in his electorate but he also served as a minister on two very important portfolios. He was a credit to his family and he was one of Minyip's favourite sons. He never forgot who he was or where he came from ...

A beautiful and well-respected man in all circles. I remember fondly our tennis days and your exemplary sportsmanship. A true gentleman.

Great friend and contributor to the Wimmera. Memories of his time with Wimmera racing and Horsham racing. Condolences to Ivy and family.

A true caring and motivated former member of Parliament.

And:

Bill was such a decent bloke doing so much for our community ...

I think that really summarises exactly the feelings of people across my electorate who greatly appreciate Bill's contribution to the region and how he had improved the state of Victoria over the years. Bill was a tireless and fierce advocate for rural Victoria, especially his homeland of the Wimmera. His strength on the footy field and as a local farmer and food producer stood him in good stead for parliamentary life. He often recalled to me the battles he faced in his ministerial roles with pride and sincere passion, and he generously shared the lessons that he learned on the journey. I will

never forget his advice and guidance, which has assisted me greatly in my parliamentary career. Thanks, Bill — a true statesman and great country MP, of the people and for the people. My deepest sympathies go to Ivy, Katrina, Shane, Simone and Alicia, the late Naomi and the many, many members of the large McGrath family. Vale, Bill McGrath.

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) (12:45) — Some people turn up to Parliament with their possible parliamentary questions; Bill McGrath turned up with his possible parliamentary jokes. In the dining room, where unlike today all members of each party would be aggregated in large numbers at the tables, there was a distillation of wisdom and the passing on of knowledge that is not written in any handbook or online parliamentary guide. A lot of information was transferred. Bill was renowned as a storyteller. I recall that his jokes were of a very high calibre. He had a lot of competition. One of the finest exponents of storytelling was Pat McNamara, who generally saved his best for the Hansard party on the last sitting day of a parliamentary term when he would be on a table regaling all who were there with both stories of this place and stories that would go well around country Victoria.

Upon the passing of Jack Simpson it was said of him that he had played 94 games short of 100. In Bill's case it was 85 games short of 100 of then VFL football. In Jack Simpson's description it was said that he preferred to apply the adage that on the football field it was better to give than to receive. In Bill's case he was a very hard-headed, strong footballer with chiselled features. Having taken many family holidays in the Wimmera over the last 18 years, I have had the privilege of travelling around the towns of Minyip, Murtoa, Rupanyup, Kaniva, Warracknabeal, Nhill and Dimboola, many grounds on which Bill played and coached. In the 1970s and beyond in this state country towns built legends from those people who had gone forth from those towns to play AFL games, VFL games and AFL premierships and make their mark in the wider world. Even one or two games in the city and then a country coaching career provided legendary opportunities. I might note in passing that Jim McCabe, who Bill beat in the 1979 election, is still alive today and an active member of the Dimboola Bowls Club despite approaching the age of 96 or thereabouts.

In terms of Bill's contribution to policy, I sat in this place when he was the Minister for Agriculture and some people were sent in on the adjournment debate, which was generally attended by all ministers, who responded to all questions. Bill was sometimes the tailender who might have been sent in to help

parliamentary staff take the clock to 11.00 p.m., which then entitled parliamentary staff to get a cab fare home. He was keen minded, vigorous and enthusiastic.

There is a poem by Bruce Dawe called *Life Cycle* which speaks about Australian football and people seeing their hope of salvation in the 6-foot recruit — not from Minyip but from Eaglehawk — and the notion that for them it will always be three-quarter time with the scores level and the wind advantage in the final term, and that defined the ethos of country. Through his sporting background, both as a tennis player and as a footballer, Bill had a great rapport with people across the state. Often times in a parliamentary sitting week some members here would go rowing before the sitting day and Bill would generally manage several sets of tennis with other members of the National Party. So he was very fit, active, keen minded, engaged and gregarious as he moved around the building.

My main object in contributing today is just to note too that in his role as Minister for Police and Emergency Services he made a very significant contribution to the Sandringham electorate — both he and Pat McNamara did. As police resources were being redirected and delivered on a regional basis I would always aim to have a brand-new station built on the former Sandringham police station site. Bill, having come down for a tour — which I will go into a bit more detail on in a moment — made a decision that the site was not surplus to police requirements so it was able to be retained and maintained for the development of a police station. When local priority policing came in 15 or 16 years or so ago the site was there and that facilitated the development of a new police station which is ably serving the local community.

On the day I brought him down I showed him the Sandringham police station site, I showed him the Cheltenham police station and I showed him local policing hotspots, but his mind was a little bit distracted. It was only when I worked out that he had a trotter racing at Mildura and was actually looking for the nearest TAB to get his money on that I noted a wider interest of his that accompanied his political journey.

He was a great member of the Kennett government, in my memory. He was one of the strong personalities and worthy members of this place, whose time and friendship I enjoyed as the member for Sandringham as he served the country region of Victoria. The legacy of a local police station in the Sandringham electorate is due to his good work and also that of Pat McNamara.

**Ms RYAN** (Euroa) (12:50) — There are many ways to describe Bill McGrath: a farmer, a committed and

trusted community member, an avid sports fan, a much-loved father and grandfather and an absolute legend of our party. As has already been said, Bill followed the well-worn path of many country MPs as a VFL footballer before his election to Parliament. But it was his deep involvement, understanding and love of community rather than his football prowess for which he will be long remembered in western Victoria.

He started his football career as a 16-year-old, playing for Minyip before he was recruited by South Melbourne. He would drive the 3½ hours from Minyip to Melbourne on Thursday nights for training before playing on Saturday and then returning home late that night, where he would spend the rest of the week working on the farm. I am sure those journeys well prepared him for the long trips to Parliament — and we all feel sorry for the member for Lowan for having to do them now.

Bill played his first VFL game for South Melbourne at Victoria Park, as has already been said, against Collingwood in 1959, the year after Collingwood won the flag. I am sure that everybody in this house, with the exception of the Collingwood supporters, would be delighted that South Melbourne won that game. Bill was a genuine all-rounder. He represented Wimmera in A-grade tennis at Kooyong, and as the Leader of The Nationals said, despite being a right-handed tennis player with a powerful forehand, a strong slice backhand and quick reflexes, he kicked with his left foot and was a left-handed golfer. I have to say that up until today I had always wondered who used the tennis court, which has now vanished, in the back gardens of Parliament House, but it is clear that Bill got great use out of it.

He was larger than life in the Wimmera but he also left a sporting legacy for the state. In fact Rod Laver Arena, or Melbourne Park as it was then known, would likely not be here if it had not been for Bill, because it was Bill who persuaded Peter Ross-Edwards at the time to support John Cain in getting it through the Parliament, including the upper house. Bill really understood that an international tennis event in Victoria required the building of a new centre because Kooyong was not big enough and not central enough.

Sport played a huge part in Bill's life, but to see him through that prism alone I think would be an injustice. There was hardly an organisation in the Wimmera that he was not involved with in some way, and those who knew him well remember him as a true country MP who attended absolutely everything. As the member for Lowan shared today, he was an incredible mentor to many National Party MPs.

He was particularly passionate about Wimmera Legacy, and he actually named it as one of the organisations that he was most proud to be involved with. But most of all I think Bill really understood the importance of community, of treating people equally. He was tough and charismatic. He dreamt big, and he was fierce for his community and for country people. His achievements, particularly during his time as the Minister for Agriculture as well as Minister for Corrections and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, are too many to name, but there are a few that are worth noting today.

During the gun reform debate that followed the Port Arthur massacre it was Bill who stood alone at a meeting of police ministers to point out that farmers simply had to have access to certain classes of firearms for animal welfare and for pest control. He held out on that debate and he won. His focus on ensuring that legislation gave due consideration to the lives of country people was also reflected in his work as the Minister for Agriculture. His instructions very clearly to his department were that they were there to make a dollar or save a dollar for the farmer. He was very focused on keeping farming viable through investments in research and development, and he had a really great empathy, having come from a farming family, for the challenges of farming life. I think one of his greatest achievements was his role in removing stamp duty from family farms. He really recognised that the key to getting people to hand over the farm to the next generation was removing stamp duty.

He did, as has already been well said, know how to have a laugh. I had a chat to Bill Baxter, who, like others, recalls that nearly every speech he gave or every deputation he led always started with a joke. In Bill's words, some were good and some were bloody terrible. He will be remembered not just as a champion of the Wimmera but as a champion of country Victoria and as a champion of our party. As his daughter Alicia said:

Leave today not mourning but asking, as Dad did, 'Are we giving life our best shot? We only live once, but if we play our cards right, once should be enough'.

I think Bill played his cards right and he gave life its best shot. Last year, when he was interviewed by the *Wimmera Mail-Times* he said:

If someone told me I was going to die tomorrow, I would say, 'I've had a good life'.

And he had a good life indeed. I extend my deepest condolences to Bill's large family but most particularly his wife, Ivy, and his children, Katrina, Shane, Simone and Alicia. Rest in peace, Bill.

**Motion agreed to in silence, honourable members showing unanimous agreement by standing in their places.**

### ADJOURNMENT

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (12:58) — I move:

That as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourable William Desmond McGrath the house now adjourns until 2.00 p.m. today.

**Motion agreed to.**

**House adjourned 12.58 p.m.**

**The SPEAKER took the chair at 2.02 p.m.**

### DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

**The SPEAKER** (14:02) — Before calling for questions, I would like to acknowledge in the house today that we have with us representatives of the 19 participating Hindu and Indian organisations responsible for putting on the fifth annual Diwali and Annakut Exhibition at our Parliament in Queen's Hall. A number of members attended last night's inauguration and took the opportunity to thank the organisers for bringing the event to Parliament again this year, even if it is a little earlier because of our electoral cycle.

The Diwali and Annakut Exhibition is an example of the Indian, particularly the Hindu Indian community, reaching out to the broader Victorian community through the Parliament to enhance our understanding and enhance harmony in Victoria's very successful multicultural society. The exhibition also provides more encouragement for members of the Indian community to visit the Parliament and to learn more about our democratic processes. On this fifth anniversary of the exhibition I urge all members over the next three days to visit the exhibition in Queen's Hall and have a chat with the representatives of the organisations.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

#### Prisoner day release

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (14:03) — My question is to the Premier —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! That was not a good start. I will remove members from the chamber if they shout across the chamber.

**Mr GUY** — My question is to the Premier. The one-punch killer of David Cassai, Dylan John Closter, was recently found to be playing local football while serving jail time for his fatal attack. Premier, is it a fact that Closter, imprisoned while serving a manslaughter conviction for this fatal one-punch attack, was also teaching swimming, to which he was escorted to Shepparton, 30 kilometres away, by unarmed volunteers, not prison guards, despite being jailed for a violent and fatal one-punch attack?

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (14:04) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. He has asked me about the specific matters of a particular prisoner. I will need to seek advice from Corrections Victoria in relation to the very specific question that the Leader of the Opposition has asked, and I am happy to undertake to do that.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The members for Hastings, Mornington and Warrandyte heard me warn the chamber. I ask members not to shout.

#### Supplementary question

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (14:04) — Premier, isn't it a fact that, while playing and training football and teaching swimming, Closter, in prison serving a manslaughter conviction for a fatal one-punch attack, was being released from prison for a majority of days every week, and that far from serving a prison sentence he was playing football and jumping in the pool?

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (14:05) — Again the Leader of the Opposition has asked me for specific details of a particular prisoner. As I said in my substantive answer, I am happy to seek advice from Corrections Victoria. I am also happy to confirm in broad terms that many of the release programs that the Leader of the Opposition is concerned about were actually introduced by the previous government, I believe, but on the issue of this specific case I will seek advice.

I do note the Leader of the Opposition's new-found interest in day-release programs — very interested in day-release programs the Leader of the Opposition is, very interested indeed.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I take the opportunity —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** (14:06) — Order! The member for Euroa will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

**Honourable member for Euroa withdrew from chamber.**

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, this was a very specific question the Premier has undertaken to make inquiries about. He should not be proceeding to debate the issue. I ask you to bring him back to answering the question.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Premier has concluded his answer.

**Ministers statements: Suburban Rail Loop**

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (14:06) — While others are very distracted, I am delighted to be able to confirm that the government last week laid out the —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** (14:06) — Order! The member for Hastings will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

**Honourable member for Hastings withdrew from chamber.**

**Mr ANDREWS** — It is a great shame the member for Hastings will miss this, but still. The government has laid out a comprehensive plan to connect every single passenger rail line, all of our major passenger rail lines. It is the biggest infrastructure program in the nation's history, connecting hospitals, universities, TAFEs, employment precincts, research and development precincts, creating 20 000 jobs.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — I wonder: was the phone hook-up as loud as this, as noisy as this?

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** (14:07) — Order! The Premier will resume his seat. I am going to ask the Premier to come back to making a statement, but I am going to ask the member for Polwarth and the member for Warrandyte to leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

**Honourable members for Polwarth and Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.**

**Mr ANDREWS** — We wonder whether the member for Warrandyte was on the phone hook-up, being the tactical genius of those opposite. I wonder:

was the phone hook-up as loud and disorderly as those opposite today? I think it might have been. Twenty thousand jobs —

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is becoming very disorderly and is departing from making a ministers statement. I do ask you to bring him back to compliance with sessional orders.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Premier strayed from making a statement but he came back to making a statement, and I ask him to continue.

**Mr ANDREWS** — I did indeed; 20 000 jobs, 200 000 cars off our roads every day, 400 000 passengers using what will be the busiest line in our rail network. Not only will we have a situation where by 2022, under a re-elected Labor government, the airport rail link will be under construction through that Sunshine corridor — not painting signs on the ground like somebody else did — but of course stage 1 of the Suburban Rail Loop, running from Cheltenham to Box Hill, will be under construction as well.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — The Leader of the Opposition says no-one believes me. Of all the things you might say today! You are in more trouble, I tell you.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** (14:09) — Order! I am going to ask the member for Footscray and the member for Ripon to leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

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

**Youth violence**

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (14:09) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, you said after the Moomba riots in 2016 you would smash the gangs. Given there was yet another riot on the weekend smashing up property and an 18-year-old sustained serious leg injuries in a situation where police were overwhelmed, will you now admit that despite your hollow threats to them the only people doing the smashing in this city are out-of-control youth crime gangs, not you?

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of The Nationals!

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (14:10) — It will not go without notice that apparently gang violence is a laughing matter now — all very funny. If only those opposite were in power to cut the police budget — that would work, wouldn't it? That would be a great solution. That is what you did the last time you were in office, and the government you used to work for, before the one you were a member of, cut police budgets as well. It promised 1000 more police and cut 800. That is the government you worked for, the one led by your hero, and of course the government that you were a member of cut the police budget as well. That is the history of our state. Those opposite know a bit about smashing up — smashing up the police budget. That is what they know about. That is what they always do.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — Are you Peter Dutton or Scott Morrison?

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order!

**Mr Pesutto** — On a point of order, Speaker, I would expect that from Tattoo but not this guy over here.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Hawthorn will come to making a point of order.

**Mr Pesutto** — The opposition leader's question was very direct. We have had out-of-control riots on the St Kilda foreshore, at Moomba, in Taylors Hill, at the Ecoville centre in Tarneit and now in Collingwood. How much do Victorians have to put up with before this Premier answers for his failures and why he has not smashed the gangs?

**Ms Allan** — On the point of order, Speaker, I ask that you rule that point of order out of order. It was not taken in the appropriate form — it was more an audition from the member for Hawthorn than a point of order — and I ask that you rule it out.

**Mr Walsh** — On the point of order, Speaker, can I support the member for Hawthorn in his point of order. The Premier was asked a very serious question about gang violence and particularly how one youth tragically lost their leg. I ask you to bring him back to answering that question. He promised to smash up these gangs. The only people who are smashing up Melbourne are those gangs, and the Premier needs to do something.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! A point of order is not an opportunity to repeat the question. However, I do ask

the Premier to refrain from using this as an opportunity to attack the opposition, and to answer the question.

**Mr ANDREWS** — As I was saying, Speaker, the government has not cut the budget of police. We have in fact given to Victoria Police every dollar, every resource, every power, every support that they have requested, and more in fact. That is why there is a dedicated gang task force.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — One minute those opposite would have us believe that the government does not acknowledge that there are gang violence issues, the next we are doing something but not enough. Those opposite are completely and utterly confused when it comes to what is required, and that is to continue to support Victoria Police. If the Leader of the Opposition took the time perhaps to go out to the police academy, if he took a chance given his current problems and went out to the police academy, he would see that it is full: full of recruits and full of graduates, thanks to more than \$3 billion in additional investment by this government.

And the government will continue to provide the chief commissioner, police command, every single woman and man of Victoria Police and the civilians who provide support to them not with cuts but with further resources. The Leader of the Opposition's rather emotional presentation and bravado today will not change the history of our state — that is, whenever you get the chance you cut the police budget. We all know it, and so do Victorians.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** (14:15) — Order! The member for Lowan and the member for Macedon will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

**Honourable members for Lowan and Macedon withdrew from chamber.**

*Supplementary question*

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (14:15) — Premier, your community safety trustee and respected former police officer Ron Iddles yesterday said about the recent Taylors Hill riot, 'You had a young group saying, "You can't touch us", and I think the fact that no-one was arrested doesn't send a good message'. Premier, how many times do Victorians have to see another riot, many times with no arrests? How many times do people have to get hurt, does property have to be destroyed, lives endangered and people hiding in fear in their homes before you finally reverse your

soft-on-crime policies, which have hurt so many Victorians across so many towns and suburbs?

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (14:16) — I am not quite sure whether the Leader of the Opposition was criticising Ron Iddles in that question, which no-one —

**Mr Guy** interjected.

**Mr ANDREWS** — Well, no, I was not quite sure whether you were criticising him or not, which would be —

**Mr Guy** interjected.

**Mr ANDREWS** — Anyway, we will wait and see what the record says. I do not know whether you were criticising Ron Iddles or not. In relation to what the government will and will not do, let me be very clear with the Leader of the Opposition: we will continue to provide to Victoria Police the resources that they need and the support that they require, and of course we will not, as those opposite did, seek to undermine police command or cut the very budgets that those opposite now pretend to be concerned about. When you had your chance, if only you had spent a bit less time rezoning land for your mates and a bit more time supporting Victoria Police.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** (14:17) — The member for Kew will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

**Honourable member for Kew withdrew from chamber.**

### **Ministers statements: Suburban Rail Loop**

**Ms ALLAN** (Minister for Public Transport) (14:17) — Victorians have well and truly seen for themselves how it is the Andrews Labor government delivers the big and important public transport projects that our city and state needs. They have seen us remove 26 level crossings. They have seen us build the train line to Mernda six months ahead of schedule. And of course they have seen that the Metro Tunnel project is also a year ahead of schedule and that work is underway on every single regional rail passenger line as part of our regional rail revival program of works.

I think that is a fair reason why Victorians are so supportive of our announcement last week that an Andrews Labor government will get on and deliver the Suburban Rail Loop, an incredibly important project for the city and the state. It will transform the way people connect to and move across our city. It will connect

people in new and different ways to job centres, to educational opportunities, to universities and TAFEs and also to important hospital services.

Everyone welcomed this announcement — well, actually, not nearly everyone, but we will come back to that in a moment. We saw business groups, transport experts, local councils and universities all on board and very public with their support for this project. Also importantly, thousands of Victorians support this project because they know, and this is a key point with the Suburban Rail Loop, it will get them to where they need to go — a direct rail connection to those important services.

We have also heard the Premier say that this is a project that will create 20 000 jobs. This comes on top of the tens of thousands of jobs that Victorians have seen us already create. We know that not everyone is on board because those opposite do not know how to commit to, fund and deliver big public transport projects. No excuse is too small for them to block them.

### **Police resources**

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (14:19) — My question is to the Minister for Police. On 7 December 2016 you promised in this house that all 24-hour police stations would be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You repeated the promise in the *Police Association Victoria Journal*. The highly respected and decorated former police officer, your community safety trustee Ron Iddles, told Neil Mitchell yesterday that at least 17 24-hour police stations are not open as you promised. Minister, can you guarantee that every single 24-hour police station that was operating as one two years ago is operating as a 24-hour station today, or is Ron Iddles right and you have broken your word?

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Police) (14:20) — The Leader of the Opposition may not have realised I was actually sitting next to Ron Iddles during that interview, so I know exactly what he said and I know exactly what he has also informed me about — that is, every single 24-hour police station is a 24-hour police station. Every single 24-hour police station has police at the police station. They have 24-hour patrols and they are open.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Ms NEVILLE** — Oh, so now those opposite are saying they are hiding. Oh, you really do not like police, do you? You really do not like the police.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Members need to be able to hear the minister answer that question. She does not need people shouting at her across the chamber and across the table.

**Ms NEVILLE** — Every single 24-hour police station that was a 24-hour police station is a 24-hour police station and is staffed. But let us talk about promises. I remember a promise in 2010 that the Waurn Ponds police station was going to be a 24-hour police station. Yes, a 24-hour police station — the *Geelong Advertiser*.

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister may be embarrassed about the issue, but she does need to address the question rather than proceeding to debate matters. I ask you to bring her back to answering it.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The minister is referring to a 24-hour police station. I ask her not to use that as an opportunity to attack the opposition.

**Ms NEVILLE** — Speaker, I was just talking about a reference to the Waurn Ponds police station back in 2010 as a local community member in Geelong. There was an article in the *Geelong Advertiser* promising that there would be a 24-hour police station in Waurn Ponds. Unfortunately in November 2014 —

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, as I heard you, you have asked the minister to come back to answering the question. She seems to have gone back to exactly the point she was making before, and I do ask you to renew your direction to her.

**Ms Allan** — On the point of order, Speaker, as I heard the question that was asked, the question went to references that have been made in the past about 24-hour police stations, and the minister is entitled, in answering her question, to provide some context around that matter.

**The SPEAKER** — The minister to continue answering the question.

**Ms NEVILLE** — So, Speaker, some other supposed 24-hour police stations — Rowville, Emerald, Mount Waverley, Ashburton — were all promised to be 24-hour police stations at various stages; 2013 —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr Watt** — On a point of order, Speaker, sessional orders actually require the minister to be factual in her response. Ashburton was never promised to be a

24-hour police station. It was also never promised to be a two-day police station under this government.

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

**Ms NEVILLE** — Speaker, when you go back in the history of what were promised to be 24-hour police stations — all those ones I have gone through — you then go to 2014 and actually find broken promise, broken promise, broken promise, broken promise, broken promise. So we committed in the community safety statement for 24-hour stations to be open. They are open, and that is exactly what Ron Iddles has said to me and has said to the community.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (14:24) — Speaker, in recent weeks the 24-hour Mooroolbark police station has stopped its night shift and installed new locks at the station so it can now be closed at night. This has left the entire Yarra Ranges police service area — an area of 2500 square kilometres, home to 145 000 people — with just one 24-hour police station at Lilydale. Minister, you promised to keep this station open 24 hours a day, accessible by the public 24 hours a day. If you have kept your promise, why does the station now shut at night?

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Police) (14:25) — I received — in fact today — an update from Victoria Police on every police station across the state, and one of those happened to be Mooroolbark. I can assure you from Victoria Police command it is a 24-hour station with 24-hour counter service and 24-hour patrol. But not only that, let us be really clear. In this division we have got 24 more police, we have got 18 police custody officers, we have got another 12 coming and our crime rate in that region has come down 11.2 per cent. So police are doing the hard yards out there. We are backing them in with resources and equipment, and for the first time in six years the crime rate is coming down after those opposite left a mess for us to turn around.

### **Ministers statements: health funding**

**Ms HENNESSY** (Minister for Health) (14:26) — I rise to update the house on the Andrews Labor government's \$3.2 billion health infrastructure pipeline. Just last week I was delighted to join with the Treasurer to open the wonderful \$85 million expansion of the Werribee Mercy, a health service providing world-class care with a very important expansion. And of course I can advise and update the house that the expansion of the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's health service

is coming along very, very well — almost complete. An important expansion of the Sunshine Hospital emergency department is underway, we have opened the new Broadmeadows surgery hospital, we have undertaken important projects at both Austin Health and also Mercy Hospital for Women, and we are building the wonderful first standalone Victorian Heart Hospital at Monash University in Clayton.

But of course we are not done with just investing in the importance of health infrastructure; we absolutely have to connect them. I really do want to welcome the announcement made by the Premier and the Minister for Public Transport last week of the Suburban Rail Loop because, importantly, all of those health services that I have just talked about — health services are getting important expansions because Labor governments invest in health while Liberal governments cut health. But Labor governments also invest in public transport. This is a big, bold, new, visionary project that will provide incredible connectivity between all of those health services. That is not only important for patients and important for healthcare; it is critically important for our healthcare staff.

We employ almost 92 000 staff in the Victorian public health system. We are very proud to back them in. We are proud to support them. We are absolutely going to be continuing to do all we can to help them get to work. In stark contrast, we see those who sit on the other side of this house put plans out to the casino, put plans out that they have got no intention of ever delivering on. We will support our hospitals and we will support people with getting there.

### Police resources

**Ms VICTORIA** (Bayswater) (14:28) — Premier, Ron Iddles — now your community safety trustee — wrote in the *Herald Sun* on 31 August 2016 regarding the need to keep police stations open:

There is no shortage of family violence victims who attend stations seeking refuge at all hours, when other community services have closed and they have nowhere else to go.

As a result of your service cuts, at least 17 supposed 24-hour police stations are closed at night. What are women fleeing family violence meant to do when they arrive at a police station seeking refuge and help at night, only to find the doors are locked, the lights are off and their formerly 24-hour police station under your government is closed? What do they do?

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (14:29) — I thank the member for Bayswater for her question. I am afraid it is littered with errors, as is so often the case. I am more

than happy to get some advice from Victoria Police if I can add, and maybe they can help me actually list all the errors in that question. What I would say, though, to the member for Bayswater is that I welcome her question on the issue of family violence. It is after all the number one law and order issue in our state and our nation. I suppose there are a number of different approaches you could take. For instance, on the day when, say, the alternative government announced that there would be Australia's first royal commission into family violence, you could tweet, 'That'll be a lawyers' picnic'. You could do that. That could be your approach.

