

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

Tuesday, 5 June 2018

(Extract from book 7)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER (to 25 February 2017)

Deputy Speaker

Ms J. MAREE EDWARDS (from 7 March 2017)

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

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Ms Kilkenny, Ms Knight, Mr McGuire, Mr Pearson, Mr Richardson, Ms Spence, Ms Suleyman,
Ms Thomson, Ms Ward and Ms Williams.

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The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. M. J. GUY

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

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals

Ms S. RYAN

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent ³	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio ⁴	Melton	Ind
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Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
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McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

¹ Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ ALP until 7 March 2017

⁵ Nats until 28 August 2017

⁶ Elected 14 March 2015

⁷ Died 23 August 2017

⁸ Elected 31 October 2015

⁹ Resigned 2 February 2015

¹⁰ Elected 18 November 2017

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

Legislative Assembly committees

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

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

Legislative Assembly select committees

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

Joint committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Tuesday, 5 June 2018

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The SPEAKER (12:03) — We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to them, their culture, their elders past, present and future, and elders from other communities who may be here today.

CONDOLENCES

David Lewis Treasure

The SPEAKER (12:03) — I wish to advise the house of the death of David Lewis Treasure, member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Gippsland East from 1992 to 1999.

I ask members to rise in their places as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

Honourable members stood in their places.

The SPEAKER — I will send a message of sympathy from the house to the relatives of the late Mr Treasure.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Metropolitan Fire Brigade enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (12:05) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, your government's Victorian equal opportunity and human rights commissioner Kristen Hilton has said that the new Metropolitan Fire Brigade pay deal is discriminatory and unfair to women and parents, and she has sought and been granted leave to put these concerns to the Fair Work Commission. Premier, why do you continue to support an unfair enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) that actively stops women from returning part-time as operational firefighters after maternity leave?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:05) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, and I would simply make the following point: that the certification of all EBAs is a matter for the Fair Work Commission, and it is the position of the government that the Fair Work Commission ought to be able to get on and go through the process that they undertake with every

single enterprise bargain agreed to by this government or others on its behalf. This is no different. There is a process to be gone through, and it ought to be allowed to —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, this was not a question about the Fair Work Commission process or what the Fair Work Commission may decide. It was a question about why the Premier supports the putting forward of the EBA to the Fair Work Commission, and I ask you to bring him back to answering that question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The Premier was being responsive to the question as it was asked.

Mr ANDREWS — It certainly is a matter for Fair Work — it is before them right now. The government's position is clear, and Fair Work ought to be allowed to get on and do their job under the legislation, under the well-established practices. Their job is to do the certification, and we should allow them to get on with it.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, I did not ask about process, I asked about the Premier's support for an EBA that his own equal opportunity commissioner says is discriminatory. I ask you to bring him back to answering the question. It is not about the EBA process, it is not about the Fair Work process; rather, it is about his support for an EBA that his own commissioner opposes.

The SPEAKER — Order! I understand the point of order but the Premier was complying with standing orders and sessional orders. The Premier has concluded his answer.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (12:07) — The equal opportunity commissioner, Kristen Hilton, is on record as saying the proposed EBA 'needs to change' because it entrenches discrimination. In the introduction to your government's gender equality strategy you say that if Victoria is 'serious about ending violence against women, then we must begin by addressing gender inequality' and discrimination. Premier, why have you walked away from your own words that equality is not negotiable in order to support a blatantly discriminatory EBA?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:08) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition and I reject the assertion at the end of his question. The government has done no such thing. He would do well to acquaint himself with the national employment standards that apply to every

single enterprise bargain. Not one, not the other — every single EBA that provides the opportunity for the request for flexible working arrangements. This is perhaps why it is not for the Leader of the Opposition to certify the agreement; perhaps it is for Fair Work Australia.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, again on relevance, I did not ask about the certification of the EBA, I asked about the Premier's support of it and why the Premier is supporting an EBA indeed that goes against what his equal opportunity commissioner is stating, to the extent that she now wants to appear before Fair Work, and why he has walked away from his own words that equality is not negotiable.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I understand the point of order but again the Premier is being responsive.

Mr ANDREWS — I have done no such thing, and the Leader of the Opposition perhaps should have a better understanding of how industrial relations works before he starts throwing around allegations. There are national employment standards; there is also a Fair Work process. It is not for the Leader of the Opposition, with respect, to be certifying these agreements, nor is it for me to do that. That is the job of Fair Work Australia, and we will let them get on and do it.

Ministers statements: Prahran High School

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:10) — I was delighted this morning to join the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education to inspect progress on the new Prahran High School — a fantastic addition to our education —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — And what a fantastic building it is. It is one of 70 new schools we are building. It is one of 1200 school upgrade projects that we are funding.

It was a great opportunity to thank Kane Constructions and to thank all the workers there doing that work and the architects and to see progress on what is going to be a fantastic addition to our education system in this, the Education State. It is five storeys high, a vertical school of course, a challenging environment, a small footprint. But we have had to go back and put into these inner-city communities in a number of places vertical schools at a considerable expense to the taxpayer because of course there was another government from a few years ago that closed many, many schools and then sold the land off. But no matter, we are getting on and

delivering Prahran High School. We are delivering South Melbourne Primary School and Richmond High School as well.

In terms of Prahran High School, there will be 650 students there, the best of new facilities to give every child every chance, delivered by a Labor government that invests in schools, invests in facilities and equipment, teachers and staff — not just the words from those opposite, the failed former Treasurer over there. We do not see these investments as a distraction. We see them as core business — core business of a Labor government that delivers for all Victorians.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I warn the member for Warrandyte.

An honourable member interjected.

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

High-capacity metro trains

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:12) — My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. Changchun Railway Vehicles are the provider of trains for the Tehran and Pyongyang metros and are constructing Melbourne's new high-performance trains. Changchun Railway Vehicles have a history of design and quality compliance issues, such as poor-quality welding, milky windscreens, gaps in plastic moulding and unreliable software when they built Sydney's Waratah trains. Minister, do Melbourne's new imported trains meet Victoria's quality specifications and are they free of design faults and compliance issues?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (12:13) — I thank the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party for bringing up an issue that was canvassed widely at a Public Accounts and Estimates (PAEC) hearing in 2017, where these issues were extensively addressed. At that PAEC hearing in 2017 —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Footscray!

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Footscray and the member for Hastings are warned.

Ms ALLAN — At that meeting in May 2017 — a full 12 months ago — I made it very clear to the

Deputy Leader of the Opposition's colleagues who were going down this line of questioning that we are very proud of our investment in rolling stock and indeed we are very proud to breathe new life into a rolling stock industry that was destined for a different era under those opposite, who instead wanted to —

The SPEAKER — The Leader of the Opposition, on a point of order.

Ms Neville interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Police!

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question was: do these trains meet quality specifications and are they free of design faults? That is the question asked to the minister. It is a relevant question for 2018, and I ask you to bring her back to answering just that.

The SPEAKER — The minister to come back to answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — We are absolutely delighted. Along with making an investment in our regional rolling stock of 87 new trains, alongside buying new X'trapolis trains that are manufactured in Ballarat, we are bringing brand-new, high —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Ms ALLAN — We are bringing brand-new, high-capacity metropolitan trains to our network to travel on what will become the new Dandenong to Sunbury corridor.

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Speaker, I renew the Leader of the Opposition's point of order. The question specifically asked the minister about the quality specifications and whether these imported trains are free of design faults and compliance issues. I ask you to bring the minister back to answering that question.

The SPEAKER — I ask the minister to come back to answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — I am going through some of this because there are parts of the member's question that are not correct. These trains are not imported. We are very proud that as a result —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Ms ALLAN — As a result of our very strong local content policy requirements, 60 per cent of these trains are being manufactured here in Victoria. That means that the bogies of these trains are being made in Bendigo. There are parts that are being made in Geelong, in Morwell. And of course there is the depot at Newport, where new life is being breathed into that depot and over 1000 jobs have been created as a result of this contract. Do these trains meet our specifications of our Victorian network? Of course they do, because we went through a rigorous process. As part of the work to commission these trains there will need to be extensive testing —

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance again, the minister was asked: are they free of design faults and compliance issues? The minister has not addressed this once in her answer. Maybe she might want to address that answer — or does she want to go to Changchun Victoria to find out?

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The minister was directly answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — The xenophobic approach of those opposite is absolutely outrageous. We are very proud —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The level of interjections is excessive. Members will be removed from the chamber without warning. I ask members not to shout across the chamber, and I ask the minister not to invite interjections from those opposite.

Ms ALLAN — These trains will go through an extensive testing process. I appreciate that those opposite, who did not commission a new train, do not understand how these processes work. These trains will go through an extensive commissioning process, and we look forward to them running on our network in 2019.

Supplementary question

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:18) — In 2016 the Singapore metro returned 26 Changchun railway vehicles for repair due to the cracking in the railcar bodies just three years from construction. Minister, isn't it a fact that issues such as poor welding and fatigue, non-compliant wheel gauges and potentially flammable flooring have already been identified with your new trains even before they arrived in Victoria?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (12:18) — As those of us on this side of the house have learned on many occasions, you cannot trust a word

that those opposite say. What I can tell the member opposite —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (12:19) — Order! The member for Ripon will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Ripon withdrew from chamber.

Ms ALLAN — is that these trains are being manufactured with 60 per cent local content, and the attacks he is making are on those Victorian workers in Bendigo, in Geelong, in Morwell and in Newport, who are proud to be manufacturing these new trains for our network.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the minister was asked about the trains arriving from overseas with poor welding, fatigue and non-compliant wheel gauges. Is the minister now thinking that Changchun is in Victoria and Bendigo overseas? She has got her geography completely wrong. We are asking about imported trains that have arrived with faults, and the minister is now verballing the opposition by saying that we have asked something completely different.

The SPEAKER — I ask the minister to come back to answering the question that was asked.

Ms ALLAN — The member is wrong when he talks about these trains being imported. As part of the arrangements that we have struck with —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — The shell.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Ms ALLAN — A train without wheels, bogie, frames, windows or seats is not a train; it is a shell. We will be manufacturing the rest here in Victoria.