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, this was a very serious and direct question about police stations being closed at night when family violence victims are seeking refuge. The Premier is now proceeding to debate the issue and depart from that topic, and I ask you to bring him back to giving a proper answer to an important question.

**Ms Allan** — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier was being entirely relevant to the question that was asked, and you should rule that point of order out of order. As the Premier has indicated in starting his answer, there were many inaccuracies in the question that was asked, and he is absolutely entitled to address that in answering the question.

**Ms Victoria** — On the point of order, Speaker, there has been an assertion made that my question was factually incorrect, and I would ask if the Premier could actually tell me what was incorrect because my facts are very clear. The Leader of the House has also made those assertions and I am being accused of being factually incorrect, so just because they assert that does not make it true.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Premier had been responsive to the question asked but had started to attack the opposition.

**Mr ANDREWS** — The question was about family violence, and if I am not interrupted in the couple of minutes I have got to go, I will go through a few of the things the government has done to support victim survivors of family violence and their kids — not just to talk about the issue and not to peddle half-truths and inaccuracies but to actually invest in the biggest boost to family violence services in the nation.

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, you have already asked the Premier to come back to answering the question, and the question was a very specific one. If the Premier wants to have a broader discussion about family violence issues, then he will have other

opportunities to do so, but on this occasion I do ask you to bring him back to answering the specific question asked by the member for Bayswater.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The question related —

**Ms Ryall** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** (14:32) — The member for Ringwood will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

**Honourable member for Ringwood withdrew from chamber.**

**The SPEAKER** — The question related specifically to 24-hour police stations but then asked what family violence victims should do, and the Premier is responding to the issue of family violence.

**Mr ANDREWS** — And I am challenging, Speaker, the assertions made in the question asked by the member for Bayswater. Beyond that I am left only to talk in broad terms about what the government has done because the question was littered with errors, as is so often the case when questions are put forward by the member for Bayswater.

Four hundred and fifteen specialist family violence police, more than \$2 billion in additional support — more than if you add up every state and territory and the commonwealth government. If you combine them all together, there is less investment than what this government has made to support victims of family violence and their children. What is more, we are prepared to call this crime out for what it is: it is a gendered crime. When, for instance, Rosie Batty stands just there, everyone on this side of the house is prepared to stand up and back her in, not something those opposite can say.

We will continue to give to Victoria Police and every agency involved in the family violence prevention and support sector more funding than the member for Bayswater ever bothered to give them and more funding than every other government in this nation combined gives to those services. That is the answer to the member for Bayswater as to what we will do. We will keep investing because those investments save lives and change lives — not the words of those opposite but the profound record of investment by this government.

*Supplementary question*

**Ms VICTORIA** (Bayswater) (14:34) — Premier, your *Community Safety Statement 2018–19*, on page 1, says your government has a:

... continuing commitment to 24-hour police stations being open and accessible at all hours.

Premier, this statement is simply not true. The people of Mooroolbark and at least 16 other locations are now living with reduced hours from their local so-called 24-hour police stations that are no longer open at all hours due to your cuts. So why have you allowed this misleading and potentially dangerous information to be promoted — paid for at taxpayers expense — given you know it is not true and that your government has in fact reduced police station opening hours?

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (14:35) — Just putting a question mark at the end of a long, long statement does not actually make it a question. I am not sure there was a question in there, but there was more of the inaccuracy that the member for Bayswater is very well known for. Essentially the member for Bayswater puts it to me that there is misleading and dangerous information —

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, it is not in order for the Premier to make gratuitous attacks on a member who has asked a question of him. This was a specific question about why he has allowed misleading information to be made available at taxpayers expense given the dangerous consequences of it. That is the question that was posed to him, and that is the question he needs to come back to answering.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! There was a very long preamble to this question, but I ask the Premier to come back to answering the question.

**Mr ANDREWS** — As I was about to say, the only misleading and dangerous information that has been put around is in questions from the member for Bayswater that are wholly inaccurate.

**Mr Guy** — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the Premier needs to come back to the question and answer the member for Bayswater's putting of facts to this chamber about police stations being closed and the Premier's community safety advocate, Ron Iddles, saying on radio yesterday, 'I think my last count was up to 17'. So unless the Premier thinks his own adviser is lying, maybe he wants to explain himself to the house.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Premier is being responsive to the question that was asked. The Premier has concluded his answer.

### Ministers statements: Suburban Rail Loop

**Mr CARROLL** (Minister for Industry and Employment) (14:37) — I rise to update the house on how the Suburban Rail Loop will make it easier for hardworking Victorians to get to key industry and employment precincts. On this side of the house we know how critical it is to have easy access to world-class jobs, TAFEs, universities, schools and hospitals. The Suburban Rail Loop project will create 20 000 jobs and some 2000 apprentices will be guaranteed work through our Major Projects Skills Guarantee. We will maximise industry participation, ensuring local jobs and small businesses get easy access and good access to help build this city-shaping infrastructure that will also help shape young people's lives in the future.

The network will circle Melbourne, connecting every major railway line from the Frankston line to the Werribee line to Melbourne Airport. Twelve new underground stations will connect the Monash, Latrobe, Sunshine and Werribee employment clusters with precincts such as Box Hill, Burwood, Broadmeadows and Melbourne Airport.

Not everybody agrees with the Suburban Rail Loop though. Travel from Box Hill to La Trobe University is estimated to take approximately 10 minutes and Box Hill to Monash University is estimated to take around 13 minutes — and the Minister for Health outlined the important heart hospital that is being built.

I have got a copy here of the *Whitehorse Leader* from last week, and I quote:

It is one of the most irresponsible approaches to public policy that I have ever encountered ...

Who said that? There he is: the attorney-general for Ventnor said it, Speaker, that is who said it. We will not be lectured to on public policy by the attorney-general for Ventnor.

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, the honourable member is getting very agitated and has departed a long way from making a ministers statement. I ask you to bring him back to complying with sessional orders.

**The SPEAKER** — I uphold the point of order. The minister has strayed from making his statement. I

ask the minister to refer to members by their appropriate titles.

**Mr CARROLL** — I could not have written the script any better myself, thank you, member for Box Hill. We are creating jobs, we are helping people, we are supporting peoples' futures, we are making sure our steel industry is strong and we are getting on with the job.

### Police resources

**Mr CLARK** (Box Hill) (14:39) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, Victorians were sickened by the attack on six police at the Brewhouse bar in Queenscliff on Saturday, 25 August. Premier, is it not a fact that because the Queenscliff police station was closed when the brawl took place, the police response rather than coming from a few hundred metres up the road — if the station had been opened as your now police minister had promised — instead had to come from other parts of Geelong and the Bellarine, delaying the response while the incident escalated?

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (14:40) — I thank the member for Box Hill for his question. He is asking me to confirm what might have happened if circumstances had been different and if there had been various hypotheticals. He is entitled to ask that question, but I would need to consult with Victoria Police about the details of that particular incident. It was a nasty incident, and I dare say there would have been the need for an operational response from all members that were available from the region, not just from right next door, as the member for Box Hill put forward. The member for Box Hill is putting a scenario to me — and no disrespect to the member for Box Hill, but —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — As I was indicating, I mean no offence to the member for Box Hill when I say to him that I would, I think, have a very strong case to go and check the facts that have been put forward to me by the member for Box Hill and other members sitting opposite. It was a nasty incident, and I would need to seek advice from Victoria Police as to the details there and indeed the nature of the response that was provided. I assure the member for Bayswater that in calling into question the accuracy of all of you, I am an equal opportunity critic of the fact that more often than not you simply make it up.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr CLARK** (Box Hill) (14:42) — Speaker, let me give the Premier some further facts. In opposition his

now police minister, the member for Bellarine, promised that the Portarlington, Queenscliff and Drysdale police stations would all be open 16 hours a day, seven days a week. Despite this clear and unequivocal promise, these stations are now only open but a handful of hours during the week. Premier, how can Victorians believe a thing your police minister says when she cannot even keep the promises she made to her own constituents in her own portfolio?

**Mr Pesutto** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** (14:42) — The member for Hawthorn will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

**Honourable member for Hawthorn withdrew from chamber.**

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (14:42) — Why would the operating hours of those police stations have been a matter of public debate during that election campaign? Was it the fact that they were slated to be closed and that — sorry — they were actually closed? Those opposite cannot have it both ways, although they very much wish they could. They very much wish that they could have it both ways — for instance, those who should be answering questions are very keen to ask them today. Those who signed off on the Ventnor payment are very keen not to answer questions about that today. Did you sign the cheque, Clarky?

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier seems intent to talk about anything other than an answer to the question, but question time does require, and standing orders do require, him to be relevant and to address questions. I ask you to ask him to come back to complying with standing orders. He might tear up conventions, but the standing orders of this house still apply to him as to all members.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The end of that supplementary question was very broad, but I do ask the Premier to come back to answering the question.

**Mr ANDREWS** — I am indebted to the member for Box Hill for his lecture on conventions. Pairing arrangements, shall we say, would that be ripping up conventions, and lying about being at church on Good Friday and then turning up to vote? What about paying \$2 million to not buy a piece of land? That is conventional, is it?

**Ministers statements: Suburban Rail Loop**

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Education) (14:44) — I rise to update the house on how the Suburban Rail

Loop will help students and staff get to TAFEs and universities right across Melbourne. The landmark project will connect Monash University in Clayton, Deakin University in Burwood and La Trobe University in Bundoora, and it will travel between Monash Clayton and La Trobe Bundoora, taking just 25 minutes. At the moment those commuting to those universities must either drive or take a tram, bus or train towards the city and then back out again, and it is not good enough.

The Suburban Rail Loop will mean someone living in Broadmeadows can get to Monash Clayton in around 35 minutes, making study or working there a possibility for many for the first time. By way of comparison, right now this would take approximately 2 hours by train on our current network. TAFEs will also be connected, including Box Hill Institute, Melbourne Polytechnic in Heidelberg and Victoria University Polytechnic in Sunshine. New super-hubs at Clayton, Broadmeadows and Sunshine will connect regional passengers to the new line, giving them direct access to these education and jobs precincts and opening up new opportunities for regional students.

The vice-chancellor at La Trobe University, Professor John Dewar, has said:

This is great news for students and staff at La Trobe and for the communities and industries that surround our campus.

The chief operations officer at Deakin University said the new train line would be ‘an absolute game changer’ for the university. The vice-chancellor at Monash University, Professor Margaret Gardner, said:

Building a network that links Monash University with the rest of Melbourne truly recognises the importance of the south-eastern corridor and the Monash precinct in Victoria’s continued innovation and economic growth.

## CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

### Brighton electorate

**Ms ASHER** (Brighton) (14:47) — (14 901) The constituency question that I have is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. What was the cost to the taxpayer of recent telephone polling into parts of the Brighton electorate relating to what is commonly referred to as the New Street public housing renewal program. In asking this question, I make the following points: community consultation is quite different from opinion polling; secondly, taxpayers money should not be spent on opinion polling on a Labor government project, and if the minister wishes to advise me it was not, I will be absolutely delighted; and thirdly, the government does not need opinion polls. I can tell the

government how to fix the problems of the lack of public acceptance of the New Street public housing renewal: all the government needs to do is to reduce the scale of the project.

### **Yuroke electorate**

**Ms SPENCE** (Yuroke) (14:48) — (14 902) My constituency question is to the Minister for Sport. How have residents benefited from the Andrews Labor government's investment in supporting grassroots sports in the Yuroke electorate? Whether it is providing life-saving defibrillators or assisting athletes with the cost of travel, uniforms and equipment, sports clubs in the Yuroke electorate have benefited significantly from having a government that cares about helping them grow and succeed. With such a large number of grants awarded, I would appreciate any details the minister can provide on the extent of this local investment over this term of government.

### **Murray Plains electorate**

**Mr WALSH** (Murray Plains) (14:49) — (14 903) My constituency question is to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and it is on behalf of the organisers of the Southern 80 waterski race and the wider community of Echuca and Moama. It concerns the three-year deal that he did to sponsor that race for \$55 000 per year, which he actually withdrew from after one year of that sponsorship. I ask: when is the minister actually going to reinstate that money that he promised to the Southern 80 race so it can be held into the future?

### **Rowville electorate**

**Mr WELLS** (Rowville) (14:49) — (14 904) My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Minister, will your government offer compensation to the 69 commercial and manufacturing businesses in my electorate of Rowville who have been told by AusNet Services that for the second time in a month they will lose power supply for another whole business day? When service provider AusNet advised of an impending power cut on 3 August then cancelled at short notice, Rowville businesses sent staff home, lost wages and interrupted their manufacturing processes and supply chains for nothing. Now you expect them all to do the same again. There is no compensation. You have not even offered so much as a backup generator to help them keep running. Because of Labor's policy to jack up coal royalties and close Hazelwood, Victorian businesses and consumers now pay a premium for a Third World electricity supply.

### **Williamstown electorate**

**Mr NOONAN** (Williamstown) (14:50) — (14 905) My question is for the Minister for Education, and it relates to Yarraville Special Development School, which, as members would appreciate, is a terrific local school — and I want to place on record my thanks to the teachers, staff and parents. For some time the school has been seeking to replace their front fence. This in part relates to the need to keep the front of the school perimeter safe for students accessing the particular school and for periods of the day when the students are having a break. Given that need, I am very pleased that the minister has, through the department, helped facilitate funding to replace that front fence. My question is really quite simple. When is the minister expecting that this work will in fact be completed?

### **Sandringham electorate**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) (14:51) — (14 906) My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Public Transport. I note that in 1982, prior to the election, the then Labor opposition, the Labor Party, was promoting a rail link between Huntingdale station and VFL Park via Monash University. Such a proposal was floated and got front page coverage in the *Herald Sun* but was never, ever delivered. I also note the proposal for a rail link between Cheltenham and Werribee — and in a subset comment I note that it does not link with the Sandringham rail line — and I further note the proposal for grade separation at Charman Road and Park Road in Cheltenham, and I ask: will the grade separation works continue in light of the proposed new suburban rail link?

### **Tarneit electorate**

**Mr LANGUILLER** (Tarneit) (14:52) — (14 907) My constituency question is to the Minister for Sport, and I ask: when will the minister inform clubs in my electorate about applications they have submitted for the first round of the 2018–19 sporting club grants? I am aware that SUP Melbourne Inc. and Hoppers Crossing Football Club Inc. have applied. Sport is growing and very popular in Tarneit, and I have taken a keen interest in assisting clubs whenever funding is available. The grants provide clubs up to \$1000 for new uniforms and equipment, up to \$2000 for training coaches, officials and volunteers, and up to \$5000 to improve operational effectiveness. I am proud to be a part of this government's investment to enable sport and active recreation to go from strength to strength.

**Bass electorate**

**Mr PAYNTER** (Bass) (14:53) — (14 908) The Pakenham East structure plan will completely transform the east of Pakenham, with 7100 homes, 20 000-odd residents and approximately 15 000 cars. The question is to the Minister for Planning. Minister, I am asking you to review the structure plan with a view to meeting with the Ryan Road residents who are concerned about the traffic having access to Ryan Road. What the residents of Ryan Road are asking for is for the minister to review the plan and ensure that traffic can only enter and exit the Princes Highway and not use Ryan Road.

**Yan Yean electorate**

**Ms GREEN** (Yan Yean) (14:53) — (14 909) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport, and I ask: when will Public Transport Victoria (PTV) make changes to bussing arrangements for students living in Doreen who attend Montmorency Secondary College? Due to the outstanding introduction of rail services to Mernda and a new Hurstbridge line timetable, PTV has introduced new bus routes, including routes 388 and 389, reorganised the Plenty Valley bus routes to connect to rail services and expanded bus services to many new parts of Mernda and Doreen that did not have them. It seems there have been unintended consequences for some students. I have met with the college, I have had correspondence from parents and I travelled the journey yesterday with the students, and I agree that changes need to be made.

**Broadmeadows electorate**

**Mr McGUIRE** (Broadmeadows) (14:54) — (14 910) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport, and I ask: how will Australia’s largest public transport plan affect Melbourne’s north and its designated capital, Broadmeadows? My constituents have been delighted to hear of the \$50 billion plan, how it will link the rail lines and what it will do to open up this entire area, which will soon have a population larger than that of Adelaide. This is the growth area. This is what this government is doing to actually deliver and provide the new industries, the jobs and the economic and cultural development that these communities crave, to reimagine Melbourne as it becomes a metropolis and to spread opportunity throughout the rest of the state. This is fantastic for jobs and growth. My community would be delighted to hear from the minister and to see her actually come to the area to talk about it.

**PETITIONS**

**Following petitions presented to house:**

**Drug driving**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

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

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

**By Mr BURGESS (Hastings) (141 signatures).**

**Rochester ambulance services**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of constituents in the rural communities of Rochester and district draws attention of the house to a recent reduction of ambulance service level in Rochester with the cessation of a two-officer crew trial back to a single-crew model without community consultation.

The petitioners therefore request the Andrews Labor government take immediate steps in consultation with the community to review the level of ambulance service in Rochester.

**By Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (1728 signatures).**

**Tabled.**

**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE**

***Alert Digest No. 13***

**Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 13 of 2018 on:***

Building Amendment (Registration of Building Trades and Other Matters) Bill 2018

Essential Services Commission (Governance, Procedural and Administrative Improvements) Amendment Bill 2018

Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Repeal Bill 2018

Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal Appeals) Bill 2018

Open Courts and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2018

Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2018

Sale of Land Amendment Bill 2018

Victims and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

**together with appendices.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered to be published.**

### INDEPENDENT BROAD-BASED ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION COMMITTEE

#### External oversight of police corruption and misconduct in Victoria

**Mr WELLS (Rowville) presented report, together with appendices and transcripts of evidence.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered that report and appendices be published.**

### DOCUMENTS

**Tabled by Acting Clerk:**

*Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978:*

Orders under s 17B granting licences over:

Beauty Park

Flinders Foreshore Reserve

Order under s 17D granting a lease over Yarra Bend Park

*Environment Protection Act 1970* — Order under s 18D

National Environment Protection Council — Report 2016–17

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

Ballarat GC95

Boroondara C291

Corangamite C45

Greater Shepparton C208

Latrobe C108

Melton C174, C196, GC95

Moorabool GC95

Yarra C241

*Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:*

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 73, 112, 114

Documents under s 16B in relation to:

*Gambling Regulation Act 2003* — Determination of Gaming Machine Entitlement Allocation and Transfer Rules

*Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983* — Amending Conditions No 2 under s 220D.

### PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

**The Acting Clerk** (14:58) — I have tabled documents under standing order 171 in accordance with the resolution of the house on 29 March 2018 and ordered to be published under the resolution of the house made on 23 August 2018.

### PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE BILL 2018

*Council's amendments*

**Returned from Council with message relating to amendments.**

**Ordered to be considered later this day.**

### VICTIMS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

*Council's amendment*

**Returned from Council with message relating to amendment.**

**Ordered to be considered later this day.**

### ROYAL ASSENT

**Message read advising royal assent on 28 August to:**

Disability Service Safeguards Bill 2018

Environment Protection Amendment Bill 2018

Residential Tenancies Amendment (Long-term Tenancy Agreements) Bill 2017.

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

#### Program

**Ms ALLAN** (Minister for Public Transport) (14:59) — I move:

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 5.00 p.m. on Thursday, 6 September 2018:

Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal Appeals) Bill 2018

Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2018

Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018

Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

In making a few observations to the house in support of the motion I have just moved — obviously you would expect me to support this motion — I would like to note that this is the penultimate government business program for 2018 and indeed for the 58th Parliament. As you will see from the bills that are on the program, it shows the Andrews Labor government is not wasting a single day of our time in government, making sure that we are developing policy and putting to Parliament important bills and legislation that cover some really critical policy areas.

I particularly draw attention to the work that is being done by the Minister for Roads and Road Safety in bringing forward the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. Of course I remember the origins of this came from some discussions we had with particularly councils in local communities who were very concerned about how road maintenance funding had been cut under the previous government and how we needed to see more money put into that important area. That is exactly what the Andrews Labor government has done.

Similarly too we are discussing this week a bill around the nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios. The treatment of nurses and the treatment of health professionals by the former Liberal-National government was just deplorable — the cuts to our hospitals, the way paramedics were treated — and it has taken an Andrews Labor government to put in place this legislation that is about protecting those ratios that are being fought so hard for by those wonderful representatives of our nurses and midwives in the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation. We are also wanting to back that up with significant recurrent funding support so our hospitals are treating more patients closer to where they live and of course building new hospitals, as the Minister for Health referred to in her earlier contribution during question time.

I mention these issues because they do present a sharp contrast. They present a sharp contrast and demonstrate how this government is determined to not waste one single day in our time in office in doing the hard policy work, in developing the programs and in putting in place the infrastructure projects that our city and our state needs.

I am pretty confident, in fact I would almost go and bet \$50 on it, that those opposite will oppose this government business program. Indeed I could almost recite to you right now the speech that we are going to hear from the manager of opposition business. We are going to hear a few nice words about the program and then we are going to go straight into all the reasons why and all the other issues that he and the Liberal-National opposition would like to consider in place of these important pieces of legislation. What we will hear are issues about standards and government and members of Parliament being held to account in this place. As I said, I could almost give you this speech verbatim right now because we have been hearing it every single week on the government business program for the best part of two years.

**Mr Clark** interjected.

**Ms ALLAN** — The manager of opposition businesses says we are not listening. Well, this will be a test for you, manager of opposition business, not just on whether you support this government business program that is before the house that contains those important pieces of legislation that I talked about, but also on whether you are going to live by your word and whether those opposite are going to stand up and stand behind those expectations that they set for us and that they set for others in this place and whether they are prepared to stand by those standards.

We have heard the Leader of the Opposition so many times talk about how ‘the standard you walk past is the standard you accept’. Well, now is the time for you lot to be counted. I tell you what: now is the time to show whether you are prepared to live by those standards you have set for us or whether you are going to scurry away and try and hide and skulk from the really important issues that need to be addressed around the Leader of the Opposition and his absolutely scandalous behaviour, not just in his dodgy planning decisions that cost this state money —

**Mr Clark** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to standing order 118. The Leader of the House is proceeding to make imputations against another member of this house in breach of that standing order. If she wants to do so, she needs to do so by

substantive motion. I ask you to bring her back to compliance with standing orders.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — I ask the Leader of the House to come back to speaking on the government business program.

**Ms ALLAN** — There is your answer. I predict they will not stand behind those expectations they set for us on their own side. They will oppose this government business program, just like they have every other week this year.

**Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (15:05)** — That exhortation from the Leader of the House was one of the most convoluted chains of argument I have ever had the misfortune to hear. I am not quite sure what the bottom line of her contribution was, but in relation to the program that she urges the house to accept I think what we have seen so far during today's sitting is not evidence of a government that is getting on with the job. It is evidence of a government that seems to be preoccupied with spin over substance and is actually struggling to continue with a legislative agenda and program, because although we are only two sitting weeks away from the end of this Parliament a government that really was focused on the future for Victoria would have been bringing bills to this house this week — not in the expectation of them being passed in this Parliament but in the expectation that they would be out in the public arena for consideration, moving forward with a reform agenda and showing the community that there was in fact some substance to the government rather than promises of something that may or may not be delivered in 20, 30 or 40 or more years time.

But of course there were no such bills introduced. The bills that are in the program this week, although they cover a range of areas, are not evidence of a government that has a full legislative agenda. In fact what does strike me is that the Leader of the House did not refer, as she usually does, to the proposition that the opposition has put to her regarding consideration of bills in detail. Our view is that while all of the bills on this week's program, as indeed on every program, would benefit from some consideration in detail — as indeed the government promised would be standard practice if it came to office, which of course it has not been — the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018 in particular would benefit from such consideration, and I would have thought there would be ample time this week for that to occur. Regrettably, we have had no mention of it from the leader; perhaps she got carried away with her exhortation and it slipped her mind, but I

certainly do think that there will be no excuse whatsoever for the government not to at least allow for one of its four bills to be considered in detail this week.

The Leader of the House foreshadowed that my remarks would be predictable, and the key point that I make as to why the opposition opposes this government business program is indeed predictable, and I am glad that the point has at least registered with the government, even though that just adds to its culpability in failing to act on it.

Of course what should be dealt with are the findings of the Ombudsman in relation to the red shirts rorts and the scandals around the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Unlike the fabrications we have heard from the Deputy Premier over recent weeks in relation to other matters, we have an Ombudsman's finding of a wrongful artifice and ample evidence to back that up. Yet despite that, the government refuses to allow this house to do what it should be doing, which is to refer these matters to the Privileges Committee or another select committee for investigation.

I also repeat the point that I have made repeatedly on previous occasions, that similarly the conduct of the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker should be referred to the Privileges Committee or another select committee. It is the fact that these persons were appointed to offices which should have upheld the standards of this house. Victoria must hold a unique and discreditable reputation in the Westminster world — of the three holders of high parliamentary office nominated by the government of the day, namely, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker and the Deputy President in the other place, nothing has been done about the scandals.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The member's time has expired.

**Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (15:10)** — I am delighted to make a contribution on this, being the penultimate debate on the government business program of the 58th Parliament. At the outset, what a privilege and an honour it has been to be a somewhat regular contributor to the government business program debate. It has been a whirlwind over the last four years as we have brought in a raft of legislative measures that fulfil our election commitments and contribute to building a progressive state. Really, I think what has characterised the last 18 months to two years has been the entrenched opposition of those opposite to the program, week in and week out.

The member for Box Hill raised the issue of the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker. He raised the issue of the red shirts. The interesting thing to note, and I paid close attention to what the member for Box Hill said, is that there are in fact 128 members in this place and the other place, and there is only one member from both houses facing charges, and it is not one from this side of the house. It is not a member of the government that is facing criminal charges at the moment, but the member for Box Hill continues to raise these matters.

We came to this place with a clear vision, and this week is no different to any other sitting week where we are bringing forward legislation that will make a tangible difference to the lives of the community. I would have thought that the member for Box Hill would be slightly more up — enthusiastic — about the notion of the Suburban Rail Loop. In living a great part of my life in the outer eastern suburbs, there has been a lot of talk for many, many decades about having suburban rail lines like this being constructed, and finally you have a government that has come here and indicated quite clearly that work will commence on such a project. Indeed it is the sort of visionary project that you would have thought that Publius Clodius Pulcher would have raised when he was tribune of the plebs in republican Rome, it is so visionary. It is exactly the sort of thing that could have formed the basis of the Clodian laws of republican Rome.

The manager of opposition business has been a member of this place for a very long time, and he has held his political conservatism and his professed adherence to economic liberalism closely. He is hanging onto this dying dream quite closely. If you think about it and look at it over the passage of time, when I was here as an adviser in the 1990s, economic liberalism and political conservatism of the hue and form that the member for Box Hill takes was certainly in vogue. It was certainly seen as the dominant political ideology of our state at the time. Over the course of that time, haven't we seen it change? The reality is that those opposite in opposing this government business program are not in tune with the people of Victoria.

In many respects the way in which they conduct themselves in this debate, week in, week out, and the way in which they maintain their adherence to economic liberalism and their adherence to political conservatism is almost like they are something out of *Monty Python*, with the dead parrot sketch. They are trying to breathe life into this thing. They are trying to tell themselves that people are saying, 'Political conservatism is just resting. It has got beautiful plumage. It is just stunned. It is pining for the fjords'. That is what they are trying to say, but the reality is that

the ideology that those opposite hold near and dear to their hearts is out of favour, and it does not connect with the views of ordinary Victorians here today.

A government business program like this is something that I am incredibly proud of. I do not know whether I will have an opportunity to speak on the next government program — in fact this might be the last time I get to speak on a government business program. I say that with a feeling of nostalgia and regret because I absolutely love participating in this debate. It is a wonderful opportunity for us to showcase and highlight the strength of our administration and to shine a light on the flaws and deficiencies of those opposite.

In the previous debate I indicated that the numbers were certainly falling away from the Leader of the Opposition; I think the shadow Treasurer, the member for Malvern, had something like 23 votes in the Liberal party room. I would be very curious to see what those numbers are now. I would have thought that the odds of the member for Malvern leading those opposite to the polls in November might be shortening quite significantly. This is an outstanding government business program, one which I know Publius Clodius Pulcher would be most proud of. I support the Leader of the House's motion.

**Mr KATOS** (South Barwon) (15:15) — I rise to oppose the government business program, primarily, as the manager of opposition business has already stated on behalf of the opposition and as has been said many, many times in this house, because it does not deal with the rorting members for Melton and Tarneit. There are various ways they can be dealt with. There is the Privileges Committee, and there is a notice of motion on the notice paper in the name of the member for Bulleen, the Leader of the Opposition, that can deal with these members, but the government continues to run a protection racket for these two members, who will very shortly be leaving this place with a nice parliamentary pension. That is a lovely thing to think about, that after what they have done, rorting all that money from the taxpayer, they will be rewarded with a pension, which is quite amazing.

It is not only the opposition Liberal and National parties that have been opposing the government business program. The Greens political party has been opposing the program on the same basis, and the member for Morwell and the member for Shepparton have been opposing the government business program because the government is not dealing with the rorting members for Tarneit and Melton. It is not only the Liberal and National parties. Obviously the member for Melton cannot possibly be counted as an Independent member,

but all other members on this side of the house have consistently opposed the government business program. With those words, as I said earlier, the opposition parties will be opposing the government business program.

**Mr CARBINES** (Ivanhoe) (15:17) — I am pleased to rise to support the government business program. I want to draw attention to the bills on the notice paper, particularly the Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2018. I suppose I should declare an interest: my mother completed her nursing at St Vincent's, not far from here, many years ago and still maintains close contact with the many nurses who continue to devote their working lives to the service of others.

I thank the nurses who work at hospitals in my electorate — the Austin and Mercy hospitals, the Warringal Private Hospital and of course the mighty Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital — who provide hospital in the home services to people in the community. I want to pay tribute to them and thank them for their campaigning for and hard work with the Labor Party, both in opposition and in government, to ensure that safe patient care and nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios are again before this place. They continue to expand and reaffirm the right to treat patients with the greatest of care. We want to ensure that our nursing workforce have professional support and that they are not put under pressure to provide care without adequate and supportive resources, both the financial resources to provide the necessary medical equipment and the labour and staffing support that they are entitled to in the workplace.

Legislation has consistently been opposed by those opposite, who tried to sell off and privatise the Austin Hospital in my electorate under Jeff Kennett. They failed to do that, and a cabinet minister lost his seat in Ivanhoe over that very famous issue. Of course it was the Bracks government that built two hospitals on the one site, the Austin and Mercy hospitals, and that worked closely with denominational healthcare providers in our community, which provide great service, and that continues. I was at the Austin last week, and I know that there are many people who have settled in my electorate not only because they work at the Austin and Mercy hospitals but they also know it is a great place to live and raise their families.

It is also interesting to note the Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal Appeals) Bill 2018. Those opposite like to throw around a lot of accusations, but it is only those opposite who have to answer for unlawful associations, certainly in a moral context, such as the way many of

the dinner dates the leadership group of those opposite have had at the Lobster Cave are being perceived. They are things people in the community will remember as we head towards November.

While we are debating the Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal Appeals) Bill, particularly those parts around unlawful association, the Victorian community will make their own moral judgements and assessments about the associations made by people who seek to represent the community and represent our state in government. The people of Victoria will make some pretty clear judgements around the calls that those opposite have chosen to make in relation to those matters.

We also saw an unwillingness from those opposite in the debate over last sitting week's government business program. They sought to oppose the government's tabling of documents in this house so that the people of Victoria could consider matters relating to the outrageous expenditure and blank cheque-writing by those opposite in relation to the Ventnor debacle and disgrace. They were buying the silence of Victorians on the steps of the Supreme Court with taxpayers funds. That is what we have seen happen.

I know we will be reaffirming mandatory heights in Ivanhoe. Those mandatory heights were only ever guidelines, with a wink and a nod, set up by the former Minister for Planning when he was on this side of the house. A wink and a nod and a guideline, and it left Ivanhoe vulnerable to excessive building heights. We have stepped in and made sure that there are interim mandatory heights in Ivanhoe for developments. We have said to developers: if you want to come out to Ivanhoe, you have to obey the laws of the land, and those opposite refused. Their planning minister refused to do that and looked after people on the leafy side of the Yarra but did not look after those to the north side of the Yarra. We have changed that in government, and people in Ivanhoe have been reading over their *Age* today and their local papers and reading through these Ventnor matters. These are very important issues of planning in the Ivanhoe electorate, and those opposite will reap what they sow in November.

**Ms VICTORIA** (Bayswater) (15:22) — I too rise to enter the debate on the government business program. I do not think it comes as any surprise to anybody here in the house that our side will be opposing the government business program, and on very good grounds. It is funny, the Leader of the House said she could basically look into the future. She had a crystal ball, she knew what it was that we were going to say on our side of the house. Do you know what, if only the government was

as keen on looking into the eyes of the people of Victoria right now — not looking into the future, not pre-empting what the government of the future is going to say but in fact what the people of Victoria are now saying — the fact that they are fearful, the fact that regardless of whether they are told to stay in their homes in their suburban streets, regardless of whether they are enjoying a night out with friends — people are scared. If you look into their eyes when they come into the electorate office, you know that is absolutely right. So it is funny for a government to be talking about what they think we might be doing on our side of the house.

What they need to be doing is reflecting what the voters actually want. We are not seeing that reflected here on the government business program because if we were, we would be talking about rorts. We would be talking about the government of the day — and I know one of the speakers opposite mentioned that there is supposedly only one person who is on charges in this state. I just say wait, and there is my crystal ball, there is my prediction — this is me looking into the future, saying let us have a look and see what happens with red shirts. Let us have a look at what the people of Victoria are going to say on 24 November when they reflect back on the last four years and say, ‘You know what? What do we remember of this government?’ Rorting, shonky, lots and lots of things that just come up in front of us, like the way they tried to destroy the Country Fire Authority (CFA), and the crime wave in this state.

**Ms Allan** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, as those of us who contribute regularly to this debate know, we do allow each other some latitude on the content.

**Ms Asher** — The member for Ivanhoe had a lot of latitude.

**Ms Allan** — Yes, I know, and you did not pull him up, so that is your call. There is a lot of latitude that is given in the course of this debate, but I really think the member for Bayswater is stretching the bounds of what we have come to expect as part of being a little bit more expansive beyond the government business program, and I would like you to bring her back to order.

**Ms Kealy** interjected.

**Ms Allan** — I know it is disorderly to respond to interjections, Deputy Speaker, but I really do find it tiresome that the member for Lowan is accusing me of showing disrespect for women in this chamber. I am absolutely fed up to the back teeth with the hypocrisy of those opposite, given how they treat female members

on this side and how they play the victim on that side. I am sick to the back teeth of it, Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The manager of government business will resume her seat. I will rule on the point of order. It has been an expansive debate but I do ask that the member return to speaking on the government business program.

**Ms VICTORIA** — If the government business program was all that the people of Victoria wanted it to be, it would be addressing crime, it would be addressing congestion, it would be addressing what we should be doing with the CFA, which is not interfering with a system that works so very, very well. Of course we look at the bills that are sitting on the notice paper here and we see the mismanagement of this government in both houses and the fact that there are over 20 pieces of legislation sitting on the notice paper in the upper house.

One of them is particularly interesting to a whole lot of people, including all of the people of Victoria, because of what it contains with regard to a mistake that was made by the director of Consumer Affairs Victoria during the last Labor government and the fact that that needs to be rectified. We debated it here in this house a month ago or more, and it is not being debated in the upper house. So if we were debating the things that actually really matter to the people of Victoria, both houses would be putting through the stuff that actually matters, not just trying to ram things through, not just trying to put things on the notice paper to say, ‘Here, we did something’, because guess what? If it is introduced now or if it is not debated at all, it means nothing. When Parliament is dissolved, it is dissolved, and what they have not done is put adequate things on the notice paper to address the needs and wants of the good people of Victoria, who are sick to death of the rorting and the way that they have been shafted by the Andrews Labor government.

#### House divided on motion:

*Ayes, 44*

Allan, Ms	Knight, Ms
Andrews, Mr	Languiller, Mr
Blandthorn, Ms	Lim, Mr
Bull, Mr J.	McGuire, Mr
Carbines, Mr	Merlino, Mr
Carroll, Mr	Nardella, Mr
Couzens, Ms	Neville, Ms
D’Ambrosio, Ms	Noonan, Mr
Dimopoulos, Mr	Pakula, Mr
Donnellan, Mr	Pallas, Mr
Edbrooke, Mr	Pearson, Mr
Edwards, Ms	Perera, Mr
Eren, Mr	Richardson, Mr

Foley, Mr	Scott, Mr
Garrett, Ms	Spence, Ms
Green, Ms	Staikos, Mr
Halfpenny, Ms	Suleyman, Ms
Hennessy, Ms	Thomas, Ms
Howard, Mr	Thomson, Ms
Hutchins, Ms	Ward, Ms
Kairouz, Ms	Williams, Ms
Kilkenny, Ms	Wynne, Mr

*Noes, 41*

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
Clark, Mr	Sandell, Ms
Crisp, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Dixon, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Fyffe, Mrs	Smith, Mr T.
Gidley, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Guy, Mr	Staley, Ms
Hibbins, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Hodgett, Mr	Thorpe, Ms
Katos, Mr	Tilley, Mr
Kealy, Ms	Victoria, Ms
McCurdy, Mr	Wakeling, Mr
McLeish, Ms	Walsh, Mr
Morris, Mr	Watt, Mr
Northe, Mr	Wells, Mr
O'Brien, Mr D.	

**Motion agreed to.****MEMBERS STATEMENTS****Clergy mandatory reporting**

**Ms KNIGHT** (Wendouree) (15:34) — The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse made clear recommendations in relation to the Catholic Church and the seal of the confessional. These recommendations were made after hours and hours of evidence from victim survivors, where we saw their generosity and bravery in talking about their experiences at the hands of priests. The *Courier* newspaper reported that the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the peak body for religious orders, Catholic Religious Australia, under extended mandatory reporting laws:

... will not yield to a royal commission's call to break the seal of confession to reveal child sexual abuse, even if priests face the prospect of criminal charges.

I cannot even imagine how this decision will be affecting those survivors of clergy abuse — some of whom, according to the royal commission report, were sexually abused in confessionals, and some of whom talked about their sexual abuse in confessionals and were ignored or blamed.

I firmly believe that the congregations of the Catholic Church would do anything to protect children, even if it meant breaking the seal of the confessional to expose perpetrators of sexual abuse. I know for sure that the victims and survivors of clergy abuse would do anything to protect children, even if it meant breaking the seal of the confessional to expose perpetrators of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse of children thrives in cultures of secrecy and silence. It is up to every single person, no matter their perceived status and no matter their belief system, to do everything they can to eliminate sexual abuse of children. The Church in particular should be no different.

**Julie Bishop**

**Ms ASHER** (Brighton) (15:35) — I wish to thank and congratulate Julie Bishop on the outstanding job she did as Minister for Foreign Affairs over many years. She represented Australia's interest with distinction. She was known for her fastidious attention to detail, obviously the result of her background as a lawyer; her capacity to very, very quickly master her brief; and her unbelievably hard work. I was pleased to see Penny Wong issue a statement, making reference to how hard former Minister Bishop worked.

I also want to thank her for her contribution to the Liberal Party, where she served as deputy leader for more than a decade. It shows a particular type of political dexterity to survive that long as a deputy, which is often a precarious bargaining position — and I know; I speak from experience. I congratulate Julie Bishop on the work she did in this role, and I greatly admire the job that she did, notwithstanding that so many others coveted her job very openly.

I also want to draw attention to her popularity in the electorate. Marginal seat members always wanted Julie campaigning for them and fundraising for them. She was even prepared to campaign in state seats. I wish her well for her future. She says she will run again for Curtin. I think it is a great shame that her intelligence and her appeal were not more widely appreciated.

**Independence Cup Badminton Tournament**

**Ms SPENCE** (Yuroke) (15:37) — I rise to acknowledge all who participated in the 3rd Independence Cup Badminton Tournament, held at Craigieburn Leisure Centre on 18 and 19 August. This competition, organised by the South Asian Public Affairs Council (SAPAC) and Landmark Community Sports Club, drew quite a crowd and showcased the skills of some great badminton players. There were 26 doubles, eight mixed doubles and 16 juniors

matches, with participating players from various suburbs across Melbourne. No doubt the competition was very tough.

Congratulations to all the participants, especially the following winners on their success: doubles winners Thomas and Devsi, doubles runners-up Kashyap and Dev, mixed doubles winners Thomas and Anita, mixed doubles runners-up Vinay and Trene, juniors doubles winners Areene and Alan, and juniors doubles runners-up Trene and Lunic. No doubt Mr Subhash Varshney, Indian chief commissioner, customs and GST, Mumbai zone, visiting from Mumbai, was impressed by the competition.

Thanks to Neelam Rai from Creating Luxury, Colourbourne Graphics and Amar from PVR for sponsoring the event, as well as to the SAPAC team, who have always been supportive in the way they organise the Independence Cup Badminton Tournament. A special thankyou to the Landmark Community Sports Club members, without whom this tournament would not have been such a success. Well done to president and founder Satinder Chawla, vice-president Paramdeep Singh, and members Anshuman Gulyani, Tejinder Singh, Dhermvir Nagpol, Sameer Secy, Manan Chawla, Navjot Singh, Rajinder Singh Duggal Ji, Raj Mohan Subash, Piyush and Chandan Chawla.

### Avon River rail bridge

**Mr T. BULL** (Gippsland East) (15:38) — The federal funding announcement for the new Avon River rail bridge at Stratford was welcome news, and the job now falls to the state to build it. The Avon River is one of the fastest rising waterways in the Southern Hemisphere, with its steep, funnel-shaped catchment. A viaduct forms the existing bridge's approaches across the flood plain. I am advised that during big flood events, like the one that occurred in 1990, the viaduct is not able to let the record volume of water through, causing the floodwater to back up and inundate roads and farmland. With the new bridge and its approaches currently in the design stages, I am sure that the authorities will ensure that proper consideration is taken to alleviate this issue, but a number of landholders have asked me to ensure that this occurs.

### Cann River and Bruthen public toilet facilities

**Mr T. BULL** — The public toilet amenities at Mick Baum Park in Cann River and on Main Street, Bruthen, are in urgent need of upgrade. The local shire has advised me that the Bruthen upgrade is in its future works plan, and I would encourage the government to

support the Cann River upgrade. I was told by the CEO of the shire this week that the toilet block at Cann River is one of the busiest in the shire and that unfortunately at peak holiday times there are people lining up outside, which is unacceptable. This town has had a significant downturn in its timber industry. It has reshaped itself as an important stopover point for travellers who are going through to Mallacoota, Merimbula and other areas along the Sapphire Coast. With the town being so dependent on tourism for the local economy, I would encourage the state government to contribute to this important —

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The member for Eltham.

### 1st Eltham North Scout Group

**Ms WARD** (Eltham) (15:40) — It was a pleasure to leave this place on a cold Tuesday night to be warmly greeted by the 1st Eltham North Scout Group. They are the first tenants at the old Eltham Country Fire Authority station, which is about to be transformed into the Eltham Community Volunteer Hub. They are there of course while the new pavilion is being built at Eltham North, which will house them, the Eltham Redbacks and the Eltham North Wanderers Cricket Club. I thank the Andrews government for their support of these local projects.

Arriving to a delicious roast meal, thanks to talented chef Pat, was a wonderful treat and I thank the 1st Eltham North Scouts for their hospitality. The achievements of these wonderful young people were fantastic to hear — I am especially envious of their Fraser Island trip. I congratulate all at 1st Eltham North for their achievements over the last year, especially those who received awards: Lachlan O'Dowd, Vidu Vidanapathirana, Mackenzie Jones, Flynn Kennealy, Evi Meijer, Rex Peile, Hugo Stals, Lucas Kennealy, Liam O'Brien, Joy Van Diemen-Hartlieff, Tymon Van Diemen-Hartlieff, Brian Jones, Peter Udovicic, Greg Pelly, Helen Woodman, Paul Kennely, Bruce Thuys, Andrew Goddard and Jess Watling. I also thank the hardworking 2018 group committee members: Linda Martin, Kristel Hartlief, Joe Peile, Kym Wilkins, Rob Brodie — who has been a great help with the new pavilion — and Andrew Goddard.

### Vietnam Veterans Day

**Ms WARD** — My community recently commemorated Vietnam Veterans Day in respectful and special ways. The moving service held at Greensborough Memorial Park was organised by our incredible DViets. Thank you to all who were involved,

especially Peter Blackman, Andrew McNeill and Kathleen O'Reilly. I also commend the local school students who contributed to the service: Zoe Wakelin, Alexander Madden, Joshua Coley and the Viewbank College symphonic band.

I thank the Lower Plenty Bears Football Club for their very special Vietnam Veterans Day game. This is the third year the Bears have had a game dedicated to our Vietnam veterans and I deeply admire their commitment and effort in ensuring that this day is a very special one for our veterans. The Bears' service means a great deal not only to our Vietnam veterans but also to our larger community.

### **Electorate office staffing entitlements**

**Mr WELLS** (Rowville) (15:41) — This statement notes the Legislative Council Privileges Committee report tabled on 23 August in the other place which found Labor's red shirts scheme adversely affected the reputation of the Parliament. The Premier's contempt for the Victorian public, however, is deeper than ever.

Victoria's honourable Premier refused to be questioned by the Legislative Council Privileges Committee, just as he fought tooth and nail to stop Victoria's Ombudsman from conducting a full investigation. He dragged the Ombudsman all the way to the High Court, wasting millions of taxpayer dollars, just to avoid scrutiny of Labor's campaign. Labor's complete contempt for hardworking Victorian taxpayers could not be more obvious.

Sworn evidence from former ALP minister Adem Somyurek in the Council to the committee showed that he personally raised his concerns with the Premier after a caucus meeting. Yet the Premier, incredibly, still denies knowing anything about the red shirts rorts. It beggars belief that the Premier, the leader of the Labor Party, attended high-level campaign meetings and strutted around on the campaign bus with squadrons of red shirts while 23 of his own senior Labor MPs employed these people but mentioned nothing about it to him. Does the Premier hold Victorians in such low regard that he thinks that they would believe this fairytale?

The Legislative Council Privileges Committee evidence opens up more questions about what the Premier really knew and his role in the scheme. The Premier's leadership is morally bankrupt. He retains a cabinet full of rorters claiming extra salaries, vehicles and the privileges of their ministerial positions, several of whom run Victoria's justice system, all while being

investigated by the fraud and extortion squad of Victoria Police.

### **Suburban Rail Loop**

**Ms SULEYMAN** (St Albans) (15:43) — Last week the Andrews Labor government announced the bold plan to build the Suburban Rail Loop. This means commuters will be able to get on board a train at Sunshine in my electorate and go all the way to Cheltenham via Melbourne Airport. This is on top of the Metro Tunnel and of course the airport rail link with a super-hub station at Sunshine.

### **Doctors in Secondary Schools**

**Ms SULEYMAN** — On another matter, I recently met with Linda Maxwell, the principal of Keilor Downs College. I was very pleased to be informed of the success of the Labor-funded doctors in schools program in providing high-quality health care on school grounds when the students need it most. It is part of the students being happy and ready and able to learn.

### **Head Start apprenticeships and traineeships**

**Ms SULEYMAN** — On another matter, we recently announced the rollout of the Head Start apprentice and traineeship initiative to Jackson School, Keilor Downs College, St Albans Secondary College and the Brimbank campus of Victoria University Secondary College. This program allows students to complete school with an apprenticeship or a traineeship. Again, I would like to commend the Minister for Education. This really is a game changer when it comes to investment in education in the heart of the west and in particular in my electorate of St Albans where we see other options available for students as they commence their journey in obtaining jobs for the future.

### **Fire services**

**Mrs FYFFE** (Evelyn) (15:44) — In our positions we receive many letters and emails from people from all walks of life, but I must say I was a little surprised to receive an email with an attached statutory declaration from the Premier and Deputy Premier's close friend Peter Marshall, the branch secretary of the United Firefighters Union (UFU).

In the email and attached statutory declaration Peter Marshall expresses concerns and asks that I refrain from making political commentary that, to paraphrase, could undermine the wellbeing and sense of worth of some career firefighters. Where were Peter Marshall's concerns for the wellbeing of female Liberal candidates at the 2014 election when they were harassed and

bullied by his members? Where were his concerns for the wellbeing of the 15 senior Metropolitan Fire Brigade officers who were bullied and harassed for years and years?

And where are his concerns for the career firefighters who have ceased their union memberships because they do not like what he and his union are doing? They do not like fees being increased without consultation and now they are being harassed and bullied, and in some cases since ceasing to be UFU members they have had bullying allegations made against them. It does not take an Einstein to link the resignations from the union to the bullying allegations now being made about long-serving career officers who have not even had a whisper about any misconduct in their past. Coincidence? I do not think so. Let me make it clear: I appreciate the skills and firefighting abilities of career and volunteer firefighters.

### **Buninyong electorate men's sheds**

**Mr HOWARD** (Buninyong) (15:46) — Last week I joined Minister Mikakos in Linton to announce a grant of \$60 000 to build a new men's shed for the Linton and District Men's Shed group. This is a wonderful result for the Linton crew, who have worked hard over the last three years to get a shed up and running. With this funding and a new site they can go from a two-car garage to a purpose-built facility. The Ballarat East Men's Shed also received a \$30 000 grant for major refurbishment works. The Andrews Labor government recognises that our local men's sheds are a very important asset that enhance the physical and mental wellbeing of men in our community.

### **State Emergency Service Ballarat unit**

**Mr HOWARD** — On Saturday evening I attended a dinner to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Ballarat Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) unit. This was a great event attended by many current and former SES members, along with their family members. Speakers, including regional commander Steve Warren, talked about the history of the unit and its past inadequate homes before it moved to its current purpose-built home in Gillies Street and of the significant increase in its equipment over recent years in particular. I want to commend all members of the unit for their great service to the wider Ballarat community over its 50-year history.

### **Buninyong electorate mobile phone coverage**

**Mr HOWARD** — On Friday I joined Vodafone Australia to inspect a new small cell mobile base station

that will provide residents in Mollongghip with improved mobile phone coverage. As part of this trial the plug-and-play technology involves the basic installation of a small antenna at a residential property, providing 8 kilometres of radius —

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Member for Shepparton.

### **Regional Victoria**

**Ms SHEED** (Shepparton) (15:47) — Another parliamentary sitting week has arrived, and again there is a sense of *deja vu*. Political party manoeuvring leaves little time to debate legislation and matters of public importance that we have actually been put here to discuss. It is no wonder the public accuse politicians of living in a bubble. The goings-on in this place are so far removed from the lives of real people, from the lives of regional Victorians.

In my electorate of Shepparton district constituents care about what is being done to improve schools, hospitals and transport connectivity. They are anxious about the extended dry weather conditions and fearful of the drought being experienced further north and in the east of our state. They are afraid it will reach them with devastating consequences if there is not enough spring rain. They want to know that significant shortcomings in water management through the Murray-Darling Basin plan that were exposed by the Productivity Commission last week will get the attention that state and federal governments owe to it. They want to hear politicians talk to them about their experiences and to offer them support and solutions. And let me tell you: beware the politicians who get swept up in the party politics instead of focusing on the people who put them here.

Regional Victoria is experiencing its strongest showing of independent challengers to the major parties, probably in history. People are disillusioned with the status quo and will show their hand on 24 November.

### **Livingston Family and Community Centre**

**Mr PERERA** (Cranbourne) (15:49) — It was with great pleasure that I joined the Minister for Families and Children in the other place to officially open the new state-of-the-art Livingston Family and Community Centre, Cranbourne East hub, that is bringing together kinder, playgroups and maternal and child health services all under a single roof. The Andrews Labor government provided the City of Casey with \$1.6 million for the centre through a children's facilities capital program major grant.