Ministers statements: education funding

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) (12:21) — I rise to update the house on the Andrews government's support for apprentices. We are announcing the rollout of the Head Start apprenticeships and traineeships initiative, where students will be able to leave after year 13 with a Victorian certificate of education or Victorian certificate of applied learning certificate in one hand and a trade certificate in the other —

qualified, skilled and ready for work. Last week I was joined by the member for Geelong to announce that students at Geelong High School, students at Surf Coast Secondary College and students at schools right across the Geelong region will have this new opportunity from 2019. Head Start will provide apprenticeships targeted at priority industries and traditional trades such as construction and carpentry and health care.

It is not just through our schools that we are supporting our apprentices. Last week I also joined the Minister for Training and Skills, Gayle Tierney, and the member for Clarinda at Chisholm Institute of TAFE, where students have been given a rare hands-on opportunity to restore an original heritage-listed railway shelter dating back to 1891 as part of our level crossing removal program. That shelter will be delivered to the brand-new Clayton station. One of the important jobs for the TAFE students restoring this grand old building is getting rid of the deadwood. It is important to get rid of deadwood. There are those that have now taken control of the Liberal Party that understand the importance of getting rid of deadwood.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is continuing a pattern that we saw in previous weeks of commencing to debate —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Mr Clark — Speaker, as we saw last sitting week, the minister is commencing to debate issues. I ask you to bring him back to compliance with sessional orders.

The SPEAKER — The minister had just departed from making a ministers statement. I ask him to come back.

Mr MERLINO — Coming back to the TAFE students and the heritage building, particularly important in this project is getting rid of the rotten element in the large post that no longer provides support and stability. You have got to get rid of that. You have got to cut them out and you have got to throw them away before they do any further damage — a bit like the member for Rowville, a bit like Bernie Finn, a bit like Bruce Atkinson in the other place —

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Kew!

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister has been defying your ruling. I ask you to assert your authority and warn him and other ministers to treat the Chair and the house with respect.

The SPEAKER — I uphold the point of order. The minister has concluded his statement.

High-capacity metro trains

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:24) — My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. With Changchun Railway Vehicles delivering trains, not shells, to Victoria that already have numerous safety faults identified, such as potentially flammable flooring and poor welding, Minister, was the government aware of any of these faults when it signed off the factory acceptance of these trains before they left the factory in China?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (12:24) — I thank the member for his question and the opportunity to clarify the factual inaccuracies that were contained within that question. The member describes the —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Ferntree Gully!

Ms ALLAN — The member has inaccurately described what has arrived in Victoria. They are shells.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (12:25) — Order! The member for Warrandyte will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Mr R. Smith interjected.

The SPEAKER — The member for Warrandyte will leave the chamber without comment.

Honourable member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

Ms ALLAN — I appreciate for those opposite the complexities of procuring a new train are beyond them, because they failed to do it during their time in office. The arrangements that we have struck under a rolling stock order of high-capacity metro trains that contain 60 per cent local content —

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question was very clear. It said: ‘Was the

government aware of any of these faults before they were signed off, before they left China for Victoria?’. The question was clear to the minister. Was the government aware of these faults before they departed the overseas factory to come to Victoria?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister was addressing the first part of the question, but I do ask the minister to come to answering the substantive part of the question.

Ms ALLAN — In answering that part of the question it is important to clarify exactly what the arrangements are in Victoria. As part of the arrangements where we are procuring high-capacity metro trains, which will contain 60 per cent local content manufactured here in Newport, in Bendigo, in Morwell, in Geelong and in the south-eastern suburbs around Dandenong, promoting jobs right across Victoria, what has arrived —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Mr Guy — On a point of order again, on relevance, Speaker, it has been another 30 seconds since you asked the minister to come back to answering the question. The question was: was the government aware of any of these faults before these trains left the factory from overseas? It is as simple as that.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the Deputy Premier to come to order. I ask the Minister for Public Transport to come to answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — Speaker, in answering the member’s question it is important to point out the factual inaccuracies that are riddled through his line of questioning, and therefore it makes it very challenging to answer the second part of his question given his question contained so many inaccuracies.

Under the contractual arrangements that have been struck with the consortium that is manufacturing these trains — with over 60 per cent local content, trains manufactured in Bendigo and componentry that is made in Bendigo, in Dandenong, in Geelong and in Morwell, the arrangements that have been struck require —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Speaker, again, for the third time, with a minute to go, can you please

get the minister to come back to answering the question? Was the government aware of any of these faults when it signed off the factory acceptance of these trains — or shells, whatever the minister wants to call them — was she aware of the faults when they left the factory in China?

The SPEAKER — I uphold the point of order.

Ms McLeish interjected.

The SPEAKER (12:28) — The member for Eildon will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Eildon withdrew from chamber.

The SPEAKER — Order! Members interjecting make it very hard for me to hear the minister's answer. I ask people to stop shouting across the chamber. The minister to come back to answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — It is pleasing to note that the member was listening and is now accurately describing the situation before us.

Speaker, as I was part way through answering, under the contractual arrangements that have been struck with the consortium that is manufacturing these trains — led by Downer down at the Newport Railway Workshops — the arrangements that have been struck are that there will be no payments and no arrangements entered into unless the trains are right to run on our network. Part of commissioning a new train for a network requires extensive testing and commissioning, and that is part of the process of making a brand-new train for our metropolitan network, something those opposite failed to do.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, again the minister is departing from answering the question. This was not a question about testing before final delivery in Victoria. It was about whether or not the government was aware of flaws prior to these objects, whatever they are called, leaving China, and I ask you to bring her back to answering that question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I understand the member's point of order but the minister has now come to answering the question. The minister to continue. The minister has concluded her answer.

Supplementary question

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:29) — Minister, given your government did know of the faults surrounding these trains, why was approval given to

ship them from China before these faults were rectified?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (12:30) — Again, given the member has provided absolutely no evidence to back up his claims —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Ms ALLAN — Given that when similar claims were made at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing 12 months ago, they were also found out to be wrong, it is very difficult to answer the member's question, because we know that those opposite are very fond of making things up to try and make a political point.

Ministers statements: manufacturing sector

Mr CARROLL (Minister for Industry and Employment) (12:31) — I rise to update the house on the strength of our manufacturing sector. Last Monday I had the great pleasure to attend the Victorian Manufacturing Hall of Fame awards. I was joined by some of Parliament's strongest supporters of the manufacturing industry. The member for Wendouree was there, as were the member for Dandenong and the member for Buninyong, enjoying a great night, as was the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party.

Our manufacturing sector is going from strength to strength under the Andrews Labor government. Indeed, the Australian Industry Group's performance of manufacturing index confirms that for the first time since 2001 we have had 16 consecutive months of growth in manufacturing. Our growth in manufacturing is underpinned by the Andrews government's \$120 million investment in manufacturing on the back of the auto closures, creating over 6000 jobs and including \$1.6 billion in private investment.

A highlight of the night was recognising trailblazing women in the manufacturing sector. One, two, three — three women were highlighted on this night. Can I congratulate Vanessa Kearney from Viva Energy, Jill Walsh from Actco-Pickering and can I also congratulate Vanessa Katsanevakis, who got the Young Manufacturer of the Year Award.

It is a lot easier to get to the top of manufacturing in this state than it is to get to the top of the Liberal Party if you are a woman. We all know about the success if you have got your first name as David, but if you are a woman, get your pathway and get into manufacturing, because that is the way you will go. We know about the

A-grade side here and we know about the B-graders and then on the weekend it was great to learn about the deadwood happening on the other side, the deadwood that is on the chopping block.

Another great success in our hall of fame awards was our investments in TAFE. So can I encourage anyone if they are worried — or if they consider themselves deadwood — to get into one of the free certificates in construction, because that way you might just guarantee when Marcus comes after you that you are not part of the deadwood that he has got earmarked.

Energy supply

Ms THORPE (Northcote) (12:33) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, two weeks ago your government opened up coastline on Gunditjmarra country to gas drilling, including drilling from onshore. On Friday your government extended the licences for two brown coal power stations on Gunnai/Kurnai country, meaning Yallourn and Loy Yang can keep polluting for decades to come. Premier, why are you putting our children's future at risk by allowing the burning of more fossil fuels, which lead to climate change and continued destruction of country?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:34) — I thank the member for Northcote for her question. The simple answer to her question is of course I am not doing anything of the sort. What we have done is to enter into arrangements — and at the conclusion of my answer if the Minister for Resources can in writing add to my answer I am sure he will be only too happy to do that — with our power stations and the companies that own them to both guarantee some certainty and security for rehabilitation and clean-up. Well, the member for Northcote can shake her head, but that is the fact of the matter.

There is no extension in relation to electricity generation and the mining that underpins it. That is a fact. Inconvenient as it may be for some, that is the fact. What is more, we have also insisted — and I make no apology at all for insisting — through the work that the Minister for Resources has done, that companies give every Victorian due notice if they intend to cease their generation activity. The Victorian community, businesses —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — The opposition seem unsupportive of proper notice being given by companies. They are always on the side of the big corporation, aren't they? They are always on the side of

the big corporation. I am not surprised that they are unhappy that big companies would need to provide notice if they were to substantially change their generation activity. So they are the facts of what has been done here.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Malvern!

Mr ANDREWS — The member for Northcote may not be as loud as the member for Malvern, but she is as wrong as the member for Malvern.

Supplementary question

Ms THORPE (Northcote) (12:35) — As well as opening up half our coastline for gas drilling, the Labor government have not told Victorian communities whether they will allow onshore gas drilling when the moratorium expires in less than two years. Will the government make the moratorium on onshore gas drilling permanent, or can Victorians expect to see their country, farmland and environment opened up for conventional gas drilling if Labor is re-elected in November?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (12:36) — Thank you very much, Speaker. The —

Mr Southwick interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — As tempting as it is to take advice from the member for Caulfield on energy policy, I shall resist doing that. If I need your help, I will come and ask for it. I will come and ask for it, Professor, if I need it. I hope I never need that.

The member for Northcote asked about the moratorium put in place by this Labor government. Future policy settings will be determined by science and proper consultation with communities. That is why — for the information of the member for Northcote — the lead scientist is driving that process with a group of others representing stakeholders from business, the environment and local communities. In terms of offshore drilling, the member perhaps needs to remember that we have had offshore drilling in our state for a very long time, and I reject the assumption that anything has been done to change any of the policy settings this government has put in place.