### Family violence prevention

**Mr PERERA** — It was with great pleasure that we welcomed the Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence to our local area and subsequently welcomed an Andrews Labor government grant of \$80 000 to support the City of Casey in the important work they are undertaking to prevent family violence. This is part of the Labor government's unprecedented \$1.9 billion package announced in the 2017–18 Victorian budget to address the scourge of family violence — more than the federal government or any other state in the nation.

### Cranbourne South Primary School

**Mr PERERA** — I am also pleased to state that a re-elected Andrews Labor government will deliver a much-needed \$5.9 million to completely refurbish and modernise classrooms and facilities in block A at Cranbourne South Primary School and to upgrade the car park and playing fields.

### Family Safety Victoria

**Ms KEALY** (Lowan) (15:50) — Simone O'Brien is an amazing woman. Bashed and left for dead by her partner, she is a true survivor and passionate advocate for White Ribbon and people affected by domestic violence. I have nothing but respect for her actions and her bravery, and I am proud to call Simone my friend.

Simone is one of many local domestic violence advocates who are deeply concerned that Labor have only committed to one family violence support and safety hub in the entire Department of Health and Human Services western region. To put this into context, this area is equivalent to about a quarter of the state — it goes from Hopetoun down to Warrnambool, and from Portland across to St Arnaud. It is an enormous region. People who live in this part of the state who would be seeking support from this safety hub may have to travel more than three hours to attend the hub if it is located in Warrnambool, which is the biggest site in the region. There is no direct public transport route between the north of the state and Warrnambool. This is really concerning to me, and quite frankly I think it is unacceptable that if we are looking to provide better access for family violence survivors and their families that we only have one hub in that part of the state.

Please, Premier, please, for the sake of all women and families affected by family violence in the west of the state, where we suffer from some of the highest family violence rates, for the sake of survivors and domestic

violence prevention advocates like Simone, will you commit to more than just one family violence support and safety hub in the western region to ensure equitable and fair access for domestic violence sufferers?

### Victorian Premier's Volunteer Champions Awards

**Ms WILLIAMS** (Dandenong) (15:52) — This coming Sunday we will be celebrating some of Victoria's most dedicated volunteers at the Victorian Premier's Volunteer Champions Awards at Government House. These annual awards are an incredible showcase of the strength of volunteering in Victoria and of the wonderful Victorians who make our communities strong and vibrant places to live and work.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the Ministerial Council for Volunteers, which had its last meeting a couple of weeks ago. Over the last few years the council has worked tirelessly to determine a strategic direction for volunteer support within government. The group has worked hard to change the perception of volunteering as an area of policy and has worked extremely hard to build a vision and a direction that will better inform government thinking and support for volunteering across our state well into the future.

I want to acknowledge and thank in particular the members of the council: Simon Abrahams, Sherry Balcombe, Helen Coleman, Karen Dimmock, Daniel Leighton, Kylie Lewis, Angela Malan, Gail McHardy, Elise Mutton, Simone Power, Gail Rodgers, David Rowlands, Kate Torney, Walter Villagonzalo, Zoe Waters, Paul Wheelton and former members, including Rowena Doo, Walter Harrison, Mark McAllion, Sue Noble, Casey Nunn and Ian Walker.

I also want to acknowledge Volunteering Victoria, in particular Bronwen Clarke, Geoff Sharp, former CEO Sue Noble and new CEO Scott Miller for their advice along the way. This is a group of people, each of them with an incredible CV of volunteerism, who have poured their hearts and souls into the work of the ministerial advisory council. They have thought critically, challenged themselves and each other and have been single-minded in their focus on improving the volunteering sector here in Victoria.

### Drought assistance

**Ms McLEISH** (Eildon) (15:53) — People in my electorate have faced tough times in recent years. The memories of Black Saturday are just around the corner as are memories of the millennium drought. They know what it is like to do it tough and are the first to

acknowledge others in desperate situations. I have been so impressed by the many people across the Eildon electorate who have responded so positively to help the farmers and communities — through New South Wales, into Queensland and East Gippsland — who are suffering from the current drought.

From the Shire of Mansfield, Bendigo Bank staff led by Jess Fearon-Brown have launched a drought relief program. Kate McDougall, having already visited the area with Craig Wedlock, who drove through the night to deliver the first load of donated hay, is following up with a 'Buy a Bale' ball later this month. Tanya, Luke, Molly and Charlotte Purcell headed north to both assist and to raise the awareness of farmers, businesses and communities under extreme hardship. They have another trip planned and will take hay, stockfeed, care packages and food.

From Yarck, Paul Creighton and Tanya Rolston received wonderful local support for a fundraiser to purchase and deliver hay and household provisions for the little-known community of Walgett in New South Wales. Mark Lincoln provided a truck and drove the 1000-kilometre journey, with fuel provided by Simpsons of Alexandra.

From the Kinglake Ranges, farmer John Dowdle rallied locals and teamed up with Waldie Transport of Epping to deliver 160 rounds — half bought, half donated — to drive 17 hours to Toowoomba to deliver to affected communities. And in the Yarra Valley, Healesville and Lilydale, Rotarians and farmers teamed up to make deliveries of hay, grain and fuel vouchers closer to home in Orbost, Marlo, Buchan and Cabbage Tree. We have certainly responded to their need.

### Essendon electorate

**Mr PEARSON** (Essendon) (15:55) — What a big four years it has been in the state district of Essendon. We have rezoned and we have rebuilt Strathmore Secondary College, we are rebuilding and refurbishing Strathmore Primary School, we have rezoned Strathmore North Primary School, we have put seven new car parks at Strathmore station and we are funding the redevelopment of Essendon Primary School, including the foundation centre.

We have looked at restoring the Moonee Ponds courthouse after it was damaged by fire. We have introduced mandatory height controls for the first time in my electorate. We are upgrading Ascot Vale Primary School. We are funding the Wingate Avenue Jobs Victoria Employment Network program as well as other important programs down at Flemington to

support newly arrived migrants in my community. We have looked at running out the school breakfast program in both Debney Meadows Primary School and Ascot Vale West Primary School.

We have established the Flemington revitalisation program, which will look at providing job opportunities for public housing tenants on the Flemington public housing estate. We have started the process of getting rid of 198 walk-up units at Flemington to make it a mixed community with energy-efficient, modern, 21st-century housing. We have introduced pedestrian and cycling safety improvements along Racecourse Road in Flemington. We are building netball courts to a competition standard at Riverside in Ascot Vale. We are upgrading women's change rooms at the Essendon Rowing Club. And we are getting rid of — finally — the Buckley Street level crossing. It has been four fantastic years. I hope I have the opportunity of another four.

### Pakenham Op Shop

**Mr PAYNTER** (Bass) (15:56) — The hardworking volunteers at the Pakenham Op Shop distributed \$100 000 back to the community at their annual general meeting last week. A dedicated group comprised entirely of women, the Pakenham Op Shop commenced operation in Pakenham in 1959 and has been going strong since. A range of local organisations within Cardinia shire were the grateful recipients, including 20 fire brigades and several local self-help groups. Secretary Bev Burley said:

It was another busy but rewarding year for Pakenham Op Shop under the leadership of Win Reed, who inspires us all with her dedication.

...

I wish to say thank you to the committee for their support and concern over the past year and to volunteers for taking on extra jobs when required.

I congratulate the incoming committee, with Win Reed as president, Margaret Gray as vice-president, Bev Burley as secretary, Sue Johns as treasurer and Val Hilyear, Faye Outridge and Ray Plummer as committee members.

### 1st Koo Wee Rup Scout Group

**Mr PAYNTER** — Congratulations to the 1st Koo Wee Rup Scout Group on another successful year. I attended the annual reports and presentations event last week. It is clear this group is engaged, enthusiastic and has fun. The young leaders of the group ran the night and did a great job. The scout hall, whilst full of

character, has not kept up with progress and requires some much-needed renovations. They have approved plans for over \$150 000 worth of work, but they need money. They are calling for the public and anybody that is interested in the scouting movement to head to their Facebook page and donate generously.

### **Transport infrastructure projects**

**Mr RICHARDSON** (Mordialloc) (15:58) — Last week was an extraordinary week for Victorians. With the announcement of the Suburban Rail Loop we are making vision and purpose the focus of everything that Victoria does. Just as transformational as the city loop was back in 1985 with the opening of Flagstaff station, this is generational planning for the future, and that is what Victorians are crying out for. They are crying out for leadership on infrastructure, on schools, on health and on transport planning, and that is what the mission of state governments is. This is in contrast to the federal government, where we have seen politicians looking towards themselves and being more worried about their own leadership and their own jobs rather than serving the people that they represent. That is where priorities go astray.

When we think about the other investments in my local community, there is the Mordialloc freeway and also the recent level crossing removals on the Frankston line, where 13 out of 30 have been removed between Frankston and Caulfield, and soon Mentone and Cheltenham will get underway. Then just yesterday with the Minister for Public Transport we confirmed rail-under-road solutions for Edithvale and Bonbeach after an environment effects statement process. This is about transforming our state and our communities for generations to come. This is about future planning — not looking in short-term cycles and not looking at how politicians can benefit themselves but looking to the future. The contrast for Victoria could not be any greater than with Canberra, and we stand ready to continue to deliver these important projects.

### **Renewable energy planning**

**Mr RIORDAN** (Polwarth) (15:59) — The billions of dollars being invested in renewable energy in western Victoria is being done on an unprecedented scale. The complete lack of planning and coordination is being described by local communities as breathtaking. I again hosted a community briefing on the unplanned rollout of massive industrial developments in pristine rural environments. Hundreds of signed letters from neighbours were presented to me from Inverleigh and Mortlake, and there are still hundreds to come. Representatives from Inverleigh, Rokewood,

Dundonnell, Mt Fyans, Mortlake, Noorat and Hexham all told stories of the bullying at the hands of wind farm developers, who are keen to promise the world and have people sign their rights away under contract.

There is growing fear in small townships like Mortlake and Rokewood that their towns will be lost forever as they become surrounded by Rialto tower-sized structures, with planning overlays that cover their towns and that will most likely prevent future developments in those communities. These communities are not anti-renewable energy; they are against development that is being sold as being good for the environment when it will clearly have a long-term effect on their local environment and the wellbeing of their communities. There is a growing number of examples of neighbour against neighbour and family member against family member as money, lifestyle and the environment clash head-on. This government cannot possibly expect to find the land necessary to provide the renewable energy it says it is aiming for unless it begins to strategically plan and work with communities in an appropriate way. Country communities want control and strategic vision for their renewable energy. Communities want their landscapes protected from unnecessary destruction.

### **Broadmeadows electorate revitalisation**

**Mr McGUIRE** (Broadmeadows) (16:01) — My call is for a new deal with the Australian government to combat crime, racism and the threat of terrorism. My offer is for a unity ticket to help the Australian government deliver its election promise of jobs and growth where they are needed most. The coalition cannot continue its political bias on place-based disadvantage.

The federal Auditor-General has now highlighted the problem I disclosed two years ago in the strategy *Creating Opportunity: Postcodes of Hope*. It is in the national interest for the Australian government to coinvest with the Victorian government and business to fast-track communities struggling through deindustrialisation to deliver new industries, businesses and lifelong learning to connect the disconnected to jobs and opportunity.

However, the federal seat of Calwell, which includes the state district of Broadmeadows and some of the country's most disadvantaged communities, received no funding from the \$620 million National Stronger Regions Fund, which has a particular focus on assisting disadvantaged regions to achieve growth. Instead more than \$120 million in funds was diverted to affluent coalition-held seats. This follows the Australian

government's refusal to reinvest in Broadmeadows any of the unspent \$1.324 billion I uncovered in the automotive transformation scheme, despite my community being hardest hit by the cessation of the Ford Motor Company's manufacturing.

Coalition governments have relegated Melbourne's north to the status of managed decline. Such a strategy proved disastrous for England's north under the Thatcher government. Australia must have a needs-based strategy coordinating the three tiers of government, business and civil society for these postcodes of disadvantage.

### Victorian Energy Compare

**Ms BRITNELL** (South-West Coast) (16:02) — Over the past few weeks I have been contacted by several pensioners who want to take advantage of the Victorian government's \$50 power saving bonus payment but do not have access to a computer or have any computer skills. Many of the constituents who have contacted me have been advised to use the public library or to ask a family member or a friend to assist. The issue here is that the public library is able to provide a computer but is not able to assist to the extent needed to fill out the information online. Even if my constituents could figure it out, many of them do not have an email address, which is required to fill out the form, or have no knowledge or desire to set up an email account. One constituent, who does have computer skills, said the process was incredibly difficult and no matter what she did, she would reach a point during the process and was not able to proceed any further. A 30-year-old constituent, who is very computer literate, also has reported this to me.

It seems there are several obstacles to accessing this bonus and the mechanism of comparing energy prices, which the government says will help save money on the ever-increasing energy bills. But how will people be able to save if they do not have access? Wouldn't the government be better off helping people by just bringing down the power cost? Many of my constituents say they feel discriminated against because of a lack of access to technology and lack of knowledge. They have asked that I make the minister aware that there is a group of people in the community who want to access this program but cannot —

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The time for statements has now ended.

## JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (UNLAWFUL ASSOCIATION AND CRIMINAL APPEALS) BILL 2018

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 25 July; motion of  
Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).**

**Mr PESUTTO** (Hawthorn) (16:05) — I am pleased to be able to rise this afternoon to speak on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal Appeals) Bill 2018. The first thing I would say is this bill should never have been necessary. This bill should never have been necessary because the government has made a mess of this, a complete and utter mess of anti-consorting laws in this state. We warned the government back in 2015 that it was on a frolic, a misadventure, when it brought in its changes to the anti-consorting regime. We warned them frankly and directly that the laws they were bringing in then would not work, and it has come to pass.

The mess that the government created back in 2015 has indeed been nothing short of a disaster. It is a disaster because the laws have not been used — Victoria Police reported in this Parliament last year that they had not issued any unlawful association notices in all the time since the government brought these changes in — but it is also lamentable because this has occurred at a time when we have had the emergence, make no mistake, of a gang culture in this state. And who can deny it? Who can deny that outlaw motorcycle gangs are stronger now than they have ever been? They are just openly defiant. They have a contemptuous disregard for law and order in our state — contemptuous, my good friend, the member for Gippsland South — an utter disregard for the law.

Not only do we have outlaw motorcycle gangs out of control, we also have youth gangs out of control. Yet the government over there denies that we have a youth gang culture. Well, how do you explain that to the people of this state when you only have to go back a little over two years to the Moomba riots or when you consider the riots on the St Kilda foreshore, the wreckage that was meted out at the Ecoville centre in Tarneit, the Taylors Hill riot, the Collingwood riot and various gang assaults in and around Melbourne in particular? We have a problem in this state and the government is at sixes and sevens as to what to do about it.

Sometimes they let the cat out of the bag. I see the Minister for Police sitting at the table. She recognises that there is a problem — sometimes. She is on the

record saying that people feel terrorised, and that the community has a right to feel unsafe in this present climate. That is the police minister, who is in charge — so it seems — of protecting our communities along with the Attorney-General, and who we would expect to do more in this space. Even the Minister for Police is admitting that there is a problem, so this farce of an anti-consorting or unlawful association regime that the government has brought in has exacerbated the problem and has allowed this gang culture to emerge.

When I talk to frontline police officers and people involved generally in law enforcement, they echo the concerns I am articulating now. They feel powerless to be able to take charge of situations and they are vastly outnumbered, despite what the minister and Premier were trying to assert in question time today. We know that the Police Association Victoria through its secretary, Mr Wayne Gatt, said yesterday that, according to reports from their members, on Saturday night and in the early hours of Sunday they were understaffed for that riot and they did not have enough resources.

The Premier and the police minister are out there saying that they have resourced the police, as the Chief Commissioner of Police has said. Well, why is it that frontline police officers feel understaffed? Why are they not able to perform arrests? I will tell you why they are not able to perform arrests: it is because there are not enough of them. There are not enough of them where we need them to be; we need them out in the streets and in our communities protecting the Victorian people — but no arrests, maybe one or two.

Let us be clear as to why there have been no arrests. It is not only that we do not have enough police where we need them and when we need them, it is also the case that as part of other 2015 changes this government weakened the ability of Victoria Police to perform arrests when it comes to juvenile offenders.

**Ms Neville** interjected.

**Mr PESUTTO** — Yes, the minister may not recall it, but there were some changes made in 2015 to the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 that created a presumption in favour of proceeding by way of summons, not by way of arrest, for violent conduct. What message does that send to Victoria Police? It sends a message to them that they should not look to do that before they have exhausted all other options. Now, you tell that to a police officer — a policewoman or a policeman — in the middle of a riot in the wee hours of Sunday morning on a weekend that they have to be attuned to the Children, Youth and Families Act and

what might happen to them if they are accused of not observing it. How much harder is it for them when the friends of this government, the Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre, are reported to be lying in wait to accuse any police officer of overstepping the mark?

So what happens? We have a culture and an environment in this state, overseen by the Minister for Police, where police are not given the support they need to do what we need them to do, and they admit that openly when you talk to them. When you look at the range of changes taken in combination we now have a justice system that is weaker, that is softer than the one this government inherited, and these changes to the anti-consorting regime have made a difficult task even harder. Imagine that — you bring in and herald a new regime which is designed to bust up the gangs, to reinforce what the Premier proudly boasted was his plan to bust the gangs or to smash the gangs, and yet not one notice has been issued.

Now, until you have a system that police can actually use, these gangs are not going to be brought to heel, they are going to continue to grow. We know they do not operate in isolation. They operate in conjunction with other youth gangs, with outlaw motorcycle gangs and with other sophisticated syndicates that recruit these young, impressionable and vulnerable gang members and usher them into a life of crime. Unless we can smash that culture, truly smash it, this problem is only going to get worse.

Having warned the government back in 2015 that its changes were going to result in a completely ineffective system, which has come to pass, we have this bill here today. It took the riots and wreckage of early January — remember that, Acting Speaker? I remember because I was on duty and I almost had to go out every day to offer comment on behalf of my colleagues and I on the gang behaviour that we were seeing — the aggravated home invasions and the violent, antisocial behaviour in parts of western Melbourne that deserve so much better. I remember having to go out, and I remember various positions by the government and various positions by the senior leadership of Victoria Police as to whether there was a gang problem or not. I think after many twists and turns there was an emerging view, it seems, that there was in fact a gang problem.

The situation continued to change, but what we saw at that time was a remarkable admission by senior commanders in Victoria Police that they did not have the power to crack down on these youth gangs. Do you remember that, Minister? They did not have the power.

Why? Because the changes that the government brought in in 2015 do not allow Victoria Police to issue these notices to people under 18.

**Ms Neville** — Give me that quote.

**Mr PESUTTO** — For the benefit of the minister, she might refer to comments by Mr Shane Patton in early January. I am happy to send the Minister for Police the comment that I have circulated to many people who have raised this with me that confirms his view and the view of Victoria Police that they did not have that power. It was that outbreak of gang violence which left Victorian communities exposed to the reality and the dangers of gang violence. It was that outbreak that led this government belatedly, unwillingly and humiliatingly to go back to the drawing board and see what it could do to repair the damage it had done when it overhauled the existing system, which admittedly could have been improved but at least was broader, and replace it with something which is mildly better.

This bill is not a bill we will oppose, but it is not a bill we are happy with in this sense. We are not happy with this bill because it does not go far enough. I still have doubts that this bill will do what is needed to smash these gangs — to really smash these gangs. What police need is a broader system that gives them far wider powers to break up these gangs. I can already look at a number of these provisions — which I am happy to say are an improvement on the disaster that is already there — and I can still see how gang members, particularly juvenile gang members, will be able to circumvent the operation of what is proposed in this bill.

That said, we are not going to oppose it. As for the de novo matters which I will come to in a moment, we are not going to oppose those either. They have been raised with me as a concern over the time that I have been shadow Attorney-General, and I think it is something that should happen. We should start to filter, subject to appropriate safeguards, the right of people to appeal decisions of the Magistrates Court and the Children's Court without ever so compromising the ability of parties to seek a correction in an appellate jurisdiction. I will come to those in a moment.

One thing I did express at the time of the bill in 2015 was that the threshold issues around the requirements of an unlawful association notice that prohibited the subject of that notice from associating with somebody else who was subject to that notice more than three times in a three-month period or more than six times in a 12-month period were easy to avoid. I pointed that out three years ago, and here we are with the Attorney-General in his second-reading speech

acknowledging just that — that it has been too easy to get around.

It is often said that the anti-consorting regime in Victoria is something akin to the Switzerland of jurisdictions when it comes to anti-consorting regimes, and there is truth in that — a great deal of truth in it. Media reports over a long period have suggested that Victoria is a jurisdiction that is worth coming to if you are involved in organised syndicates or gang activity. What the bill proposes is that individuals can be charged with unlawful association if they associate with at least two convicted offenders, whether on the same or separate occasions, on at least two occasions each. That is an improvement, but I do have serious reservations about whether that will be enough.

When you have a system like this I think the measures that you need to introduce to seriously crack down on gang activity need to be far more sophisticated than these. How people associate is rapidly changing. We know at least through social media and other advancements in technology that how people associate is very different to how they did two years ago or 10 years ago. We know that Facebook is now a popular way for gangs to congregate. Encrypted messaging is another way that gang members can coordinate their activities. This approach, which applies almost a mathematical calculus, is something that I suspect the subjects of these unlawful association notices will easily be able to avoid. But it is an improvement on what is there, so we are certainly not going to oppose it.

The bill will broaden the meaning of offence for the purposes of the scheme, and we think that is important. I did point out at the time in 2015 that this represented an unhelpful limitation on the powers of police to do their job.

I also note that sergeants and above may be able to issue unlawful association notices. We know that at present senior sergeants and above can issue unlawful association notices, and this hopefully will broaden that out, but I doubt that is the problem that we are facing in our system. We are not going to oppose it — it should help operationally — but the real issues are around the threshold.

I do want to note that the minimum age of persons who can be subject to this scheme will be lowered from 18 to 14 years of age. We are not going to oppose that; we think it is absolutely necessary that the minimum age be reduced, subject of course to safeguards where you have got juvenile subjects of these orders. But I also note that the requirements for convictions may well constitute an unhelpful barrier to the use of these

notices. We are happy to see how the system works for the time being, but I do want to place on record our concerns about this requirement, which I think may preclude unduly the operation of these notices.

In terms of offences, as I said, the bill will make it easier and provide wider opportunities for these notices to be issued. The bill allows for internal review, and we do not oppose that so long as the internal review is not used to scupper legitimate and necessary efforts on the part of Victoria Police to seriously tackle gang and crime activity. Under this bill IBAC will be given a new oversight role in monitoring and reporting on the operation of the scheme. Again, that is something that we are prepared, obviously, to see happen, but let us remember that this scheme is already subject to judicial oversight and internal review, so there are plenty of opportunities for people who have reservations about or objections to the way that Victoria Police are performing their functions under these powers to seek a review of that.

IBAC already exists to tackle police misconduct, and its powers are quite broad in relation to police misconduct despite what some critics say. IBAC does have very broad powers. Whilst we are quite prepared to see this as part of the bill, I hope and trust that it will not become a de facto means of effectively precluding legitimate and necessary police efforts to seriously crack down on gang activity.

Safeguards in relation to vulnerable persons are again things that we are prepared to see come through. We know that there are many people in the system who are suffering from different kinds of physical disability or mental illness. We know that these are often associated with criminal activity, but again we hope and trust that the provisions in relation to vulnerable persons will operate as just that and that others will not try to abuse those provisions.

Before I move on to de novo appeals, I say this bill should never have been necessary. The government was warned — we warned them and Victoria Police, or certainly the Police Association Victoria, warned them at the time — so this is a humiliating backflip. I say to everybody watching and everybody who will read the debates around these changes: understand that you cannot trust the Andrews Labor government to manage community safety for four more years. You cannot trust them to give police the actual powers they need. When the Premier stands in this place and in other places saying that he has given Victoria Police all the powers they need, do not believe him. I say to everybody watching: do not believe him because as recently as Saturday night Victoria Police members were telling

their representatives in the police association that they did not have enough resources when it mattered most, so do not believe the Premier when he says he has given police the resources they need.

I say to everybody watching and to everybody who will read this debate: do not believe the Premier when he says that sentences will be tougher. Do not believe him when he says that bail laws will keep dangerous people off our streets, because they will not — we continue to see them out in the community. Just in question time today, Acting Speaker, you will recall a question from us about someone found guilty of manslaughter giving swimming lessons and playing football. That is jail under the Andrews Labor government, and it is not good enough. We can do better. I say to Victorians everywhere watching this debate: you deserve better and you can have better if you are prepared to vote for it in November of this year.

I do want to finish off on de novo appeals. I have long been concerned about the quantum of appeals and the basis of appeals from the Magistrates Court to higher courts. There is an issue, and I think the bill goes some way to alleviate that burden. I do want to point out that cases in the Magistrates Court, County Court and Supreme Court are taking longer under this government and they cost more under this government. In each of the jurisdictions cases cost more per case and take longer, and those delays are unacceptable. I think what needs to happen is that appeals do need to be filtered a little more than they are at the moment, and requiring leave to appeal in some cases is an appropriate change.

Bodies like the Criminal Bar Association, the Law Institute of Victoria and Liberty Victoria have pointed out some concerns about these changes, and those concerns are things we have considered — we do not take them lightly — but we are prepared, on the basis of what the government is presenting, to allow these changes through without any opposition from us to see if they can address the issues and relieve the burden on our court system, which is getting worse and worse, by placing reasonable filters in the way of appeals. As we understand the government's advice to us and its supporting materials, these changes are not about stopping appeals. If somebody has an appealable basis for bringing their case to a higher court, we do not think there is anything in this bill that will preclude that person from pursuing an appeal, but we do think that this is a necessary step that needs to be taken to impose some rigour around appeals from the summary jurisdiction. As I said, I want to thank those organisations that have got in touch with me about their concerns. I have considered them, and they are not lost on us in considering our position. But we certainly

think that given the burdens on the court — the volume of appeals — something needs to be done.