Ministers statements: level crossings

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (12:37) — I am pleased to rise to update the house on

more works to remove dangerous and congested level crossings here in Victoria. The nine level crossings between Dandenong and the city are not only the most congested in Victoria, they are the most congested in Australia. As we know, five of these nine remaining level crossings are gone, and later this month all of these nine level crossings will be removed. What we saw last week were the very last trains to ever pass through these level crossings. This part of the line is currently closed and will reopen later this month with not one single level crossing between Dandenong and the city.

The member for Oakleigh has been doing some research, and he has estimated that since 1879, 6 278 000 trains have passed through the level crossings in his electorate. Give or take a couple, we will have to assume he is right, but we do know that the member for Oakleigh is absolutely right when he says no-one in his electorate will get stuck at these level crossings ever again.

This project is extremely complex. Constructing the elevated corridor while trains were still running is an absolute credit to the workforce, as it has dramatically reduced the amount of time we have needed to shut the line. For an example, an alternative approach that was being proposed by some that involved a trench-based solution would have seen sections of this line needing to be shut down for nine months, causing massive disruption on the busiest rail line in Australia.

As we know, the hundreds of thousands of Victorians who travel through these roads freely will remember two things: that it was the Premier and Labor who got rid of them and that it was the Leader of the Opposition and the deadwood of those opposite who fought to have them stay. That is why we have worked so hard to get rid of them. The deadwood opposite would have seen these relics of the past stay as part of our level crossing network.

Murray Basin rail project

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:39) — My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. Earlier this year, Minister, you went to western Victoria and boasted that stage 3 of the \$440 million Murray Basin rail project, the upgrade to the Sea Lake and Manangatang lines, would be completed between March and August of this year. Minister, it is now June 2018. When is this stage of the Murray Basin rail project actually going to start?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (12:40) — I appreciate the members continuing the line

of questioning that they undertook last week at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing, where this issue was also —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — Well, it actually did, and they are repeating again the same questions that were —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — They are excitable. I will repeat to the Leader of the National Party what I said to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee last week, because clearly it has not been appropriately transmitted by his colleagues at the hearing. As I made clear last week, there is some work that is being undertaken as part of the Murray Basin rail freight project, because since this project was first commenced — and of course this was a project that we needed to get fully funded by the federal government; we needed to finalise the work to get it fully funded — what we have had to do also —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, the question was very clear to the minister: when is stage 3 of the project actually going to start? My recollection of PAEC last week is that she did not actually answer that question then, and I would ask you to actually ask her to answer that question now, please.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister to come to answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — As I was explaining to the Leader of the National Party, what has also occurred over the last few years is that we are also making additional investments in the regional rail network, particularly on the Ballarat line and around the communities of areas like Ararat and Maryborough, where we are making significant improvements. As a result of that, we need to go and look at how the project on the Ballarat line intersects with the Murray Basin rail upgrade. We have also been talking extensively to industry groups —

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, can I reinstate my previous point of order and ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question: when is this project actually going to start? That is what industry want to know. They do not want to know all the excuses; they actually want a straight answer from the minister as to when this project is going to start.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is addressing the question. The minister to come to answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — I am, because we have been engaging in extensive consultation with industry, and as part of that they have been encouraging us to look at how the staging of the remaining parts of the project needs to be undertaken so that we ensure that their pipe, if you like — their access to their export markets through the ports — is maintained through their peak production periods. I thought this would have been something that the Leader of the National Party would have understood. We have been talking to the industry as part of that, and one of the groups we have been talking to of course is the Victorian Farmers Federation. Recently — indeed just yesterday — on ABC radio the grains group president, Brett Hosking, said:

But you know what, if it means getting the project done right, that is the first priority ...

And he said he was confident that the project would be finished. So to answer the question —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister has the call.

Ms ALLAN — So as I said to the hearing last week, for the remaining parts of the project, we are finalising the timing of the delivery of that in consultation with industry, because the most important thing is ensuring their access to their important export market continues.

Supplementary question

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:44) — Minister, businesses like Pentarch, Qube and Pickering Transport have all made multimillion-dollar investments based on your promise that you would upgrade the Sea Lake and Manangatang lines by August this year. They were notified at a meeting with V/Line on Tuesday of last week that this upgrade will now be put on hold indefinitely.

Ms Allan interjected.

Mr WALSH — It is right.

The SPEAKER — Order! Through the Chair.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the Premier to cease interjecting across the table.

Mr WALSH — Minister, you have done over the taxi licensees. You have done over the bus proprietors. Will you now compensate these businesses for your latest botched project?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (12:45) — This question from the National Party that closed country rail lines, this question from the National Party that privatised our freight industry — this is the hypocrisy of those opposite. When previously in government the National Party flogged off our rail freight network. They ran that network down, and it took a Labor government to bring it back.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, sessional order 9 requires that answers be direct, factual, succinct and relevant. This was a very specific question about providing compensation to the businesses who have suffered due to the minister's failure to deliver on her promise, and I ask you to uphold sessional orders and require her to come back to answering that question.

The SPEAKER — I ask the minister to come back to answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — The member is wrong when he talks about this project being put on hold indefinitely, and they were the lies that I had to correct when I was in Kerang last week talking to members of the community who said that the National Party had been telling them that this project was not going ahead. That is a complete lie. We are pushing on with this project —

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, can I ask you to bring the minister back to actually answering the question? Show some respect to those businesses that have invested millions of dollars based on the minister's promise and answer the question. Will the minister actually compensate those businesses for the costs that they are now going to bear because she has botched this project?

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is responding to the question. I ask the minister not to use the word that is unparliamentary that she has been using.

Ms ALLAN — We will continue to work closely with industry, including those like the Victorian Farmers Federation that have talked about the most important thing being getting the project right. That is exactly what we will do.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, under sessional order 9(2) I submit that the minister's answers to both the substantive and supplementary questions have not been responsive. The first was about when the project would get started. The second was whether or

not there would be compensation payable to affected businesses. Neither of those questions has been answered. I ask you to require the minister to provide a written answer.

The SPEAKER — I will consider that matter and come back to the house.

Ministers statements: Thompsons Road duplication

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (12:48) — I rise to update the house on the massive upgrade that is occurring on Thompsons Road in the south-east. Thompsons Road is being duplicated between Dandenong-Frankston Road and Berwick-Cranbourne Road, adding extra lanes and easing the congestion in that local community. New traffic lights are being built at the Western Port Highway, Evans Road and McCormicks Road to better manage traffic flow. Workers are also building more than 10 kilometres of new road, including a new bridge over the eastern contour drain, so they are very much working very hard. Of course down there we are also removing a level crossing at the Merinda Park station, and I expect that will be removed in the coming weeks, so very much good news for the local community.

But while we are there we are also working very hard with our design and the like to protect the local environment in that area. Arborists and wildlife experts have inspected every tree, every hollow and every nook and cranny along the whole alignment of this massive project. Unfortunately some tree removal is inevitable, but as much as possible we are trying to redesign it. I noticed recently John Paul College in Frankston received five large logs to put to good use in their Victorian certificate of applied learning program, whether it be designing things or the like. Very much our motto is 'Re-use, recycle, repurpose' — very much good plans for dead wood.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DONNELLAN — But what are the alternatives? The alternatives are that you could just burn it, as Brother Bastiaan has indicated, whether it be in Rowville or whether it be in other seats like that, just burn it.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is proceeding — albeit in an incredibly tortuous way — to commence to debate the issue. I ask you to again uphold sessional orders and bring him back to compliance with making a ministers statement.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister had just departed from making a statement. I ask him to come back to making a ministers statement.

Mr DONNELLAN — Thank you. But I understand that is not the favourite pastime of Brother Bastiaan and his team. It is actually member farming — acting like juveniles or like barnyard animals —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister, without the assistance of the member for Hawthorn. I warn the minister to come back to making a ministers statement, otherwise he will be sat down. The minister has concluded his statement.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Constituency questions

The SPEAKER (12:51) — Before constituency questions and calling points of order, last sitting week on 23 May the member for Brighton raised a point of order in relation to a constituency question asked by the member for Bentleigh the day prior. The member for Brighton suggested the question should be ruled out of order because it related to a park which is not in the member for Bentleigh's electorate and therefore is not a constituency issue.

After reviewing *Hansard* I make the following ruling: firstly, constituency questions as stipulated in sessional order 7 (1) must relate to a constituency matter and not — as has been ruled previously — encompass broader policy issues that can be included in questions on notice. In this instance the park referred to in the question is located outside the member's electorate in the neighbouring electorate of Brighton. That fact alone does not mean that this is not a constituency matter. A decision or service that does not relate directly to a particular electorate may have an effect on that community in a way that means it is appropriate for a member to raise a constituency question. It may be that constituents living in the member for Bentleigh's electorate use the park or are affected by its use in some way through the sporting organisations that had written to him. However, the member did not make this clear in his question and so it is ruled out of order. When asking constituency questions members should ensure that it is clear how a question relates to their constituency.

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, I raise a matter with regard to question 14 239. It was a very simple question to the Minister for Public Transport. All I asked was: which scheduled 903 bus services did

not run on 10 March 2018? It was a question on notice that I asked that was required to be answered on 31 May as it was asked on 1 May. As yet I have not received a response. I ask you to get the minister to chase up the answer to that very simple question. It should not be too difficult for her to answer if she is across her portfolio.

The SPEAKER — I thank the member for his point of order. Are there further issues he wishes to raise?

Mr Watt — No.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Sandringham electorate

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) (12:53) — (14 467) My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Public Transport. Earlier this year on the adjournment debate I made representations on behalf of a number of Sandringham electorate residents in relation to the proliferation of graffiti on the Frankston and Sandringham railway lines, and the great work being undertaken by a number of local residents to seek to wind back the defacement of public infrastructure and public property.

The minister in her response to my adjournment debate question — I understood from that — would facilitate a meeting with representatives of Metro and representatives of VicTrack to see if a worthy pathway could be defined that would bring about a better outcome in removing graffiti. I just ask whether she will progress that indication on the adjournment debate.