We will not oppose this bill. It will pass, certainly, this house, but along with many other bills it is likely to sit in the upper house. In fact once this bill passes this house it will go to the upper house and it will join the other amendments that the government boasted about back in May.

The government, you will recall, with our support, said it would change the law in relation to attacks on emergency workers, paramedics, police officers and other first responders. We had a bill ready to go in this place. I stood right there back in May, I had a bill drafted by the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel that was ready to go, and they over that side opposed it. We would have had a bill, but do you know something? The government said it would bring in a bill. It did in late June. That bill passed this house in June.

We are now in the second-last week of this parliamentary sitting term. The government knows that we support that bill even though we think it should go further. Do not think all of the little get-outs and the special reasons are lost on us, but we are still prepared to support it because it is an improvement on what is there. But knowing that we are prepared to support paramedics, police officers and first responders with these changes, where is that bill? It is not on the business list in the other house. They have not even brought it on, and here we are in the second-last sitting week.

I doubt whether it will be able to pass, but I want to put on record that we have been prepared to support that bill. It could have been passed weeks ago, and paramedics, police officers and first responders could have been enjoying the protections that that bill might have brought in, limited though they may be. They could have had them now, but this government — wanting to play games, distracted by political frolics and spending days on pointless motions when we could have been debating and passing important legislation — has delayed this matter in the upper house. Why? I will tell you why. For everybody listening, I will tell you why the protections for paramedics, for police officers and for first responders sit idly in the upper house. Why? Because they do not believe in it. They actually do not believe in the mandatory sentencing proposals that are needed. They never have supported them, and I know this from so many who have raised it with me. I know my counterpart, the Attorney-General, does not like these changes. I doubt whether the Minister for Police likes them either. So they sit there.

I will tell you what I think has happened. They have wanted to turn around to Mr McGee, Mr Hill, Mr Gatt and other representatives of our great emergency workers and they have wanted to tell them, 'We're looking after you. We're delivering for you'. But I say to them: where is the law? I know where the bill is. The bill is stuck in the upper house because the government has not brought it on, but where is the law? We would have had this law passed weeks ago.

I stood here and asked for your permission to move a bill that would give paramedics, police officers and first responders actual protection, and who opposed me? Those over there. Why? Because you do not really believe in tough sentencing. You actually do not. It took them years to do anything about baseline and years to do anything about mandatory sentencing, aggravated burglaries and aggravated carjackings. We had bills ready to go. All of our law and order measures which we had ready to go years ago now the government stonewalled, and it has only belatedly brought in pale imitations which now sit in the upper house.

I want to tell paramedics and police officers everywhere: you could have had stronger laws to protect you, but you have not got them. You have not got them because this government, which pretends to look after you when it comes to assaults on you, your members and your colleagues by people who think that violence on you is okay, has not delivered for you. It left its bill in the upper house.

I say to all Victorians watching and who will read of these debates: there is only one choice to make in November if you want a safer state, if you want stronger sentencing laws and tougher bail laws and if you want police who are there to represent you to have stronger powers to break up gangs and stop these riots. There is only one choice. To paramedics, police officers and everyone else who is out there protecting and serving our community: there is only one choice if you want to crack down on violence and do something to change the culture of violence in our community. There is only one chance to change that in November, and that is to vote for a change and effectively tell this government, 'Thanks but no thanks'.

It is time for a change in our state. To make our state safer, for everybody watching you have to vote for it. You can get it and you deserve it, but this government will not change anything. Despite its belated efforts we will let this bill go through, but if we are elected we will do a better job — a real job — of protecting those who deserve those protections.

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Police) (16:32) — I just want to start with a quote from a member of Parliament in the upper house, and it reads:

We accept that there is a need for FPOs, but we recognise that the legislation as drafted allows them to be applied on a very, very wide basis and with insufficient safeguards to protect the civil liberties of Victorian citizens.

**Ms Hennessy** — Who said that?

**Ms NEVILLE** — Well — surprise, surprise! — it was the Liberal Party spokesperson in the upper house. So this idea that we are not willing to get tough and do what we need to do and give police what they need every step of the way is just a load of rubbish and rhetoric from those opposite.

Let us do a little history lesson for the member for Hawthorn. He goes on about ‘what they told us in 2015’. Well, let us have a look back at the member for Box Hill, the then Attorney-General, in 2013, who introduced the Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012 (COCA) and just applied it to bikies and did not apply it to unlawful associations. We came in and fixed those issues in relation to the COCA and the mess that those opposite left. We also then added unlawful associations. We also said to Victoria Police that if these did not work as needed we would look at them and review them, and that is exactly what this bill does.

Let us put this bill into a broader context. If you think about the context, for four years under the Liberal-Nationals government we saw crime go up 12.3 per cent and offence numbers go up 21.4 per cent. Just so you have got a sense of how the crime rate has gone up under our government in three and a half, almost four, years, it is minus 0.01 per cent. So we are on the minus track because we have spent four years solely targeted on turning around the crime rate that just continued to grow and grow under those opposite. It grew because not one new police officer was funded under those opposite — not one. The last 7000 police funded in this state have been funded by a Labor government, and of that, 3135 in this term alone.

We saw them also cut the budget to Victoria Police, so it was not surprising that burglary, armed robbery and high-harm crimes started their rise during the time of the Liberal-Nationals government. We have set out to turn that around, and in fact, we now have an offence rate much, much lower than New South Wales. We have the second lowest youth offence rate, just behind the ACT. We have the lowest burglary and break-and-enter rates in a decade. Aggravated robberies are down to figures that we were seeing in 2011 — all those high-harm crimes rose under those opposite.

Motor vehicle theft is lower than it has been in 10 years. One of the key parts of driving this crime down has been giving police the resources and the powers they need.

There was a comment made by the member for Hawthorn a moment ago that Victoria is worth coming to for organised crime. I will tell you why, Acting Speaker. It is because they know they have got an opposition leader who will take them out to dinner and feed them some lobster and red wine. That is exactly how organised crime figures work. They try to infiltrate areas and people that have influence and can make decisions, and that is exactly what they have been doing.

**Mr D. O’Brien** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the minister is reflecting on another member of the chamber. She knows there are ways that that can be done, but not in general debate. I ask her to withdraw that comment about the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms Hennessy** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I would submit to you that the member’s point of order is misconceived, in that the standing orders only allow for a request for a withdrawal if there is an alleged individual imputation to which a member takes offence. The Minister for Police did no such thing, and upon that basis there are no grounds for you as Acting Speaker to request any such withdrawal.

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

**Ms NEVILLE** — Giving avenues for organised crime to be influential, particularly in a political area, perhaps gives them the biggest boost that they have ever had.

We know that the biggest driver of crime is organised crime in this state. That is why we have invested in significant new resources and powers that are targeted particularly at dealing with gangs in our community. Whether it is motorcycle gangs, Middle Eastern gangs, our youth gangs or whatever it is, we are putting in place the resources and powers that police need. We have funded the anti-gang squad for Victoria Police.

In fact, almost one of the first announcements I made as Minister for Police back in 2016 was when I co-launched with the federal justice minister the national anti-gangs funding program. At the time I made it very clear that it was absolutely critical for our enforcement agencies to work together at a state and federal level. When the new gang team commenced at Victoria Police, this was in fact my quote at the time:

The new gang crime squad will protect the community from gang violence and networked offending. Criminal gangs have no place on our streets.

Our strategy has been comprehensive. It has been linked. We have got the community safety statement, with the first one back in 2016 for the 2017 year, and one in 2017 for this year. That has delivered \$3 billion of investment — new police; the public order response team; the anti-gangs team; new equipment, particularly some additional non-lethal equipment for our public order teams; cash for scrap metal; Fagin's law; more air wing; youth specialists —

**Mr D. O'Brien** — Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

### **Quorum formed.**

**Ms NEVILLE** — Clearly they do not like me talking about the facts. I know that seems to get in the way of their narrative.

Let us be really clear: the biggest investment in Victoria Police history, the biggest uplift in police numbers, in resources, in equipment and of course legislation. I was running through some of that, including Fagin's law, cash for scrap metal, and the firearm prohibition orders (FPOs), which have been extremely successful so far. They were pretty much opposed and those opposite attempted to water down this legislation, so the hypocrisy of the member for Hawthorn, sitting in this chamber, saying that we are not up for the tough sentences — carjackings, home invasions, bail laws, the FPOs are absolutely what Victoria Police wanted. We have delivered them, and we will continue to deliver them.

This bill before the house now is the last piece in the jigsaw of providing around gangs that additional capacity and capability for Victoria Police to both detect and disrupt organised crime and gangs in our community, but also to prevent. That is particularly why we have reduced the age of issuing an unlawful association notice down to 14 years, to enable Victoria Police to apply this legislation to young people who may be at risk of associating with those adults, those organised crime figures, that we know are driving some of their behaviours, particularly the home invasions, carjackings and burglaries. We are really trying to stop that before it starts. It is going to be an additional tool, but of course we are doing the other things — the youth support workers in Victoria Police, the new embedded youth program out in the west and out in the south. They are all designed to disrupt, detect and prevent crime in our state.

As I said, under those opposite crime went up 12.4 per cent; ours is now down in the minuses.

**Mr CRISP** (Mildura) (16:42) — I rise to make a contribution on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal Appeals) Bill 2018. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012, to widen prohibitions on individuals associating with individuals convicted of serious criminal offences to prevent further offences and to give IBAC oversight over unlawful association notices by police officers. It also amends the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and Criminal Procedure Act 2009 in relation to criminal appeals.

The main provisions of the bill include that individuals may be charged with unlawful association if they associate with at least two convicted offenders — whether on one or more occasions — on at least two occasions each. It removes the requirement that a notice can only be issued when the issuing police officer reasonably believes that preventing associations between individuals is likely to prevent the commission of an offence. It broadens the meaning of an 'offence' for the purpose of the scheme to include offences committed against the laws of another state or territory which correspond to an applicable offence against Victorian law. An unlawful association notice can be issued by police officers at or above the rank of sergeant. The minimum age of a person who may be issued with an unlawful association notice will be reduced from 18 to 14 years of age. This reverses the government's 2015 changes. This is a backflip by the government to sort out some of the anti-consorting mess that we have been in on these issues, probably since about 2015.

For most of the people in the Mildura electorate, when you talk about anti-consorting laws, it comes down to members of outlaw motorcycle gangs, or bikies. I probably have to make a definitional difference here: bikers are those people we see on Sunday mornings with their friends parked in front of the coffee shop, whereas bikies are generally involved in far more dangerous activities than sitting around on a Saturday afternoon or a Sunday morning. So to the bikers of the world I am sure this does not apply, but the bikies are of concern to my community.

The scourge of ice has arrived in Mildura, and it is popularly thought by the citizens of Mildura that it was the bikies who brought ice to town. When it arrived many years ago it started a long struggle for our community with those who are suffering from ice addiction. In order to feed that addiction, many people, when they have exhausted their family's resources, turn

to crime. Mildura took that struggle head-on, and we have progressed a long way in the years since ice was introduced. First there was Project Ice, for which the community came together to try to get the facts of the matter and get them out into the community. Then, when ice started to pop up in various other areas, like when it turned up in our sporting clubs, information and programs were provided to sporting clubs and other organisations to deal with ice. All the time it was the bikies that my community saw as being behind this.

Sunraysia Community Health Services has got a non-residential rehab program running, and that has been running for some time now and has helped many people. Now the attention of the community has moved to residential rehab facilities, and that is something that I was pleased to make an announcement about last week with the shadow minister for country health, the member for Lowan. Our commitment, should we be elected, is that we will develop a residential rehab facility in north-west Victoria, in Mildura, to serve that community.

Behind all that, what the community do want to know is, yes, how we are treating the symptoms — which are those people who are caught up with ice — but also how we are dealing with the cause. How is it coming to Mildura, how is it being distributed and how do you disrupt that? Our police have done a good job at disrupting that supply to Mildura; however, there is always more to be done. I see these anti-consorting laws as something very useful, particularly when we are dealing with outlaw motorcycle gang members. Therefore I see a use for this legislation in my community.

Mildura also does not want to catch the city disease of some of the crimes that are across the city media, and it does want to make sure that the police have the powers they need to try to make sure that we do not catch that disease. Whether consorting laws can be useful in that area or not, I am not sure, but certainly when we look at lowering the age to 14, they might well be useful for some of those youths that gather from time to time. If at an early stage we can use the anti-consorting arrangements for those younger people, it may well stop them from further progressing along the line of crimes and separate some of them from what I am sure begins as mischief but ends in their having a criminal record.

Also, I do want to add to what the member for Hawthorn spoke about, and that is our first responders and the bill to protect them. When enough was enough, particularly for our ambulance officers, there was a considerable reaction by the community in my area about the need to protect first responders. That bill is

now in the upper house. It does need to be dealt with, because there is an expectation that we in Parliament will deal with it. First responders are there to help, and they should not be subjected to some of the behaviour that we have seen over time. We just need to send clear messages that that is unacceptable. That is certainly what our first responders want to hear from us.

Finally, I want to take this time to say thank you to all those who have supported the Belej family in their process through the criminal law system seeking justice for Karen. They have had a difficult time. It is something that no family should have to go through, but I want to acknowledge what the Belej family have done. They have put their own lives on hold and put a great deal of effort into pursuing justice for Karen in the hope that that will prevent anyone else from having to go through what they have been through. Change is needed in our laws, particularly around this justice area. Chris Belej is reported in the *Sunraysia Daily* as saying:

An increase in baseline sentencing would help send a message that the community doesn't tolerate it. This is not a justice process, it is a legal process ... and we're trying to improve the system for other victims of crime.

I think the Belej family have shown remarkable courage and strength throughout this process. They have enjoyed a great deal of support from the community of Mildura, but their quest to make sure that no other family goes through it is very much reflected in the words that Chris Belej made to the media. It is something that we should note.

With those words, we will not be opposing this bill because it does take a step in the right direction, but on so many issues we still have a long way to go.

**Mr PEARSON** (Essendon) (16:51) — I am delighted to make a contribution on the justice legislation —

**Mr R. Smith** — Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

**Quorum formed.**

**Mr PEARSON** — I am delighted to make a contribution on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal Appeals) Bill 2018. I thought I would begin my contribution by telling a story. My mother grew up very poor, and she grew up poor because my grandfather was an alcoholic. What my grandfather would do is he would work, he would knock off at 5, he would go to the pub — usually the Mitcham Hotel — and drink excessively. He was always immaculately attired and well dressed and he

would come home and would threaten and abuse my grandmother and her children.

My mother was the youngest of four kids and my uncle was the eldest and the only boy. It was a very unhappy environment that my mother grew up in. My uncle, who has passed away, was in his own way I think traumatised by what he would see unfold. He did not like being poor. I do not think anyone likes being poor, but my uncle in particular did not like being poor, and as he got older he started to get stronger and bigger and he would remonstrate with my grandfather when my grandfather came home drunk. My grandmother relied upon my uncle to almost be the enforcer, to try to remonstrate with my grandfather and to control him when he was drunk.

My grandfather never struck my grandmother but he would come in at 10 o'clock at night and threaten to burn down the house, and my uncle and my mother and her two sisters would flee the house in terror. It was a very traumatic childhood for my uncle, and as a consequence of that he did not like spending much time at home. Who would, as a teenage boy? And he had big dreams and he was hungry, and when you are poor, when you are in a violent household, when you have got dreams of making it rich and when you are in the motor trade in the 1950s you might find yourself, as my uncle did, stealing cars.

He was stealing cars to be broken up for parts, so he was at the bottom of the ladder and he got done. He got done and my grandmother at that stage could not afford a lawyer, so he went to Pentridge. He was locked up in Pentridge and my grandmother, realising the fate that lay before my uncle, begged and borrowed money off a relative to get Frank Galbally to represent him on appeal. He got off on appeal, so my mother, who only went to Pentridge a couple of times to visit him and always described the stench of the place, mercifully never went near the place again. In the case of my uncle, Jimmy Willis, who ran the local bus line, gave him an apprenticeship, and he was on his way then. He got an apprenticeship, he got married and he had four children. He was a successful small businessman, and he voted Liberal for the rest of his life.

Why I tell this story is that these laws are designed to protect the most vulnerable members of our community. It might be that you are black. It might be that you are Muslim. It might be that you are a newly arrived migrant. It might be that you are fleeing family violence. It might be that you do not want to be at home so you want to hang out with your mates and you feel strong and secure. It is funny; the curious thing about some of the recent commentary about the so-called

African gangs that those opposite in particular seem to be particularly fixated on is that for some of those opposite they see a group of African males and they are frightened and intimidated, but for many African men a group is where they feel safe because they do not feel like they are going to be picked on as they might be if they were alone.

A bill like this is important because it is trying to ensure that people who are vulnerable and people who are at risk are not taken advantage of. I know the member for Prahran is in the chamber and the member for Melbourne is here, and I am fully expecting and can pretty much anticipate the contributions that they will be making on this issue. I take the view that if this stops one child from spending the rest of their life in and out of correctional facilities, it is a good law.

It is about making sure —

**Ms Sandell** — Send them all to jail.

**Mr PEARSON** — Go and send them all to jail? Is that the substance of your argument — send them all to jail? Is that your argument? What a ridiculous notion. Sitting up in your ivory tower and looking down on the masses? This is about protecting vulnerable children in our community, making sure that they have got the protections that they need in order to be able to lead good lives and meaningful lives and fulfilled lives. It is about making sure that they do not go in and out of correctional facilities for the term of their natural lives, and it builds on and it complements —

**Ms Sandell** interjected.

**Mr PEARSON** — Honestly, really, is that the best you have got? I mean, really. You show no interest in the big issues. You are not interested in investing in TAFE. You do not care about public housing tenants. You do not want public housing tenants living in decent —

**Mr Hibbins** interjected.

**Mr PEARSON** — You are not interested. You come in here and sit in the cheap seats and lecture us. You are a bunch of policy dilettantes. You are nothing more than a two-dimensional caricature of what a Greens member of Parliament is. We at least are coming into this place and making decent, substantive and measured contributions, understanding the challenges that are confronting young people in our community. We are making the investments in public housing. We are making investments in the education system. We are investing in TAFE. You just are interested in ensuring that working people are

condemned to lifetimes of misery and deprivation. That is what you want. You are not interested. You just want the working class to stay exactly where they are: locked up in poverty and in misery and in deprivation.

You come in now having a crack at the Labor government. You never show any fight against the Tories, do you? You always sign up with the Tories at every step of the way, and you can guarantee that come November you will be lining up with the Tories to sink the boots into the most progressive Labor administration this state has ever seen, because that is what you do. You are a bunch of modern-day, 21st century Groupers that are here to try to wreck the Labor movement.

We will not be stopped by you. We will not be silenced by you. We will not deviate one iota from the mission that we set ourselves, which is to provide decent, modern, progressive government and make sure that working-class kids have the very best opportunities, the very best education, the best housing, the best training we can afford, and decent jobs at the end of the day. You are not interested because you are not up to it. None of you are up to it because you are not prepared to come in here and fight and stand and espouse your values in terms of supporting working people. It has always been the same, Acting Speaker: Labor has always had to face the coalition of moneyed interests in the Liberal Party, the landed gentry in the National Party and these blow-ins who now occupy the cheap seats. I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (17:01)** — If the member for Essendon wants to know what has wrecked the Labor movement, if the member for Essendon wants to know why voters are abandoning the Labor Party, if the member for Essendon wants to know why the Labor Party is struggling to compete with the Greens, he has to look no further than himself and his own contributions in this place, because people like the member for Essendon are why people are abandoning the Labor Party and voting for the Greens. He is why more people are going to be voting for the Greens. His contributions to this place, his values of selling off public housing, his support of this bill, which is just aping the Liberal Party — that is what is driving people towards the Greens. His contributions in this place of attacking the Greens are not the solution to the problem of the Labor Party losing votes to the Greens; they are the cause of the problem. So the member for Essendon can keep making those speeches. It does not make a difference to us; it is to the benefit of us.

I am going to speak on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal

Appeals) Bill 2018, which proposes two changes: to amend the Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012 regarding unlawful association offences and to abolish de novo appeals for criminal matters in the summary jurisdiction, replacing them with a new appeal process. Yes, the Greens do oppose both these proposals, but I will focus on the anti-association aspects of the bill.

It is not just the Greens who oppose this bill; it is also the Law Institute of Victoria, Liberty Victoria, community legal services and the Youth Affairs Council Victoria. The Criminal Organisations Control Act currently provides that a person aged 18 or over can be served with an unlawful association notice if a senior police officer believes that the person has previously associated with an adult convicted of an indictable offence and a criminal offence is likely to occur from their future association. A person can be served with a notice and charged with unlawful association if they subsequently associate with the convicted person three times in three months or six times in 12 months.

This bill proposes to amend those laws by lowering the rank of a police officer authorised to issue an unlawful association notice from senior sergeant to sergeant, except when issuing notices to vulnerable persons. This scheme now includes children by allowing police to issue unlawful association notices to innocent children aged 14 and over, and in regard to association with convicted children aged 14 and over. It removes the requirement for police to reasonably believe that preventing association is likely to prevent the commission of an offence when issuing that notice. There are also changes to the criteria for an unlawful association violation, and the bill mandates that the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission monitor and report on the scheme.

We oppose these unlawful association laws and these amendments, not just because they are unworkable and not just because they are an affront to those fundamental human rights of freedom of assembly, of movement and of association and to the presumption of innocence, but also because they will not work and they are simply going to capture the most vulnerable people who are not guilty of a crime.

We have already seen this occur in New South Wales, where these laws originated. By removing the ‘adult’ and ‘organised crime’ aspects of the unlawful association laws, this bill is simply copying the New South Wales legislation. The New South Wales Ombudsman has released a highly critical report of the New South Wales laws, showing that these laws were not targeting serious organised crime, that they were

often used unlawfully and that they unfairly and disproportionately affected vulnerable people, including children and Aboriginal people. The Attorney-General is saying that despite this bill being based on these New South Wales laws, it will not have those problems, even though the first recommendation of the New South Wales Ombudsman was to remove children and people under 18 from this scheme. Yet with this bill — ‘Let’s put it in’.

The other protections that the Attorney-General has included in this bill do not stack up. The bill states that a police officer of the rank of sergeant should not issue an unlawful association notice and that such a notice should not be issued for a period greater than 12 months, yet it states that if this does occur, then that notice is entirely valid and the only way to then stop it is if the person who has received the notice effectively prosecutes a review process. So the vulnerable person needs to use the legal system to prove that they are not acting unlawfully. These protections are supposed to address power imbalances, not actually facilitate them. It is incredible.

This is the second time that this government has introduced unlawful association laws. The first time was in 2015, when the Attorney-General stated that the government needed to address the shortcomings of the existing laws because those laws had not been used since 2005. Now we are being told that the laws of 2015 were too complex and that they themselves have never been used. We are essentially going through trial and error when it comes to these laws. That is what happens when you ignore evidence-based policy and pursue laws based on political expediency.

The reason that we opposed the law in 2015 was that there already were anti-consorting laws in Victoria. This government seems to believe that they have got to do something, but they are just adding more and more overly complex, frequently unusable criminal laws to the statute books when we have got existing laws.

This time around the government is taking its failed unlawful association laws, which were designed to target serious organised crime and bkie gangs, and applying them to children as young as 14. Incredibly, this legislation removes the requirement that notices only be issued when it is reasonably believed that they will prevent a criminal offence. If the notices are not there to prevent a criminal offence, what exactly are they there for? The government says that this is to prevent convicted criminals from expanding networks by recruiting young innocent people, but what they are saying is, ‘We’re going to protect innocent people’ —

**Ms Sandell** — By locking them up.

**Mr HIBBINS** — ‘By locking them up’. They will lock them up for three years or give them a fine that there is no way they can actually pay. The current recidivism rate for young offenders who receive a custodial sentence is 80 per cent. If you are going to start locking kids up, these laws are essentially going to increase the level of crime, increase the level of reoffending and further marginalise those who are already marginalised.

When this government was faced with the issue of crime in this state, it had a choice of taking a different approach — one that reformed our justice system based on evidence. That is what the Greens have been pushing for. We know about the well-established link between levels of disadvantage and criminal offending. But instead, they are just chasing the Liberals down the rabbit hole. They are adopting failed Liberal policies. This government are not showing any leadership on this issue — they had the opportunity. If they had shown it from the start, we would be in a different place, but every single time this comes up, they just follow the Liberal Party in an approach that is going to lead to more crime, more imprisonment and higher reoffending rates. It is not the way to go. This government needs to change course. There are two sitting weeks left, so unfortunately they have only got a short window. This government would be very well served — and this state would be very well served — if it changed course. And do you know what? I reckon politically it would be better for the government if they changed course as well, because all they are doing at the moment is copying the Liberal Party. It is not good for anyone.

Fifty per cent of the prisoners in our jails come from just 6 per cent of the postcodes in this state, yet at the same time only 1 per cent of youth justice expenditure is allocated to early intervention programs addressing the causes of crime. Instead of putting all this money into imprisonment, we need evidence-based policies like justice reinvestment — which has been hugely successful in other jurisdictions — that invest in at-risk communities and actually address the factors that lead to criminal behaviour.

The Greens strongly oppose this bill. We need to shift our focus away from this punitive system that just criminalises more and more young people, and we need to have a multifaceted approach that focuses on the underlying causes of crime and recidivism and addresses these at their source. We can do much, much better than this. The Greens will not support this bill.

**Ms SHEED** (Shepparton) (17:11) — I rise to make a contribution on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Unlawful Association and Criminal Appeals) Bill 2018. It is a bill that purports to reform the criminal justice system, with changes to police powers to respond to serious and organised crime and to Victoria's appeals system. Firstly, in dealing with this unlawful association bill, I have to say that I feel very concerned about the nature of this piece of legislation. I note that in his second-reading speech the Attorney-General said that this was a bill that contains a range of important reforms to the criminal justice system. He concentrated really on the Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012 and said that that this legislation will enhance the provisions of that act.

It has been sold to us as a bill that is being enacted to deal with organised crime, but the unintended consequences around this piece of legislation are what are so very concerning. There are a number of points I would like to make. I know that when laws of this nature were introduced into New South Wales the New South Wales Ombudsman did a report on them and talked about the unintended consequences there. The fact that children were targeted in such a way really caused concern about the legislation. Some 9000 notices were issued and 46 people were sentenced for consorting during the period that the Ombudsman looked at. Reporting on the laws, he found that 7 per cent of consorting warnings were directed at children — 13 to 17-year-olds — while Aboriginal communities were subjected to 40 per cent of all consorting provisions. More than half the consorting warnings given to women were given to Aboriginal women.

My electorate has the highest Aboriginal population outside of metropolitan Melbourne, and I fear for a community where we create laws that place these sorts of provisions in the hands of police at the level of sergeant. It is simply extraordinary that these sorts of notices, which have the consequences that they do, could be put into the hands of local police across the state with very little examination as to the impacts of those laws. Two-thirds of the 83 children in New South Wales aged between 13 and 17 years who received consorting warnings were Aboriginal, despite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprising only 2.5 per cent of the population. These are very concerning statistics, and they put a lie to the fact that this is about organised crime. Certainly I think we all want to see organised crime smashed. We want it dealt with. We do not want organised crime recruiting young people. But the reality is that these sorts of notices are not actually targeting that group of people, so the capacity for unintended consequences that I have referred to is really very great.

In information I have had from a local legal aid service, another example has been pointed out to me of where these notices are given. I am just going to read the two paragraphs:

Police and ambulance services were called to attend a location to search for two bushwalkers. The bushwalkers had contacted emergency services after becoming lost. Once the men had been found, police conducted checks and discovered that both men had convictions for indictable offences. One man had been convicted of drug supply (not cannabis) almost 10 years earlier. There is nothing in the police records to indicate continued involvement in the supply of illicit drugs and the only police contact since that conviction involved traffic matters. The other man had been convicted of common assault five years earlier and is described in police records as a 'self-confessed cannabis user'. His police record also indicates concerns for his mental health. Neither man has ever been identified by police as a higher risk offender.

In speaking with the men individually, police were told that neither of them knew the other had been convicted of an offence. Police were also told that they were bushwalking and one man was showing the other man Aboriginal rocks and boulders in the area. The men were each issued with a consorting warning. Police recorded a suspicion the pair may be involved in cultivating cannabis although officers did not locate anything ...

In any event it was seen as okay to give them a notice. This is not organised crime and it is not dealing with what a lot of the rhetoric around this legislation seems to be about, but it is targeting people who are perhaps more vulnerable in our community.

In today's *Australian*, Chip Le Grand has published an article talking about the recent bail laws which came into operation in this state on 1 July 2018. The number of unsentenced prisoners now remanded in custody on criminal charges has leapt 60 per cent since the Bourke Street rampage that prompted the overhaul of those laws. We now see situations such as a 37-year-old mother of five spending 68 days behind bars on remand for stealing a handbag from Myer, only to be released on a good behaviour bond. A homeless man was jailed for stealing a packet of sushi. A 12-year-old boy was forced to spend a night in a police cell. Is this what we really want to see happen in our state? I do not think so.

If someone is charged with shoplifting, is bailed and is then caught with a small amount of drugs and has to go to jail, I do not think that is really what we want to see happening. Again, the rhetoric is so much around organised crime, around gangs — no doubt targeting African gangs, which seem to be so much in the news at the moment — but this is not the way we are going to solve the problems that we have with our disadvantaged communities, with people who are disenfranchised, with people with mental health problems or with children.

In in my electorate of Shepparton we are trying to deal with these problems on a community basis. We have a Sudanese community, we have a Congolese community, we have a significant African community and we have one of the most multicultural societies in Victoria. I have said before that we also have the highest Aboriginal population outside of Melbourne. These sorts of problems and the crime problem in our community are not typified by African gangs and are not typified by gangs going on rampages, so why is that? What is it that we are doing as a community that might be creating a different environment or creating opportunities for people?

I would like to just mention the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project, a community-based organisation that received \$3 million in a recent budget to continue with their work. They are working with young people in our community. They have established the Haven, which is just a place for kids to go after school and have a meal. Some 150 kids are registered from the Shepparton-Mooroopna area. They go there on weeknights and have a meal. Some do their homework. They hang out. They just wanted a place to go. They told the people who organised this Lighthouse project that they just did not have anywhere to go and that they wanted somewhere to go. Now they have somewhere to go.

The Bridge Youth Service in Shepparton works with young people aged between about 12 and 17, and there are so many other organisations in our community that work with young people to try and divert them from the sorts of issues that do arise in their families. We have some of the highest rates of young people in out-of-home care, but I have to say that as a community we are trying to do something about it. We are working on looking at these sorts of issues.

I just reflect on the fact that in Texas, a strong Republican state that you would expect to have a really strong law and order base, they have moved away from that notion of imprisoning everybody. They have moved to deliberately investing in early childhood and in mental health services in ways that are actually in the long run much cheaper than investing in the prison system, and they are starting to see results. We need to be looking at other ways and other opportunities to deal with the problems we have. We might think we have been doing it well, but we actually have not.

I had the opportunity to visit the Parkville youth detention centre about 18 months ago. Half the young people in that place are on remand, and there are only about 200 young people across the state. I ask the government to reconsider its position on this legislation.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation).**

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

## TREASURY AND FINANCE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 7 June; motion of Mr SCOTT (Minister for Finance).**

**Mr MORRIS** (Mornington) (17:21) — It is a pleasure to rise to make what I anticipate will be some relatively brief comments on the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I was going to say the bill is one of those rare creatures, an omnibus bill, but that is probably not reasonable because they are not all that rare. While in fact it is not seeking to achieve great reform, it is very much a relatively minor fine-tuning bill. It does affect some seven pieces of legislation — the Transport Accident Act 1986, the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, the Dangerous Goods Act 1985, the Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994, the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013, the Accident Compensation Act 1985 and the Emergency Services Superannuation Act 1986.

There are 11 matters picked up by the bill. Some of them — like the benefits to cyclists, which I will refer to in a moment or two — essentially are contained in the one act. Others relate to the definition of ‘family’ and apply to three acts, and others are across a range of those seven acts that I have identified.

Essentially the proposed changes fall into two categories. One is the changes to the insurance-related operations of the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and the Victorian WorkCover Authority. The other relates essentially to the occupational health and safety regime. But again, as I say, they are really minor fine-tuning and nothing to get too excited about. All of the changes I am relatively relaxed about. Some, had I been sitting on the other side of the house, I probably would have been happy to bring in as legislative proposals. Others I probably would not have bothered to do so, but from this side I am not going to get too upset about it. The opposition will not be getting too upset about it, and we will not be opposing the bill.

I guess the centrepiece of the legislation is the changes to the Transport Accident Act 1986 in part 2 of the bill — not so much all of the changes but particularly

the changes that relate to the treatment of cyclists. Cyclists are currently eligible for some compensation if they are involved in a collision with a motor vehicle, but essentially that motor vehicle has to be mobile or it has to have the car door open. The act as it stands indicates that a cyclist is entitled to compensation as a result of an incident that is directly caused by the driving of a motor vehicle, involving a motor vehicle which is out of control, a collision between a bike and an open or opening car door — which I think we have become all too familiar with, unfortunately, in the last few years as the number of bikes has increased significantly — or a collision between a bike and a motor vehicle while the cyclist is travelling to or from their place of employment, which is considered to be a journey incident.

What of course has not been covered is a situation where a cyclist riding a bike collides with a stationary vehicle but not the door of the stationary vehicle, which really is an anomaly. I know there has been one well publicised case — that of Mr Rory Wilson, who on 9 July 2014 was involved in a collision and sustained severe injuries but has not been able to have his medical costs covered by the TAC. In fact this bill has been nicknamed Rory's Law in the press. I do not think that term has been used in the house, although the minister may have used it in the second-reading speech. Certainly Mr Wilson and similarly affected people will benefit greatly from this relatively minor change.

I am pleased to see it has come through. Of course this bill was introduced and second read before the midwinter break, and it appeared for a while that in fact it might not find its way on to the government business program and pass, so I am pleased to see that it has made a reappearance this week and that it looks like it will get through before the Parliament rises ahead of the November election. This is clearly of great benefit to a very small number of cases. It is a change that eliminates an inconsistency in the act, so I think it is worthwhile from that point of view. I am advised that the impact on the scheme is negligible. That is obviously something that we need to consider, but I think the human aspect is the more important consideration in this case, so I think that is a worthwhile change.

A range of other changes are proposed to the TAC act, the workplace act and the accident compensation act with regard to an expanded definition of 'immediate family'. That is probably a more 21st-century definition of 'immediate family', so that the act is contemporised. There is also an increase in the cap for travel and accommodation benefits, and I think that recognises the reality of travel. Again those three acts are affected.

There are some changes around entitlements and income support for parents over a fairly precise period. With regard to the elements regarding the occupational health and safety provisions, essentially they revolve around consultation, the electronic service of notices, summary and indictable offences, inspections, procedures and minor changes to the management of asbestos.

As I said at the outset, it is basically nuts and bolts stuff and nothing to get too excited about. It is something that the Parliament needs to determine, but it is something that we can determine and dispatch and then move on to other business. There is nothing here that, as the shadow Minister for Finance, I am going to get too excited about or that I think the opposition is going to get too excited about. I have consulted fairly widely with industry groups and others, and essentially they have indicated that they are entirely relaxed about the proposed changes. In fact hopefully the changes will streamline the operation of the various acts and both ease the burden on employers and, more importantly, make sure that the occupational health and safety legislation and the occupational health and safety arrangements are as effective as possible because, after all, the name of the game in any of this stuff is to make sure that people can go to work and come home again safely in exactly the same condition as they were in when they walked out the door in the morning. That is the bottom line on this stuff. With those few words — I think I said I was going to go for less than 10 minutes and if I sit down now I will have achieved that — the opposition in this case will not be opposing the bill.

**Mr PEARSON** (Essendon) (17:31) — Thank you, Acting Speaker Spence. What a joy and delight it is to see you in the Chair this fine spring afternoon. I am delighted to make a contribution on this bill. As the member for Mornington indicated, it is a fairly straightforward bill. The thing that probably attracted me most to the bill was, as the member for Mornington enunciated, the expansion of coverage for cyclists. Historically Melbourne has always been a bit of a car city and has been regarded as a car city. Certainly where I grew up out in the suburbs as soon as you turned 18 you bought a car. You had to have a car to get around. You could not really cycle or walk around. However, I think that is starting to change now with cycling being seen very much as normal usage of the roads.

There is a greater uptake of cycling, and I think that is particularly pronounced when you are looking at the rate of residential infill that is happening within, say, 5 or 10 kilometres of the CBD and when you are looking at the fact that we are growing by — I think this was

the figure last year — 143 000 people and we are adding a city the size of Canberra to Melbourne every three years. With that level of population growth and that level of congestion, people are looking at other alternatives beyond driving and beyond catching public transport. We are starting to see that uptake in terms of cyclists, and as a consequence of that it is fair and reasonable that the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) scheme be amended in such a way as to provide greater levels of coverage for people who choose to cycle. To address some of the challenges in my community with the increased level of residential infill there has certainly been a greater uptake of cycling, so these sorts of changes are welcome.

The bill also looks at providing increased benefits to family members. The bill will make some changes which will enable grandparents to be entitled to the same benefits currently available to immediate family members of a TAC client. I think that is a recognition of the changing nature of work in our society and the changing structure of the family unit, particularly when you look at the cost of housing. If you go back 20 or 25 years, in parts of my community you could buy a house for two or three times the gross annual income. If the average wage was, say, \$50 000 in 1995, then for probably \$125 000 or \$150 000 you could get a house. That meant that there was greater capacity for the primary caregiver to be out of the workforce for longer or to have a bit more flexibility.

What we are seeing now though, and if I look at my electorate, you are looking at house prices which are around 10 times the gross annual income. This means both sets of parents are more likely to be required to work in a full-time capacity, which means that there is a greater reliance upon grandparents. In the event that there was an accident or an injury that would trigger a TAC payment you might find a set of circumstances whereby a grandparent might be eligible for or liable for caring for that child or assisting in its care, and therefore they might require the payment of a benefit.

The bill also looks at increasing the amount payable for travel and accommodation expenses. So it was at \$10 780 per claim, and we are now looking at increasing that to \$20 000 per claim, indexed each financial year with the CPI. I think that last point, that it is indexed each financial year by the CPI, is an important one, because often you will find that if you have a fixed dollar sum in a piece of legislation where there is no capacity for a regular annual increase it means the Parliament has to come back and review that legislation and make those sorts of amendments. That is probably not the most efficient use of our time when

you could have that factored in by enabling those increases to occur over the normal course of events.

The bill also looks at providing additional financial support to parents. This is about providing up to \$10 000 per claim for parents to access if they incur a loss of wages after five working days from the date of the child's first admission to hospital. Again, I think when you look at the degree of stress around housing affordability or rental stress, clearly there are families that are put under an enormous amount of pressure not just through the trauma of having a child injured in a car accident or a vehicle accident, but it is then thinking about having someone at the hospital and that you cannot go back to work — in your own mind I would imagine you would be stressed and traumatised by the set of circumstances that confront you. So being able to provide this level of support I think is important as well.

I am also conscious of the fact that the bill does look at strengthening WorkSafe's accountability in relation to investigations relating to prosecution requests under their act. Specifically the bill requires WorkSafe to publicly report any instances where it fails to meet its mandated legislative timeframes for these investigations. I raise this point because this goes directly back to the fiscal inquiry which my good friend the member for Eltham, who was here in the chamber briefly, participated in very early on in the term of the 58th Parliament. This amendment recognises the role and contribution of that committee in relation to that specific instance.

I think that as I reflect on my service in this Parliament I have always had an appreciation for the work of parliamentary committees, but obviously having been the chair of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee you do get a really deep appreciation for the role that committees play in terms of advising the Parliament, but also in trying to provide a bit of advice to the executive on matters which are relevant and important and which should be picked up in the course of legislative reform.

I know the member for Eltham worked tirelessly on that particular parliamentary committee. She had a real interest in terms of appreciating and recognising the impact that PFOS had on the Fiskville community, on the Country Fire Authority as an institution and on firefighters, and she was really passionate about trying to make sure this never happened again. I think when you see a member who is really passionate about an issue, who brings their A game to the table, who works diligently and ferociously to pursue a course of action that then manifests itself in legislative reform — I think the member for Eltham should be really pleased, as the

other members of that committee should be for their work, in terms of now being in a position where we have got a bill like this before the Parliament.

The bill also looks at overseas attendance care. That relates to ensuring that when clients have to travel overseas for their job they will be provided with an additional four weeks of overseas attendant care services in these circumstances. I think this talks to the fact that we are participating in a global economy and that the old Australian settlement of tariff walls, the White Australia policy and being insular and inward-looking is gone. We are now part of a global economy and there is a requirement and a need for people to be able to get on a plane and go to the Asia-Pacific region, Europe or North America for their work. We want to be in a position where if you have been injured as a consequence of road trauma that you have the capacity to go back to work and to be as engaged and be the best contributor you can be. Now clearly if there is a requirement for overseas care and you had to travel overseas for work, then that person could be in a very difficult predicament. They might have to leave their job, they might have to try and fund this themselves and that would be, I imagine, quite a costly exercise. So ensuring that people who have been injured as a result of road trauma have got the ability to participate I think is very important.

Now I do want to finish on this note. This bill is about cyclists. This bill is about protecting cyclists. I am speaking, the member for Mornington is speaking, the member for Brunswick is speaking and the member for Forest Hill was here and I reckon he will be speaking, but where are the Greens political party? That great party that professes to love cyclists — where are they? They are absent and they are not in the chamber. I have not checked the speaking list, Acting Speaker, and perhaps you can enlighten me, but I do not reckon they are here, I reckon they have clocked off. It is 5.30 p.m. — which is more like 10.30 p.m. Berlin time, in East Berlin because that is where they are — and they are not interested. The most upstanding piece of legislation that deals with cyclists and they are conspicuously absent. Why? Because they are lazy dilettantes and they are to be condemned.

**Mr McCURDY** (Ovens Valley) (17:41) — I am delighted to rise and make a brief contribution on the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, so as to give my colleagues the opportunity to give an inspiring speech a little later in the evening. Primarily as we know this is an omnibus bill. It amends the Transport Accident Act 1986 to clarify the intent of the act, it increases benefits for claimants and family members and expands the eligibility of cyclists to

access compensation, specifically when the injury occurs as the result of a collision with a stationary motor vehicle, plus a range of other matters. It also amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, the Dangerous Goods Act 1985, the Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994 and various other acts which form to increase benefits for claimants and family members, and to amend some procedures and processes under these acts.

As you have heard from our lead speaker and you will hear from others, the main provisions of the bill in terms of the Transport Accident Act are expanding the definition of ‘immediate family member’ to include grandparents, which is a good thing, and increasing the family travel and accommodation benefits for family members visiting an injured person in hospital. This is particularly good for those who are more than 100 kilometres away if they have got someone injured in a Melbourne hospital. That benefit will be available to all from the Ovens Valley electorate if they are visiting people in Melbourne-based hospitals. The bill will also provide a new benefit for parents of an injured child in hospital to compensate them for the loss of wages while visiting their child, and I think again this is a positive step forward.

Further, the bill will expand the definition of ‘dependent child’ to include people under 25 years old undertaking apprenticeships — it puts them into that category. It removes the Transport Accident Commission (TAC)’s mandatory requirement to review a claimant’s entitlement to ongoing weekly benefits at least once every five years. This bill will extend coverage to cyclists injured in collisions with stationary or parked motor vehicles. As a cyclist myself, I certainly feel this is an important part of the bill. It seems like half the world has taken up cycling when you look through the Ovens Valley —

**Mr Angus** — Do you wear lycra?

**Mr McCURDY** — Well, lycra is an important part of every cyclist’s attire, member for Forest Hill. It seems like half the world has taken cycling up. I am sure it is not that high in numbers, but up in the Ovens Valley people love to come up onto our roads and tracks and trails and cycle all over the place, which is a great thing for tourism and other things throughout the Ovens Valley. It is just terrific for people’s health at the same time.

Diverting from that, the bill will provide an entitlement to an additional four weeks of disability attendant care outside of Australia for claimants required to travel overseas for work. It will also establish a new benefit to

enable the TAC to pay the fees associated with the management of a claimant's compensation by a court-appointed professional administrator. In terms of the Emergency Services Superannuation Act 1986, the changes will transfer the Port of Melbourne Superannuation Fund into the Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme.

The bill, in terms of the other acts that I mentioned briefly, will expand the definition of immediate family member to include grandparents, as I have mentioned. It will increase the family travel and accommodation cap and benefits, and it provides for the electronic service of notices. A number of changes with regard to prosecution clarify that prosecutions for summary offences must be completed within three months.

I will go on to the two existing provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 relating to the duty of employers to consult with employees and a new framework for the removal and control of asbestos installed on or after 1 January 2004. These provisions are intended to supplement the application of prohibitions in the existing Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 made under the act. The bill provides for a new provision to allow the payment of compensation to the estate of the worker who has made a claim for compensation and subsequently dies before the payment is made. I think that it is a positive move again, to pass that payment on to the estate of the person who has passed on.

I do have a couple of concerns with the bill. The extension of the power of inspectors to require a person to produce a document regardless of whether the document is in their possession or control may create some issues. It is difficult to see how an individual can be required to produce a document that is not within their control. We know that the intention of the provision was primarily to reflect the realities of electronic storage and the retrieval of documents which may not be physically possible at the time, but it is also available to persons who work in that regime. There has been enough said I think on both sides of the house. I will conclude my remarks there. As I say, there are few concerns. It may be an omnibus bill, but certainly there are some genuine improvements. I am certainly pleased to conclude my remarks there.

**Ms HALFPENNY** (Thomastown) (17:46) — I also rise to speak on the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. From the title of this bill you would not realise how many important amendments it makes to various pieces of legislation that actually demonstrate in many ways the compassion of the Andrews Labor government. Particularly around the

transport accident legislation and the occupational health and safety legislation, while not huge changes in themselves the amendments in the bill address things that have sometimes meant a lack of respect or acknowledgement of, for example, families and of people's rights — just to ensure that people are treated in a decent way and to fix up some loopholes that have been glaringly obvious over a long period of time. It is this government that is now taking action to make these amendments to make things in a small way, and sometimes a large way, better for Victorians.

I will just go through a couple of examples. As I said, the bill makes lots of amendments to lots of pieces of legislation, but I will just concentrate on a couple. The first relates to the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). At the moment if a cyclist's bicycle collides with a stationary vehicle, it is not considered a transport accident. Therefore there are issues around compensation for injury and the need for care as well. If a cyclist is injured as a result of a collision with a stationary vehicle, the cyclist would only be eligible for compensation if the collision occurred while they were travelling to or from work. This limited coverage is unfair, and it has created a gap in claims for compensation by victims. What this bill does is close this gap by amending the definition of transport accident to include an incident involving a collision between a pedal cycle and a stationary motor vehicle. This is a major win for an increasing number of cyclists who use bicycles on Victorian roads as a means of transport. It ensures they are covered if — and hopefully this does not happen — they are involved in an accident of this nature.

The gap in the legislation was highlighted in the very well-known and sad case of cyclist Richard 'Rory' Wilson, who was significantly injured when he hit a parked truck. Mr Wilson was not riding his bike to or from work; therefore he was not eligible for cover under the TAC, even though he had suffered permanent damage and paralysis. More and more people are using bikes, so we need to make sure that they are covered, and of course we do not want to see the situation that occurred with Mr Wilson repeated. These amendments will also apply to collisions that occurred on or after 9 July 2014 so that Mr Wilson himself and other cyclists injured as far back as 2014 can also be compensated. Again it is making things fairer and looking after people into the future, but also in this circumstance showing compassion for what has happened, which highlighted the gap, by allowing people who had been treated unfairly in the past to also receive compensation.

The second issue I want to talk about concerns the amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, the Dangerous Goods Act 1985 and the Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994. These amendments are about providing more accountability and transparency in WorkSafe investigations and also providing adequate time frames to respond to prosecution requests and undertake investigations. I was chair of the parliamentary committee that investigated the chemical contamination at the Country Fire Authority training college at Fiskville. One of the important things that came out of that inquiry was the situation involving WorkSafe. WorkSafe had originally been very uncooperative or not interested in investigating in any way that workplace, the chemical contamination and the exposure to chemicals that was going on at that training centre and then, finally, when WorkSafe did go in after reports in the media — that is what it took for them to go in — and start their investigation it took a very long time and they were telling nobody what was going on, so there was no transparency.

The current legislation says WorkSafe has three months to complete an investigation and then, if the aggrieved parties are not happy with the result of that investigation, they can refer the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions. In the case of Fiskville, WorkSafe did not come to a conclusion or make a decision about their investigation into the safety of that workplace within three months so it was unable to be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, even though the legislation said that it must be done within a time limit of three months. That did not occur, but there was no penalty, no mechanism to make WorkSafe come to a decision so that it could then be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Eventually when the outcome of the investigation was determined — and that was that there was no ability for WorkSafe to prosecute — it then was referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions some 18 months or two years later. One of the reasons why it was not continued and there was no prosecution was that too much time had lapsed.

This of course is completely unfair. So some of the amendments in the legislation we are looking at today are to ensure that there is a time limit that WorkSafe has to complete an investigation and that if that investigation is not completed within that time limit, then the parties can refer it to the Director of Public Prosecutions without that investigation having been completed. For indictable offences the time limit will be nine months, so WorkSafe has nine months to investigate and if there is no outcome by then, it can be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, and there is a shorter time limit if it is a summary offence.

This is one of the recommendations that the Fiskville report made — it was recommendation 13 — and this is the government's response in accepting and acquitting that recommendation to ensure that there is proper transparency and that WorkSafe does the job it should be doing.

There is also clarification, again within the occupational health and safety legislation —

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

**Quorum formed.**

**Ms HALFPENNY** — Obviously the opposition do not want to properly debate legislation. That is not their interest; they are just here to be difficult and disruptive. In my last 10 seconds I know that people will be giving more comprehensive information on the bill, but I just want to acknowledge the member for Brunswick and the work that she did in closing the Fiskville site —

**Mr ANGUS** (Forest Hill) (17:56) — I am pleased to rise to make a brief contribution on the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. We can see in clause 1 the purposes of the bill — that is, to amend the Transport Accident Act 1986, the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, the Dangerous Goods Act 1985, the Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994, the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013, the Accident Compensation Act 1985 and the Emergency Services Superannuation Act 1986.

As other members have said, we can see that this is a genuine omnibus bill amending various elements within all the particular acts that I have just referred to. In relation to the Transport Accident Act 1986, the amendments clarify the intent of the act to increase the benefit for claimants and family members and expand the eligibility of cyclists to access compensation — that is specifically where the injury occurs as a result of a collision with a stationary motor vehicle — plus a range of other matters.

In terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, the Dangerous Goods Act 1985, the Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994, the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 and the Accident Compensation Act 1986, this omnibus bill increases the benefits for claimants and family members and also amends some of the processes and procedures required under those acts. In relation to the Emergency Services Superannuation Act 1986, the Port of Melbourne Superannuation Fund is transferred into the Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme.

I particularly want to highlight the insertion into the Dangerous Goods Act 1985 of new part VIA, which is headed 'Asbestos removal and control'. It is interesting that we have got this particular component within the bill, because one of the things I clearly recall when going into the last state election campaign in 2014 was that this government was going to remove all the asbestos from schools in Victoria. Sadly for most of my schools, and certainly for most schools in the state of Victoria, this has not happened. That was basically another lie that was told to the people of Victoria and to the education community in the lead-up to the 2014 election — that asbestos would be removed from schools. That has not happened in many instances.