Yuroke electorate

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (12:54) — (14 468) My constituency question is to the Minister for Early Childhood Education. How is the Andrews Labor government supporting kindergartens in the Yuroke electorate? As the minister knows, the Yuroke electorate is a community of choice for many young families, and our local kinders do an excellent job ensuring that every child gets the best possible start in life. In particular, I would like to thank our early childhood educators for the excellent work that they do. There has been a substantial investment in early childhood services in my community under this government, and I would welcome any information that the minister can provide on opportunities to ensure that local kinders in my community continue in the future to go from strength to strength.

Ovens Valley electorate

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (12:55) — (14 469) My question is to the Minister for Water. Michael Weston from Eurobin has concerns about the Upper Ovens River Water Supply Protection Area Water Management Plan 2012, particularly item 18 regarding permissible consumptive volume. There is a limit gazetted by the government of 4010 megalitres; however, it appears that Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) has applied for removal of this without consultation. Through this process Michael has been refused permission to use a dragline by GMW, which demonstrates a conflict between gravity irrigators and catchment landholders. Mr Weston seeks this clarification.

Carrum electorate

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (12:55) — (14 470) My constituency question is for the Minister for Training and Skills. Minister, my community is very excited about the recent announcement in the 2018–19 state budget for 30 free TAFE priority courses and 18 preapprenticeship courses from 1 January 2019. This is a real game changer and will reduce the financial barrier for Victorian students wanting to train in courses that lead to jobs. In my electorate of Carrum we have already seen a great response from students as well as workers wanting to upskill or change direction. In fact a constituent recently told me that you do not get a more Labor policy — and isn't that right? Minister, an initial 20 priority TAFE courses have already been identified. My constituents would like to know how the remaining 10 priority TAFE courses will be determined.

Burwood electorate

Mr WATT (Burwood) (12:56) — (14 471) My constituency question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Old Vulcan gas heaters are considered unsafe in public housing properties. In light of the cold winter, some of my public housing tenants have been provided with electric heaters by the office of housing. The efficiency of these heaters leaves a lot to be desired, and the electrical costs are becoming too burdensome for some of my tenants who have contacted me about their inability to pay their bills. Given the difficulties many of my residents on modest incomes face with large increases in electricity prices, what solutions does the Andrews Labor government have for those residents without the ability to access the internet to reduce their heating costs?

Williamstown electorate

Mr NOONAN (Williamstown) (12:57) — (14 472) My question is to the Minister for Education, and it relates to the Footscray learning precinct. In the coming years the new Footscray learning precinct will become operational, consisting of two junior campuses for years 7 to 9, including a new campus in Seddon, and a senior campus for years 10 to 12. Part of the transition will see Gilmore College for Girls become co-educational while also over a period phase out senior enrolments. Pleasingly the Seddon junior campus has recently received almost \$30 million in the state budget, and construction is expected to commence in the not-too-distant future, with the campus due to open in 2021. As the minister will be aware, with such a substantial project as this, meticulous planning is required. My question is: can the minister provide details about the appointment of a transition coordinator and further details in terms of a time line for that transition to be made?

Shepparton electorate

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (12:58) — (14 473) My question is for the Minister for Health. Minister, yesterday you announced the establishment of an expert task force to identify ways to strengthen the role of Victoria's community health sector. Can you please advise how regional community health centres, such as Primary Care Connect in my electorate of Shepparton district, will be consulted on this very important issue? Numerous reports have found that when it comes to health outcomes and access to health services, rural populations in Victoria suffer from a disproportionate levels of disadvantage, including higher mortality rates and lower life expectancy; higher reported rates of high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity; higher death rates from chronic disease; higher rates of dementia; and higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse and smoking. Community health organisations such as Primary Care Connect and others in my electorate are essential primary care services in our regions. Frontline workers and their staff are ideally placed to assist the task force to identify a shared vision and priorities for the sector.

Geelong electorate

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (12:59) — (14 474) My question is for the Minister for Sport, and it pertains to an application submitted by the Grovedale Football Netball Club under the country football netball program change facility upgrade. I ask when the minister will be making a decision as to the status of this application. Although this club is located in South Barwon, there are many club members from my electorate of Geelong.

The project will construct a new fully compliant, female-friendly set of away change rooms that meet modern and accessible standards. More and more women are participating in sport every year, and they deserve access to top-quality facilities. This includes constituents from my electorate.

Polwarth electorate

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (13:00) — (14 475) My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. Can the minister tell the victims of the St Patricks Day fires in my electorate how he is facilitating a quick and speedy resolution to the outstanding issues and liabilities that are a result of these fires. Many farms, farming families and community members are now suffering post-fire stress and heartache as the slow wheels of the legal redress system begin to crunch forward. It is the right of every citizen to seek redress when they have suffered neglect at the hands of others; however, this is a slow process. Many farmers affected by the Garvoc, Terang and Camperdown fires are suffering further as there is a distinct lack of clear process for people to follow and be mindful of in the wake of these devastating fires. Country Victoria is extremely prone to fire. This is not the first or last time farms and homes will be wiped out by an act of God or negligence. Victims in my electorate are very much calling for a quicker and more responsive system. We must avoid the now 10-year legal process that many from the awful Black Saturday fires faced.

Yan Yean electorate

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (13:01) — (14 476) My constituency question is to the Minister for Sport, and I ask: when can Sport and Recreation Victoria audit the playing surfaces at Whittlesea showgrounds, specifically the second oval and the netball court?