I know from my own experience in the electorate of Forest Hill, where promises were made to a number of schools that their asbestos would be removed very early on in the new term of the Parliament by the incoming government, that has just categorically not happened. Instead of going to schools and seeing that they are now asbestos free, rather I go there and I see the signs and the stickers that are still on the buildings saying, 'Caution: asbestos', 'Handle with care', and the warnings about not touching this or that. The asbestos is still well and truly there and obviously of significant concern to the education community.

That was a classic sort of mistruth, if you like, from the now government as they campaigned in the 2014 election. As we come to the last 80 or so days of the 2018 election campaign leading up to 24 November, I think it is a warning really to all Victorians just to take with a grain of salt the things that this government will be saying as they go to the people later on in November, because basically you cannot believe a word they say. Many of their so-called promises are nothing more than lies or off-the-cuff remarks, and the Victorian people need to be well and truly put on notice to be aware of that and to be aware of the deception that will be going on in the lead-up to the 2018 election. This is just one of many examples that I could cite in relation to deceptive and misleading conduct, if you like, by the then opposition and now government in the lead-up to the 2014 election. That is a warning for all Victorians to not believe a word that is put out.

We all remember very clearly the fact that the now Premier said to Peter Mitchell that there would be no new taxes and charges in a government that he led, and of course we know that we have got 12 new and additional taxes and charges under this government. We now have the highest taxing, highest spending government in Australia. That is another broken promise among a range of broken promises, with more lies and deception foisted upon the residents of the state

of Victoria. In the lead-up to the state election there will be lots of hype and lots of activity going on, but Victorians need to be aware that they cannot trust a word that comes out of the mouth of the Premier, the Deputy Premier or his team in relation to promises that are made, because history shows that those promises are false and they will be broken.

In relation to other matters of a financial nature, we have seen the horrendous blowouts and cost overruns on a range of the projects that have been undertaken, including the West Gate tunnel, the Metro Tunnel, the level crossing removals, the north-east link and the east-west link. The waste and mismanagement relating to those financial transactions is just horrendous. Of course all Victorians will be paying for that for many, many years to come. To think that the now government paid \$1.5 billion not to build the east-west link is just an absurdity, because as we all know, particularly those of us who represent seats in the east, we desperately need the east-west link. I am very thankful that the coalition has announced that should we form government after 24 November, that will be a project on the list to be completed.

In terms of some other aspects of the bill at hand, part 6 contains amendments to the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013. A range of different issues are covered, including issues that I used to see a lot in my previous occupation. When going around to businesses I would see all sorts of conditions in factories and other places. The importance of looking after employees is absolutely vital from the point of view of a business, so to be able to strengthen this particular aspect of the requirements regarding workplace injury rehabilitation is something of credit.

There are changes to the definitions in the various bills that I have cited, including the Transport Accident Act 2018 and the other various acts. Some members who have already spoken have covered off many of those issues in considerable detail.

The opposition has a number of concerns in relation to various aspects of the bill, but particularly in relation to the extension to the power of inspectors to require a person to produce a document regardless of whether the document is in their possession or control. That seems an extraordinary requirement really, and how that can ever be implemented and how an individual can be required to produce a document that they have not got is an extraordinary stretch, I would have thought, so that is a concern.

Also in relation to some of the electronic storage and retrieval of documents, there are some issues

surrounding that where they may not be physically at a particular premises but available to people that work there. So there are some issues surrounding that that have been raised, particularly by our lead speaker. So with those brief comments I will end my contribution.

**Ms GARRETT** (Brunswick) (18:05) — I am really, really pleased to be able to speak on the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I was really pleased that the Minister for Finance, who is responsible for this bill and the passage of this legislation, was with us in the chamber. He is to be commended for this work.

I note there is another shadow minister, the member for Kew, at the table now, but the shadow minister who kicked off the opposition's contribution said that there was not much to get excited about in this bill. I disagree, and I am sure the Minister for Planning, who is at the table, would disagree that there is not much to get excited about in this bill. There is plenty to get excited about. I say that from considerable experience, being married into a family with a long lineage of compensation lawyers in both workplace and transport accident compensation. I have seen firsthand the importance of having proper compensation laws, and not just the laws but the systems and processes that underpin those laws to ensure that people who have the horrific misfortune, often not only through no fault of their own but through the fault of somebody else, to find in a split second their lives changed, if they are still lucky enough to have their lives, and their families' lives changed forever.

It is also good to follow the member for Essendon who finished his very feisty contribution, went straight off the field and put on the umpire's jumper and went into the chair. He spoke about the Greens. Where were the Greens, given a key feature of this bill relates to protecting cyclists? We have not seen the Greens. I think the member for Essendon can be assured of one thing: we may not see the Greens here, they may not speak on this bill, but I tell him what — they will be claiming credit for it. They will be claiming credit for the bill, because as we learned last week there is a golden ticket under the Greens' seats. There is a golden ticket that means it is actually them who are deciding all of the legislative progress in this state.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms GARRETT** — They have a special cabinet, and the special cabinet means that they do not actually have to win a majority of seats on the floor of the house, but they can still manage with a very special wand to

control the legislative agenda. So hats off to the Greens — three seats of magic right there.

But back to the bill, which the Greens did not deliver or shape or work on over decades to create a just compensation system for people who suffer injuries. This bill makes some really significant changes that will make the lives of injured people, and significantly their families, a whole lot better. We spoke about cycling. Clearly in my electorate of Brunswick a lot of people cycle both in the electorate and through the electorate. We know that currently there is a very unequal system as to who can get compensation. Cyclists are not covered by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) unless they are travelling to or from work if they collide with a parked vehicle. We know that Rory Wilson was left without TAC cover after just such an accident, and so significantly this bill will retrospectively cover all cyclists who have hit a stationary or parked car to the date of Rory's accident, to address this anomaly.

Then of course I get to apprentices. What a good news story on apprentices for this government! Unprecedented numbers of apprentices are being put on the massive infrastructure jobs that are going around. Importantly there are mandated apprenticeship positions. I know the member for Mordialloc is very interested and supportive of that. He has many young people in his community who are desperate to get on the tools and desperate to get a proper start in life. Just this last week in Parliament we were debating the licensing of trades legislation with the minister at the table, again transforming lives and keeping people safe.

This is really important, because currently under the TAC system a child will only be entitled to dependency benefits if they are under 16 years of age or a full-time student between the ages of 16 and 25 years and financially dependent. Currently apprentices are excluded from this, and that is just not on. It means that a whole group of people, particularly young people, have been excluded from accessing just compensation. So this is a loophole. Everybody agrees it is a loophole, but it is a loophole that has the potential to cause real grief for people who need to be supported at this time. So the Andrews Labor government is fixing that issue.

We are also — and again this is an issue to get excited about, it is a significant issue — expanding the definition of 'member of the immediate family' to include the grandparents of a TAC client. We know that in our modern society, in our modern community, we are almost seeing a reverse. We had the village raising the child, and then it all became very much about the nuclear family, but we are heading back to grandparents

having really active roles. You have two parents working and you have the squeeze on households and time. This means that grandparents will be entitled to family counselling, travel and accommodation expenses, which recognises the very important role that grandparents are now playing in many, many families right across the state.

I think it is really important again, and this can be viewed as a minor change, but it actually is a change of major significance when you look at relaxing requirements for the TAC to review a client's loss of earnings capacity benefit entitlement. These are big words, and if you are a non-compensation lawyer, the eyes start to glaze over, but this is the lifeblood for people who have been injured in a transport accident. This means that a person is entitled to the loss of earnings capacity benefit beyond the usual 18-month period if they have an ongoing incapacity for work and they have a level of whole-person impairment above 50 per cent. That is a huge level of impairment. Again, for compensation lawyers this is their bread and butter — understanding how much impairment an individual has suffered.

The bill replaces this mandatory requirement of the TAC to undertake a review of these entitlements every five years with a discretionary one, so where people are clearly incapacitated to such an extent they are not going to be required to attend medico-legal examinations and vocational assessments. These of course are important tools in determining an injured person's loss and how to calculate that loss. Again, that is clinical on a page, but it is the lifeblood for people who have suffered these injuries, often through the fault of others. This means greater dignity for people who clearly do not need to be going through sometimes invasive tests and assessments. Medico-legal assessments are significant and require rigorous processes, and this allows people to continue on without that level of invasion.

We then get to changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, which again may seem minor on the page, but are very significant in terms of people's lives. I draw the attention of the house to just one of those changes, which is the employer's obligation to consult. Section 35 of the act sets out that employers have a duty to consult with employees about certain aspects of safety, and fines are set out. We know that it is usually the employees who know what is going on on the shop floor. If you are not in a meaningful dialogue with those employees, you may well be missing the things that will put their lives and livelihoods at risk.

Section 36 of the act sets out how employees have been consulted, but it is silent on fines, although the two sections are clearly linked. This bill makes the important step of consolidating both of those sections to ensure that it is very clear that if you fail to consult with your employees in the terms set out in this legislation, you will cop a fine. Again, that is one important tool in making sure employers change their behaviour or respect the role of the employees in the workplace.

Again, there are many, many other provisions that this bill goes through. Managing asbestos provisions, increasing the family and travel accommodation cap for hospital cover and the payment of impairment benefits following the death of the claimant. This is really significant — if a claimant tragically dies between their entitlement being determined and the processing of their complaint, currently their families do not get the payment. This bill remedies that, and again that is justice for families who have suffered enough. I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (18:15)** — It is a pleasure to rise and speak on the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, and it is a pleasure to follow my colleague and good friend the member for Brunswick, who has been a fantastic advocate for workers rights for many years. To hear her passionate speech on these bills shows you why we have got multiple speakers on the Labor side sticking up for working people. The opposition, after one or two speakers, has gone cold. It did not get them excited. One, we know what they would do with the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) if given the chance to ever get back into government. We will always defend the Transport Accident Commission because we know what the conservative plan would be — it would be to sell it off, privatise it, and we would have vulnerable working people who have been subjected to an accident who would then be put at risk.

I wanted to take up the member for Forest Hill, who had a very interesting contribution. You had to be listening to it really closely, because his tactic sometimes is to speak so quietly that you would not even know if he was speaking on the bill or not. I was listening with my 29-year-old hearing and I just got a snippet of him having a crack about asbestos and removing it from schools. I went back in my mind and thought about 2014 and policies that the then Labor opposition announced, and I am pretty sure that we announced something about removing asbestos from schools by 2020. I do not recall that policy being matched. I do not recall the then government doing anything about removing asbestos from schools. So it is ironic that the member for Forest Hill would come in

and criticise us and say that we are not committed to it and that we are not doing it fast enough. That was our policy. We put a line in the sand to make sure schools and communities are protected. We are not going to cop that. We are not going to cop people criticising us for a policy that we came up with and that we are using to support working people.

This bill has a number of important elements, and there are two that I want to cover off. One is the Fiskville inquiry and its important recommendations about WorkSafe. The other element, an important element, is the amendments to the TAC. They are practical amendments that support people.

I want to turn my attention firstly to the Fiskville inquiry. The member for Thomastown, who was the chair of this inquiry, did a power of work. It was an election commitment to do a full inquiry into the horrors that occurred at Fiskville. I was joined on that committee by the member for Eltham, and it was a real privilege to serve on that committee with other members, because we got to the absolute basis of the risk that career and volunteer firefighters were subjected to over decades. We understood. We saw the cover-up, the secrecy, the lack of information and that statutory authorities failed career and volunteer firefighters. It put them at risk, and we have to be fair dinkum and say lives were cut short by that exposure — to think about the years that people would have lived had the chemicals and risks that they were exposed to been known.

When we have these kinds of issues present, be they environmental issues, WorkSafe issues or Environment Protection Authority Victoria issues, we expect that our statutory authorities will protect working people in their day-to-day lives. Sadly, my experience on that inquiry, the recommendations that we put forward and the Premier losing confidence in those serving at the highest level at WorkSafe illustrated that failure. Evidence that was provided to the inquiry said that on 117 occasions WorkSafe visited Fiskville and never had the thought to test those waters, despite the decades of issues with the water and the contamination onsite. There were 117 occasions and they never tested the water for some of those chemicals that firefighters were being exposed to.

It goes beyond that as well, though, because I know the union, the volunteer association and others strongly put forward the need for a thorough and transparent investigation, but when those calls were not answered, when there were delays of months turning into years, the uncertainty that was created for those career and volunteer firefighters and other professionals that

trained at Fiskville was so overwhelming. They did not know what they were going to confront — whether or not it was health issues, and we have heard of a range of different risks and exposures — and that created a great deal of trauma. I am very proud that the recommendation that was put forward at Fiskville was honoured.

Our statutory authorities are the last line of defence, and WorkSafe unfortunately did not do the right thing during that time, whether it was a resourcing issue, whether it was the will or whether it was the fact that, as we found, when we have statutory authorities looking to investigate statutory authorities, sometimes that falls on deaf ears. So that strengthening to require any sort of referral to go to the Director of Public Prosecutions is very important and delivers on that recommendation. It acquits a number of our recommendations as well. It is a journey of work that we are doing to support career and volunteer firefighters, to make sure that we acknowledge and respect their contribution and to make sure that people are safe in the future and do not experience these things.

We saw it as well with the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry — we saw, again, the statutory authority not living up to standards that we have set and that the community expects. They are the last line of defence, and when the community calls on WorkSafe, we need to make sure that they are responding in the most efficient and effective way.

There are a couple of other really important changes made by this bill, and there is something that sticks out that relates to a personal reflection. It is the story of Rory Wilson, a gentleman who, sadly, was on his bike and hit a parked car. He was left a paraplegic. This is a story that I think has touched a lot of people: to think that there is a difference in that if an accident happens with a parked car when you are riding to work, you are not covered, but if the vehicle is moving, you would then have TAC coverage. For my family, my father-in-law had a serious accident just past a year ago when a car came over to the wrong side of the road head on. He was moving at about 50 kilometres an hour one way and he collided with a vehicle that had come over to the wrong side of the road. After a few broken bones, damage to his back and a lot of rehabilitation he has a claim in with the TAC and would be eligible because the vehicles were moving and he was on the road. There is that uncertainty after the call you get that you have got to rush up to the hospital — we went through to the Alfred. You do not know how your loved one is tracking. All you know is that they have been rushed in an ambulance by dedicated paramedics to emergency and you have to await what the tests and

scans say. To then have that extra layer of trauma and grief that you might not be covered and supported, we feel for those people. I think this amendment and change is so very appropriate and accurate, and it means that people like Rory are covered in that future circumstance.

My electorate has one of the most frequently cycled routes through Beach Road and Nepean Highway — a real attraction of activity with many, many cyclists enjoying their recreational weekends. If an incident happens, there is that extra trauma and grief of not knowing whether you are going to be supported or covered, so tightening that loophole is entirely appropriate.

The other really important change and one that sticks with any parent is if there was an incident involving your children, an accident involving your kids. Having to choose between doing a day of work or missing a day of work to care for your sick or injured child should not be a choice that we require families to make. When we think of our children and supporting our kids, there is nothing more important if they are stricken, injured or sick — you want to be there by their side each and every moment, and I think that is really important. The coverage of expenses and then the assessment of lost wages goes to the heart of what the Labor movement and this Labor government are all about: supporting working people, supporting their families.

I think it is telling in this place today, a fortnight out from the sitting period concluding, that we have got multiple speakers on the Labor side standing up and speaking out, making amendments to the WorkSafe legislation to make sure workers and volunteers are protected into the future, making sure that the Transport Accident Commission is strengthened and our compensation scheme is even more robust and vibrant into the future. It is telling that on this side of the house we make those amendments, we make those policy changes and, sadly, from that side of the house we have not had any representation from the Greens political party and we have barely had a Lib get excited about this bill. I think that is telling of the values of this government and what we prioritise in supporting working people. I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr WYNNE** (Minister for Planning) (18:25) — I am delighted to make a contribution in relation to the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 following the excellent contributions from my colleagues, particularly my colleague the member for Mordialloc and his passionate defence of the government, particularly in relation to the work that we have done in support of workers in the state of Victoria,

and of course the member for Brunswick. Prior to her time in local government and indeed obviously her time here in the Victorian Parliament both she and her husband pursued very distinguished legal careers. Her husband, James, of course continues to do so, but both have been unequivocal, real warriors on behalf of getting a fair go for workers, and I acknowledge the member for Brunswick's contribution today.

This is an important bill because it really goes to the heart of the values of the Labor Party and it goes to the heart of why we are a party that has unambiguously been for its entire history a party that stands shoulder to shoulder with workers. This is in the core DNA of the Labor Party and it is in the core DNA of all members of the government. We believe that we have an absolute obligation to do all that we can to protect working people, and that is why this bill today does achieve one of the key election commitments of the Labor government. In that context I am delighted to make a contribution tonight.

The bill aims to improve the operational efficiency of the Victorian transport accident and WorkSafe schemes and the Victorian occupational health and safety, equipment public safety and dangerous goods regulator frameworks and provide for the transfer of the assets and liabilities of the Port of Melbourne Superannuation Fund, known as the port fund, into the Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme, which is really just an ancillary aspect of the bill.

In essence the bill does a number of important things. Firstly, it expands the definition of 'dependent child' to include apprentices under the age of 25 who were dependent on their deceased parents for economic support. It expands the definition of a member of the immediate family to include grandparents of a Transport Accident Commission (TAC) client. It expands the definition of a transport accident to include an incident involving a collision between a pedal cyclist and a stationary or parked vehicle in Victoria, and it makes other associated amendments to the Transport Accident Act 1986.

I am just going to pause there for a moment, Acting Speaker, because, as the member for Mordialloc quite rightly indicated in his contribution, we have had a number of very sad incidents occur, and the most recent one was a very sad incident of someone losing their life in Sydney Road in Coburg when they were hit by a vehicle. At that time there was a significant amount of activity around this issue and an argument about whether we should have a separation between cyclists and vehicles going forward. Whilst the government did in fact consider that question in some detail, because at

first blush you think potentially that may not be a bad proposition, further expert analysis suggested that a far better way for us to seek to address this tragedy that had occurred — and when you talk to cyclists there are so many near misses that people do have when they are on the road network and car doors are swung open on people — would be an education program.

I think this is very much embedded in the minds of drivers, particularly if they are parking in streets that are used extensively by bicyclists. They are much more mentally aware of the need to do a very simple thing — that is, look around before you open the door of your car to make sure that a cyclist is not coming past you — because we know that cycling is a hugely growing area of activity. Certainly in my part of the world, particularly through the City of Yarra, our bicycle paths and our road networks are extensively used by bicyclists. Indeed Wellington Street, Collingwood, is one of the major bike thoroughfares in the morning and afternoon peaks, and it does in fact have a dedicated bike lane. The message around ensuring that bicycle riders do have safe passage is something that is very, very important and is a welcome addition to this bill.

The bill also provides a new benefit of \$10 000 for parents to access if they incur a loss of wages as a result of visiting their dependent child in hospital following a transport accident. That is particularly relevant for my colleague sitting opposite, the member for Lowan, when people have to visit their relatives who may be hospitalised in hospitals in Melbourne and they may have to come literally hundreds and hundreds of kilometres to visit their relatives. So I think this is very much a welcome proposition, and I was pleased that the government recognised just how important it is. As we know, tragically when you have some of these major and sometimes catastrophic injuries that people suffer through their involvement in accidents, the likely outcome is that they will be a patient at a major and specialist hospital based in Melbourne. For the obvious reasons, all of the specialist skills that will be required are very much housed in the centre of Melbourne. The travel and accommodation cap for immediate family members to visit a patient has been lifted from \$10 000 to \$20 000, and it provides for the payment of a reasonable fee charged by a court or tribunal-appointed professional administrator associated with the client's TAC-related benefits.

That is essentially the broad sweep of the bill. From the point of view of the government this is a bill that, as I indicated at the commencement of my contribution tonight, does actually speak in a very practical sense to the values of the Andrews Labor government and to the values that drive the policy agenda of this government.

In that context I am pleased to see that we have got any number of speakers ready to make a contribution here tonight on this bill, but sadly we find nobody from the Greens political party seeking to contribute on this bill. Particularly when this is in the context of matters pertaining to the safety of bicycle riders, which is an inherent aspect of this bill, I think that is deeply disappointing. It is reflective, I would suspect, of a lack of commitment on the part of the Greens to be an active contributor in this debate. We do not always agree with what the Greens political party's positions are on these matters, but I think in my contribution I have made it clear that the government has considered in great detail particularly the question of bicycle safety. In that context it is very, very disappointing that the Greens have chosen not to participate in the debate tonight because the opportunity is readily available to them.

In conclusion, I am delighted to be a part of what I think is an important reform by our government. The responsible minister has done a fantastic job of ensuring that we put in place key elements that go to ensuring that people who are catastrophically injured get the support that they require.

**Mr EDBROOKE** (Frankston) (18:35) — It is my absolute pleasure to rise and speak on the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. From the outset, I will make sure that the minister responsible for this bill and his advisers are congratulated. It is a bill that I very much support. We have heard from people across the chamber — well, on this side of the chamber, as a few people have pointed out. There do not seem to be any speakers on the other side of the chamber, which is a real shame. But many, many people on this side of the chamber have talked about the fact that this bill makes amendments to improve compensation available to those injured on our roads and at work. That includes cyclists, and a very well publicised case has been spoken about. This bill also makes amendments to improve the operation of the occupational health and safety system. The provisions in the bill are low cost but they make important changes to assist families. Both the Transport Accident Commission and WorkSafe are in excellent financial health.

This bill is one that I have been looking forward to speaking on for quite some time because it deals with an issue that is fairly significant for me and quite a few other people in the industry that I was previously part of, having been a firefighter. For someone who has swum in those dams at Fiskville, for someone who used the water there every single day while training and for someone who stayed on that site for months and months and months while training, it was bad enough to have the Country Fire Authority (CFA) board play

dumb and not provide evidence about what was going on there. I must also say that it is disappointing that more action was not taken with regard to that board. In my opinion they should all have been sacked. But certainly it was a real letdown to hear some of the facts and figures come out of WorkCover. There was a veritable plethora of evidence available. There were families being affected — CFA families and families who lived next door to the Fiskville facility. Yet we still had the former WorkCover board — and thank goodness they were sacked, because they deserved it — visiting Fiskville, which was a toxic site and a site that was closed down. They visited that site 117 times, and I am led to believe they did not test the water once. All the while we were hearing, and the families of these firefighters were hearing, ‘It’s all okay. It’s all okay’. I felt great disdain when I kept hearing that side of the story, until finally the Premier came out and said:

I will not be lied to, and I will not accept incompetence.

They are very strong words from the Premier: ‘I will not be lied to, and I will not accept incompetence’. I think those words confirmed what many firefighters and many families across the Ballan region, and people who trained at that facility, already knew. They are the last line of defence in a fire or an accident. They train hard to fight easy and they do the job very well, but they expect to be looked after — they expect people to have their backs in a time of need. As someone who is not yet 40, I have been to way too many funerals of people who were too young and who were sick with strange types of cancer and whatnot. To have the CFA board basically denying that and to have WorkCover being so incompetent was such a letdown.

The best thing about this bill for me is that it does actually amend some of those related issues I was talking about. It makes a range of amendments to improve the operation of Victoria’s workers compensation scheme as well as Victoria’s occupational health and safety equipment, public safety and dangerous goods regulatory frameworks.

Broadly, the amendments the bill makes to the act are to provide increased transparency in regards to WorkSafe investigations responding to prosecution requests; to ensure that WorkSafe has sufficient time to undertake these investigations; to clarify the occupational health and safety consultation requirements; to provide a clear framework for the removal or control of asbestos installed subsequent to 31 December 2003; and also to provide a fairer compensation entitlement for injured workers and the family members of injured workers. It also makes a couple of minor amendments to clarify the operation of

legislation and to improve consistency, which are small but very important. It provides increased transparency in regard to WorkSafe investigations in response to prosecution requests, and ensures that WorkSafe has sufficient time to undertake these investigations.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 — otherwise known as the OH&S Act, the Dangerous Goods Act 1985 and the Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994 — allow members of the public to request prosecutions in circumstances where they consider that a breach of the legislation has occurred. You might well apply this to the case of Fiskville.

This bill introduces amendments to strengthen WorkSafe’s accountability and transparency in regard to investigations relating to prosecution requests under these acts. Specifically, the bill requires WorkSafe to publicly report any instances where it fails to meet its mandated legislative timeframes for those investigations, and for this investigation I believe the mandated timeframe was three months.

To have had what rolled out under the previous government happen is an absolute blight on them. To have no one from that side of the room here today when they are usually bleating about Fiskville, standing up for workers and emergency services workers, is very telling right now. It is all well and good to be out the front of the Fiskville complex telling the Channel 9 news and the local regional news channels that the place needed to be open and denying that there was actually a problem there, but when it comes time to stand up in the chamber and actually make a positive change to keep people healthy and keep people safe, they are nowhere to be seen. This is a pattern that we have seen in the last few parliamentary sitting weeks.

WorkSafe is a statutory body, and it is the last line of defence for these people, so we are doing the hard yards to make sure that this body has all the powers it needs and the oversight it requires to ensure it operates correctly so there are no more instances where it fails to actually meet its mandated legislated timeframes for these investigations.

Personally, I believe there are a number of other people who probably need to be held to account for the systemic failures that have resulted in firefighters — staff and volunteer together — and the community at Fiskville being exposed to these toxins and carcinogens over many, many years. The water was not fit for purpose. In fact, I believe it was even the United Firefighters Union in the end that did their own tests and found that that water was not actually fit, in any class, to be sprayed around and to have contact with human

beings. After 117 visits, WorkCover could not find this out. We are making sure that does not happen again.

The bill also makes amendments to ensure that WorkSafe has sufficient time to undertake thorough and comprehensive investigations relating to prosecution requests for more serious and indictable offences. This is very important. These amendments substitute the existing three-month timeframe for completion of these investigations with a requirement that if an investigation into an indictable matter is not completed within nine months, WorkSafe is to refer the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions. This is very, very important. In the interim, WorkSafe is to provide three-monthly updates to the person who requested the prosecution and the minister advising them of the status of the investigation. The bill also introduces new safeguards to ensure that these investigations are undertaken without undue delay.

In the short amount of time I have got left, I would just like to point out that a very well-known woman in the field, Erin Brockovich — a great movie, too — has actually come out to Australia.

**An honourable member** — She is here now, I think.

**Mr EDBROOKE** — She is here now. And I might even watch that movie tonight. It is a ripper of a movie. I will not say what I was going to say. I was going to quote part of the movie. It is probably not appropriate. She is out here at the moment, and she is looking at some of the cases around the nation to do with PFOS and PFAS, which of course are the toxic elements of the firefighting foam that has been used.

Certainly if we could get her down to Victoria it would be very interesting to see if she could read through some of this documentation, and get her thoughts on opposition members standing outside a toxic facility — with reams of evidence about its toxicity and why people should not be operating there — saying, ‘We should reopen it and let people be poisoned’. I am sure there is probably another movie in that. It is very sad today that it is only people on the Labor side of politics that are standing up; we are not just talking about workers, we are making sure we are actually looking after workers. Of course we are the workers party, and that is for a reason.

Again, I would say that this bill covers quite a few different parts of amendments to legislation. We have heard about the cyclist and we have heard about WorkCover and Fiskville. I am sure some of my colleagues would like time to actually talk about some

of the other facets of this bill, so I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr DIMOPOULOS** (Oakleigh) (18:45) — I am very proud to speak on the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and despite the pretty rudimentary sounding name of the bill it is a pretty significant bill, as other speakers have said, in many, many ways. Just to echo the words of my good friend, the member for Frankston, it is really only Labor governments — I know it sounds trite to say, but if you look at the history of the statutory changes that benefit workers and benefit vulnerable people — it is the Labor Party and the Labor governments that are the principal architects of those changes to laws and regulations. This is no different here.

I think people expect governments to look after vulnerable people. I think people expect governments to crash through the bureaucratic nightmare that some people face just to find justice and actually give them that justice without them having to fight for it. The issue, as the Minister for Planning spoke about before, with the famous case of the cyclist — it would not just be one. Many, many people have faced that situation, where they were not covered by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) because the vehicle was not moving. It is a ridiculous bureaucratic anomaly when you think about the road usage and what cyclists have to navigate to find a successful and safe way forward. Of course they have to navigate parked cars, so I cannot believe it has taken any government this long. I am really proud it is our government that is delivering this change, through this bill, which covers not only every cyclist that is in that situation but also their family and the people who love them so that they do not have to worry about the lack of cover every single day, because this is the reality of our roads every single day.

**Mr Walsh** — Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the condition of the house.

**Ms Halfpenny** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, this is, I think, the fourth quorum that has been called within a very short period of time, and therefore the opposition is obviously just being vexatious and disruptive. In accordance with standing orders, I do not think this quorum should be called.

**Mr Walsh** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER** (Ms Thomson) — I have not acknowledged you yet. I do not need any more assistance. I will not at this stage, given the time that the last quorum was called, accept another. I will allow the member for Oakleigh to continue.

**Mr DIMOPOULOS** — Thank you, Acting Speaker. I will try and make my words more profound so that the Leader of The Nationals will be interested in hearing them.

The second element of addressing the vulnerability of people that I was talking about was actually leaving apprentices uncovered when it comes to the dependency benefits for those who are left behind by those who are killed in a case covered by the Transport Accident Commission. The current rationale is that a child will only be entitled to dependency benefits if they are under 16 years of age. There is an exclusion if a child is a full-time student aged between 16 and 25, but that exclusion does not cover apprentices. We believe the same vulnerability provisions that got students covered in the first place should also get apprentices covered. They do not have the same earning capacity, and they are dependants to a large extent. We saw that in an earlier change we made. I am really proud of the change that we made to provide a 50 per cent discount on the registration of motor vehicles for apprentices. It is the same ethos that this Labor government takes towards people who need the state, who are vulnerable and they need —

**Mr Wynne** — A leg up.

**Mr DIMOPOULOS** — A leg up — that's right. I am really proud of this particular change in the bill and other changes that make sense. We are expanding the definition of members of the immediate family to include grandparents of a TAC client. When you talk about a multicultural Victoria and an Indigenous Victoria, you consider grandparents absolutely to be immediate family members — absolutely. That is the normal family dynamic of many families in Victoria, yet it is not recognised in law.

I am reminded of a bill I spoke on some months ago — perhaps a year ago now — that was of a similar nature in terms of WorkCover. From memory, workers who were injured were required to pay a particular threshold — I think it was \$500, \$600 or \$700 — of their expenses first before they could seek reimbursement from WorkCover. We took that requirement away in that bill because that was an unnecessary impost on a Victorian worker at a time when they were very vulnerable. They may have lost income-earning capacity, they may have been injured and there may have been a whole range of other emotional and physical trauma that comes with injury. The changes we are seeking to make through this bill are of a similar nature.

The other significant change is that section 131 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 allows members of the public to request prosecutions in circumstances where they consider a breach of the legislation has occurred and WorkSafe has not acted. As we know, and I think as we have heard from other speakers, this bill makes a specific recommendation that WorkSafe be asked to make such an investigation if the matter runs longer than three months. WorkSafe must report to the minister on the complaints at three-monthly intervals on the delay. This bill seeks to put a better scrutiny on WorkSafe's determinations. Effectively it seeks to not have a situation we have had in the past where the failure of WorkSafe to decide a case then prohibits interested parties from taking that case to appeal or taking it forward to the Director of Public Prosecutions. This is a performance requirement of WorkSafe, but it is also a safeguard for the Victorian community.

What this bill seeks to do is ensure that if the investigation of an indictable offence is not completed within nine months or a set limit after the date the request was received, the Director of Public Prosecutions will advise on whether or not the director considers a prosecution should be brought, so that the investigation does not disenfranchise injured workers and other parties.

There is a whole range of these provisions in this bill. The reality is that most Victorians would not have any idea that we are debating this bill this evening. I do not blame them for that — they have a life to get on with, they are busy; they and their families are living their lives — but we are debating a bill here, as we do many, many times, that will make an absolutely significant and measurable impact on the lives of many thousands of Victorians, not only when the bill is passed today but also in future years. I do not say to those good Victorians that they have to keep abreast of every piece of legislation that their Parliament debates, but I do ask them to please be conscious of which party and which government is bringing this forward. It is absolutely the Labor Party and the Andrews Labor government.

That is not the only thing we have brought forward. I was also pleased to speak on portability of long service leave for vulnerable workers in the security industry and in the cleaning industry, and I mentioned my mother. I was also pleased that it was this government that introduced safe exclusion zones for women so they do not have to combat placards and the other things when they go, at the most vulnerable moment in their lives, to get an abortion. I was also proud of, and privileged to be a member of, this government that introduced voluntary assisted dying legislation. I was

also proud of, and privileged to be a part of, this government when it introduced a safe injecting room in Richmond, despite the absolutely disgraceful narrative run by the other side. I was proud and felt privileged to witness the Premier, the leader of the Labor Party, at the state conference of the Labor Party talk about criminalising wage theft after the next election should we be elected. This is all the same ethos that governs and drives our party and beats in our hearts — addressing vulnerability, helping people have a leg-up and making a more democratic and equitable society in Victoria. That is what Labor governments are about, that is what this government is about and this is what this bill is about.

**Ms GREEN** (Yan Yean) (18:55) — I take great pleasure in following on from the tremendous contribution by the member for Oakleigh to the debate on the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I want to start by mentioning, as others have mentioned, that this is an omnibus bill, but I want to begin with the Transport Accident Commission-related amendments applying to cyclists. I am a cyclist. I am a member of Bicycle Network, and I tell many people to join up, because Bicycle Network actually offers an insurance cover for its members. Many of its members could well be covered in future because this anomaly is being fixed.

I do want to refer to what I think was a really outstanding letter to the editor in the *Geelong Advertiser* of 11 June headed ‘TAC, ministers deserve credit for Rory’s law’. It is by John Bannister, John Burt, Keith Fagg, Barton van Laar. They are in support of the change to the law because of Rory and wrote:

As trustees of the Rory Wilson Future Fund, we would like to publicly thank the key people who made this happen, including TAC head Joe Calafiore, who had no hesitation in meeting us in the early days and highlighted the inconsistency of the law TAC had to work within.

... Lisa Neville also responded and helped us immediately, including arranging a meeting with ... Luke Donnellan. In government, they have stayed true to their commitment to review the law.

Governments often get criticised, but they have the power to make historic changes ... for all Victorians.

That’s what has happened in this case.

In my private downtime I actually volunteer as a disability winter sports guide on the snowfields and often assist people that have been injured in transport accidents — both cycling and vehicle — and others who have either acquired injuries or been born with a disability. In talking to those people in our downtime on the ski lifts and in between taking rides on those

magnificent slopes, particularly at Mount Hotham, I have really got to understand some of the great challenges that people with disability and people under the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and other systems deal with. Not only are we dealing with this anomaly around cyclists but I was really pleased that this bill recognises overseas attendant care, for example.

Some of the people that I have supported in my volunteer role have indeed had very good jobs in investment banking or in stockbroking. Most people do not think of people with disability having that sort of work, but we should do all we can to recognise the dignity of these people — whether they have an acquired disability or a congenital disability — wanting to work. Part of this bill says that if a TAC client regularly requires attendant care services within Australia, the TAC can pay the reasonable costs of these services for eight weeks in any year if these services are required by a TAC client when travelling overseas. The TAC currently has no discretion to pay for a period longer than this. Given you actually have people in the workforce in our now global economy, it seems absolutely fair to me that you would extend this discretion for the TAC.

**Business interrupted under sessional orders.**

## ADJOURNMENT

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

### **Country Fire Authority Hoddles Creek station**

**Ms McLEISH** (Eildon) (19:00) — (14 911) I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Emergency Services. The action I seek is for the minister to make application to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety on behalf of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to transfer land beside the Hoddles Creek CFA station to allow for a new and expanded station to be built. As with so many CFA brigades, the volunteers at Hoddles Creek take their role seriously and put in many hours training and working hard to protect our community. They want the best for their members and for their community. The Hoddles Creek CFA station is ideally located, being on a corner at the junction of Lusatia Park and Gembrook-Launching Place roads. The space is somewhat awkward. However, this does allow very easy access for the vehicles to head north, south or west.

The station itself is one of the oldest in the Yarra Valley and is no longer meeting the needs of the modern brigade. As vehicles increase in size the space available decreases, which impacts on functionality and

practicality. The brigade has already outgrown its current station and has to store equipment offsite, and at some point a new station will need to be built on that site. Because it is well located the brigade are very keen, and I think the CFA are very keen, to keep the station at that site, but there are a couple of impediments which I am seeking action on. There is a large section of land beside the station which is controlled by VicRoads but does not get used anymore. The brigade have already got some access to VicRoads land behind the station where they park their cars, but access is needed beside the station so that this station can be rebuilt. Regardless of when a new station is built, the issue of available land needs to be resolved, and there is no reason this process cannot begin now.

I have visited the brigade at Hoddles Creek on a number of occasions and certainly understand their needs. Once this land does become available and if it can be transferred from VicRoads to the CFA, significant excavation and landscaping work will be required. It is very clear that for a modern station to be built access to this piece of VicRoads land must be given, and ideally, as I said, the land should be transferred to the CFA. I request that the minister take action to ensure that VicRoads works proactively and constructively with the CFA so that the Hoddles Creek CFA station can be expanded in the future. I think the Minister for Emergency Services is perfectly situated to be able to drive that process to make it happen. That is the action I seek.

### **Thompsons Road duplication**

**Ms KILKENNY** (Carrum) (19:03) — (14 912) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is for the minister to provide an update on the duplication of Thompsons Road from Frankston-Dandenong Road in Carrum Downs to Evans Road in Cranbourne. Work is really ramping up. There is such a buzz of activity in the area all along the corridor but particularly at the intersection of McCormicks Road and Thompsons Road, and there is certainly growing excitement among many of my constituents.

The Andrews Labor government committed to duplicating Thompsons Road all the way from EastLink through to Berwick-Cranbourne Road, and we have not wasted a moment. The level crossing at Merinda Park station was removed in June this year, marking level crossing number 25 to go as part of this government's program to remove 50 level crossings across Melbourne. Of course a further commitment to remove the notoriously dangerous roundabout at Frankston-Dandenong Road was announced as part of

this year's budget. I know my constituents are very keen for the minister's update on the Thompsons Road duplication.

### **Western Victoria public transport**

**Ms KEALY** (Lowan) (19:03) — (14 913) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport. I ask that the minister match The Nationals commitment to undertake a business case and costings to return passenger rail to Horsham and Hamilton, to extend funding for the Overland service so that the only passenger rail service to western Victoria can continue, to fund a coach service between Hamilton and Horsham, and to improve coach services to Halls Gap and the wider Grampians to support the important tourism industry in our part of the state.

The Overland service is an important rail service that connects Adelaide and Melbourne, and it stops off throughout western Victoria through the Wimmera, Horsham and Ararat and extending through the Ripon electorate as well. For our part of the state it is the only passenger rail service that we have, so it is bitterly disappointing to hear that Labor has actually shelved funding for this important rail service from January of next year. We have heard stories of where passengers are trying to book a ticket after January but they are unable to do so. We did have a bit of a fight at the start of this parliamentary term where this was again another issue where the funding looked like it was going to dry up and not be committed to in the future. I would hate to think that we lost our only passenger rail service to the west simply because we did not have that funding commitment from the Labor government.

We also have other important things. We want to make sure that we can extend our rail services in western Victoria rather than see them grind to a halt and reduce, which is what we are seeing at the moment under the Andrews Labor government. We have actually undertaken to do a business case and costings to look at returning passenger rail to Horsham and Hamilton —

**Ms Thomas** interjected.

**Ms KEALY** — I am getting interjections here from the member for Macedon, who understands that V/Line is actually extending. Maybe she needs to have a look in western Victoria and perhaps get back out into the country, because we do not have a rail service. We actually have an area of the track where now concrete sleepers have been put down which will force us to have a standardised line ongoing and have this dual-gauge issue of standard gauge going to broad gauge from Ararat to Ballarat, which prevents us going

forward. Rather than actually moving ahead on bringing back passenger rail to the region, we are seeing under Labor that we are getting stuck under the same dual-gauge issue that we have got, and we need to undo it.

We need to understand how much this will cost and how we will deliver it to make sure we can deliver the best possible times to connect our people to Ballarat and Melbourne. Also, how can we bring people out of the city? How can we get them to come back to work in our region, to play footy on the weekends, to enjoy those community connections — for education, for networking with their friends and family — and to go to medical appointments? That is very, very important. So I ask the minister to match our Nationals funding commitment to improve passenger rail and public transport services to the west.

### **Yuroke Youth Advisory Council**

**Ms SPENCE** (Yuroke) (19:07) — (14 914) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Industry and Employment, and the action I seek is for the minister to join me in meeting with members of the Yuroke Youth Advisory Council so they can let him know about their work throughout 2018. As the minister knows, the Yuroke Youth Advisory Council members chose to focus on the topic of youth employment this year, meeting with a number of experts and facilitating a forum to help young people get the knowledge they need to get a job or pursue higher education. I am sure the members of the youth advisory council would greatly appreciate meeting with the minister to share with him the great work they have done over this year.

### **Mitcham Road, Mitcham**

**Ms RYALL** (Ringwood) (19:07) — (14 915) My adjournment request is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is for the resurfacing of Mitcham Road between Whitehorse Road and Springfield Road to address the state of disrepair of the road. Residents have raised concerns that the road is well overdue for an upgrade. There are potholes and uneven surfaces, and many people are actually concerned that ultimately there will be an accident as a result of the state of the road. It is a very busy road. There is a shopping centre, two schools — a primary school and a secondary school — as well as kindergartens in the immediate vicinity.

In my previous adjournment matters I have raised issues in relation to Mitcham Road, in particular about this area of road and the safety of pedestrians in relation to the speed zones and so forth, and now in relation to

the road I raise the issue of the surface. I trust that the minister will make sure that this is rectified as soon as possible.

### **Parktone Primary School**

**Mr RICHARDSON** (Mordialloc) (19:08) — (14 916) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the minister to visit Parktone Primary School in my electorate and review the progress of the building works for their new school hall. It was two years ago that a community campaign got underway to finally deliver Parktone Primary School its school hall. Some 15 years ago the school was in all sorts of bother. They were down to 110 students, and the landowners adjoining the school were asked whether they were interested in purchasing the school site. The resurgence of the school is a testament to the school community, the Leader in Me program there and the work that they have done over the last few years to turn the school around. The school is now vibrant and bustling, and it has over 500 students.

Their community campaign struck a chord with me and the wider community. It was one of the most extraordinary campaigns and protests that I have ever had outside my office, with placards from foundation/prep students all the way through to grade 6, reading, 'It's Parktone's turn' and 'Let's build our school hall'. We counteracted them just to keep them calm and in control with about 100 Zooper Doopers. It was not quite enough, but it countered their enthusiasm. They did colouring competitions and wrote letters to the minister and me. I presented reams and reams of paper to the minister of colourings and letters that showed just how much this hall meant to the school community.

Parktone is now only a few months away from opening up their brand-new school hall. It is a credit to the Premier and the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Education, that they saw the vision and hope that Parktone had in our community, and they will hopefully join us in unveiling this wonderful new school facility. So in my adjournment matter this evening I ask the Minister for Education to join me in inspecting the progress made by this wonderful school community.

### **School maintenance**

**Ms THORPE** (Northcote) (19:10) — (14 917) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education. The action I am seeking is for the government to urgently provide funding for repairs and upgrades that are so desperately needed in schools across Victoria and my electorate of Northcote, including at Wales

Street Primary School, and to provide adequate school maintenance funding into the future.

There has been a backlog of school maintenance for many years over successive governments. In 2017 the Auditor-General's report entitled *Managing School Infrastructure* found that approximately \$143.4 million of the estimated \$420 million maintenance backlog identified in the 2011 department audit had still not been met. The report found that school maintenance continues to be underfunded and that many school buildings remain below industry standards. The Auditor-General recommended that the Department of Education and Training develop an investment strategy for the maintenance of government school assets over the entire life of the asset and that an annual maintenance investment of 2 per cent of the total asset value be set to preserve school buildings at a suitable standard. It is not acceptable to expect our public school students, teachers and other staff to learn and work in substandard facilities. Our government schools are valuable public assets that should not be allowed to deteriorate.

Wales Street Primary School in Thornbury is one of those schools with a maintenance backlog. Parents and the wider community are concerned about overcrowding at Wales Street as well as serious infrastructure issues. These include a regularly leaking roof in the historic grade 1-2 building causing significant disruption to classes due to the water damage and drying requirements; an inadequate school hall without any functioning toilets and so small that only half the school can meet in it; and decking that is severely weathered and worn, with protruding nails and screws. It has poor toilet facilities that are not compliant with the National Construction Code. Since the new cleaning contracts began on 1 July this year, the cleanliness of the school has been compromised severely. Wales Street Primary is already underfunded, receiving only 64 per cent of the schooling resource standard. This hardly suffices to operate the school and allows no maintenance works of this scale to take place.

This situation is unacceptable. Unfortunately it is not the only school in my electorate that is neglected. I have visited several schools, and again and again I am hearing the same issue arising. Our children deserve to learn and play in a safe and clean place, and our teachers to work in one. If this government is serious about its commitment to education, it must provide funding for repairs.

### Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School

**Ms THOMAS** (Macedon) (19:13) — (14 918) The matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, and the action I seek is that the minister join me to visit students and staff at the Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School's Bullengarook campus.

Back in 2016 both the minister and the Premier came to the Bullengarook campus to announce \$4 million for facilities upgrades at Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School. I will always remember that day. Tears of happiness flowed freely as parents, students and teachers realised that at last here was a government that really did care about students with special needs. Then again in this year's budget there was \$4.2 million for major facilities upgrades, including the construction of a new multipurpose room, an upgrade of the administration building and the completion of works already commenced to totally transform the teaching and learning environments at the Bullengarook campus, while a further \$10 million has been committed to the Sunbury campus. I might point out that the Andrews Labor government's investment in Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School is more than the former Liberal government's investment in all schools across my electorate in their entire four years.

Minister, when you visit the Bullengarook campus, it would be my honour to introduce you to students Samantha, Kyle, Shelby, Madison and the two Moniques, who organised this year's spectacular Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School's debutante ball, which the member for Sunbury and I had the honour of attending last week. We look forward to welcoming you to Bullengarook, Minister.

### Cowes Primary School

**Mr PAYNTER** (Bass) (19:15) — (14 919) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is that the minister fund a new multipurpose recreational facility at Cowes Primary School. Cowes Primary School has outgrown its existing gymnasium, and it no longer fulfils the basic requirements for the school. Community and sporting groups require additional indoor multipurpose space to allow these parties to continue to provide a meaningful service to their members. It is the intention of Cowes Primary School that if a new multipurpose recreational facility is built within the school grounds, it will also be available to community groups outside of school hours on a not-for-profit basis.

Cowes Primary School enrolment has increased by more than 80 students over the past five years, and its current enrolment is 585 students. Housing estates within the school zone include White Sands, Shoalhaven, Shearwater, Seagrove and Blue Gum, which are either nearing completion or are complete and encompass over 1000 housing lots. The early learning centre currently provides services for 213 children, with a long day care waiting list of 72.

There are basic needs required by Cowes Primary School. Weekly school assembly in the current facility does not support a positive parent-school interaction. There is no space for parents to attend and participate in the assembly. Full court sports cannot be conducted within the existing gym, the curriculum is impacted due to the limited space available and school functions must be hosted offsite.

The Phillip Island community is also suffering. Phillip Island community sporting groups are greatly hindered due to the lack of specialised facilities available to allow a variety of indoor sports participation on a regular basis. The YMCA single court is required to act as a multipurpose sporting venue, with insufficient space and facilities. The YMCA single court is fully booked between 4.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. on weekdays and during all open hours over the weekend. The Phillip Island and District Basketball Association, the Phillip Island Netball Club, the Phillip Island Soccer Club and numerous other clubs such as scouts, dance, drama, gymnastics and martial arts, the Bass Coast Ballet School and many other sporting groups are hindered by the lack of facilities on the island.

If a multipurpose facility is provided to Cowes Primary School, the direct and immediate needs of Cowes Primary School will be resolved. The sporting and community groups will have access to a brand-new multipurpose, dedicated facility, and the overall community will have significant positive benefits. This facility needs to be funded without delay.

### Coatesville Primary School

**Mr STAIKOS** (Bentleigh) (19:18) — (14 920)  
My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Education and concerns Coatesville Primary School. The action that I seek from the minister is that he provide the funding required to upgrade the school oval.

One of the many pleasures of being a local member is working and engaging with the schools in your electorate. I am proud that since becoming the member for Bentleigh four years ago I have secured a total of

around \$60 million for upgrades to schools in the Bentleigh electorate. That is five times the amount of the former Liberal government in four years.

**Mr Wynne** — \$60 million.

**Mr STAIKOS** — Yes, \$60 million, Minister for Planning. This year, of course, we are turning our attention to what a re-elected Andrews Labor government will do for schools across the state, and we have already said that we will build a second campus for McKinnon Secondary College. Recently we announced that a re-elected Labor government will fund a \$4.5 million upgrade of Tucker Road Primary School, having just completed a \$3 million gymnasium at that school. These are all projects that are desperately needed.

It was with some interest that I saw last week that the Liberal candidate for Bentleigh had announced \$50 000 to fix the school oval at Coatesville Primary School. I found that very interesting, because having been in discussions with the principal of Coatesville Primary School for some time about the school oval, it is clear that it will actually take several times that amount to fix the school oval. The \$50 000 would not even fund a patch-up job. It just goes to show how out of touch they are when it comes to public schools in this state.

My adjournment request for the minister is that he properly fund a school oval upgrade at Coatesville Primary School — one that will benefit not just the students of Coatesville but also the local cricket club. I certainly ask that that funding is delivered to Coatesville Primary School as soon as possible.

### Responses

**Mr WYNNE** (Minister for Planning) (19:20) —  
The member for Eildon raised a matter for the Minister for Emergency Services relating to a transfer of land from VicRoads to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) for the Hoddles Creek CFA station, and I will make sure the minister is aware of that.

The member for Carrum raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety in relation to the duplication of Thompsons Road between EastLink and Berwick-Cranbourne Road, and I will make sure the minister is aware of that request as well.

The member for Lowan raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport relating to passenger rail services between Hamilton and Horsham and associated bus linkages as well.

The member for Yuroke raised a matter for the Minister for Industry and Employment seeking that he have a meeting with the Yuroke Youth Advisory Council, which has had a specific emphasis on better employment outcomes for youth in the area, and I will make sure the minister is aware of that.

The member for Ringwood raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety seeking an upgrade of Mitcham Road and the resurfacing of it, and I will make sure the Minister for Roads and Road Safety is aware of that.

The member for Mordialloc raised a matter for the Minister for Education in relation to Parktone Primary School and the need for further support for that excellent school community at Parktone.

The member for Northcote raised a matter for the Minister for Education seeking advocacy on behalf of Wales Street Primary School pertaining to an upgrade and for increased maintenance of schools in her area, and I will make sure that the minister is aware of that request.

The member for Macedon raised a matter for the Minister for Education seeking that he visit Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School, which the government has made a really wonderful commitment to —

**Ms Thomas** — It is \$19 million in total.

**Mr WYNNE** — It is \$19 million in total. I am sure it will be a wonderful visit and something memorable for you, member for Macedon, and the minister.

The member for Bass raised a matter for the Minister for Education in relation to advocacy on behalf of Cowes Primary School and seeking support for a much-needed multipurpose facility, as he put the case before the Parliament tonight, and I will make sure the minister is aware of that.

The member for Bentleigh raised a matter for the Minister for Education asking him to visit and fund the upgrade to the school oval at Coatesville Primary School, and I am sure the minister will be delighted to join the member for Bentleigh on a school visit there.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The house now stands adjourned until tomorrow.

**House adjourned 7.24 p.m.**