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2018

Introduction and first reading

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) (13:01) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, the Coroners Act 2008, the County Court Act 1958, the Criminal Procedure Act 2009, the Family Violence Protection Act 2008, the Magistrates' Court Act 1989, the Personal Safety Intervention Orders Act 2010, the Supreme Court Act 1986 and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998, to make consequential amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) (13:02) — I seek a brief explanation of this bill.

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) (13:02) — I can advise the member for Hawthorn that the bill responds to six recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The bill establishes the specialist family violence court division in the Magistrates Court, extends access for young people to therapeutic treatment programs, enables applications for family violence intervention orders to be filed online and includes dowry-related abuse of forced marriage as statutory examples of family violence in the Family Violence Protection Act 2008.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT
(PUBLIC SECTOR REDUNDANCIES AND
OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2018**

Introduction and first reading

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) (13:03) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Public Administration Act 2004 and for other purposes.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (13:03) — I ask the Attorney-General to provide a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) (13:03) — I can advise the manager of opposition business that the bill is designed to strengthen Victoria's public administration by formalising and ensuring the enforceability of public sector redundancy provisions currently set out in policy, continuing implementation of recommendations from the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) review of executive officer employment arrangements and clarifying the status of advisory bodies and the delegation powers of the VPSC commissioner.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

PETITIONS

Following petition presented to house:

Wire rope barriers

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the concerns of road users, farmers and emergency services workers about the rollout of 2000 km of wire rope barriers across Victorian roads.

While not opposed to wire rope barriers in the appropriate locations, the petitioners request that the Andrews Labor government immediately halt its blanket rollout of wire rope barriers until these safety concerns have been addressed and a more strategic approach for barrier placement is adopted.

By Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) (473 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petition be considered next day on motion of Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East).

**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Alert Digest No. 8

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) presented *Alert Digest No. 8 of 2018* on:

Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018

Crimes Amendment (Unlicensed Drivers) Bill 2018

Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Amendment Bill 2018

Justice Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2018

Local Government Bill 2018

Long Service Benefits Portability Bill 2018

National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2018

Serious Offenders Bill 2018

SR No. 3 — Corrections Amendment (Remotely Piloted Aircraft and Helicopter Ban) Regulations 2018

SR No. 4 — Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Amendment (Remotely Piloted Aircraft and Helicopter Ban) Regulations 2018

SR No. 5 — Children, Youth and Families Amendment (Remotely Piloted Aircraft and Helicopter Ban) Regulations 2018

together with appendices.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Acting Clerk:

Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986 — Certificate under s 7

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

Alpine — C54

Benalla — GC66

Boroondara — C267

East Gippsland — C144

Hobsons Bay — C107

Knox — C149

Latrobe — C106 Part 1

Mansfield — C36

Melbourne — C324

Monash — C137

Mornington Peninsula — C200, C209

Port Phillip — C143

South Gippsland — GC66

Southern Grampians — GC66

Whitehorse — C197

Whittlesea — C218, C220

Wodonga — GC66

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 — SR 59

Conveyancers Act 2006 — SRs 60, 61, 62, 63

Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1989 — SR 64

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — SR 65

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 52, 53, 54, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65

Victorian Electoral Commission — Greater Geelong City Council General Election 2017

Wildlife Act 1975 — Wildlife (Prohibition of Game Hunting) Amendment and Revocation Notice (*Gazette S244*, 25 May 2018).

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

Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Amendment (Further Reform) Act 2017 — Part 1 and s 6(1) — 2 June 2018; Remaining provisions — 2 July 2018 (*Gazette S248*, 29 May 2018)

Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Act 2018 — Whole Act — 1 June 2018 (*Gazette S248*, 29 May 2018).

ROYAL ASSENT

Messages read advising royal assent to:

29 May

Justice Legislation Amendment (Access to Justice) Bill 2018

Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment Bill 2017

Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill 2017

5 June

Legal Identity of Defendants (Organisational Child Abuse) Bill 2018

Parks Victoria Bill 2018.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

Messages read recommending appropriations for:

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Amendment Bill 2018

Local Government Bill 2018.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Program

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (13:07) — 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, 7 June 2018:

Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018

Education Legislation Amendment (Victorian Institute of Teaching, TAFE and Other Matters) Bill 2018

Justice Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2018.

It should be noted that, in addition to the three bills that I have just outlined to the house, also to be added to the program is the ongoing debate on the 2018–19 budget. It is a terrific budget that was handed down a month ago by the Treasurer, but we are still talking about it and they are still talking about it in the streets as well, given it was such a terrific budget: free TAFE, more school buildings, funding for country roads. I tell you what, Speaker, they are talking about it in my neck of the woods, and I am delighted that we will have the chance to continue talking about it here in the Parliament as well. For those members on all sides of the chamber, if you have not had your chance to speak on the 2018–19 budget, this is the week to do it because there will be an opportunity to come back to discuss in further detail the budget over the course of this week.

The bills that are on the program are quite substantial and cover key areas such as education and particularly the regulation of teachers in the system, and we have the next tranche in addressing terrorism-related issues in the justice portfolio.

I did just want to briefly mention the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. I have had in the past representations from the Greens political party seeking that this bill go into the consideration-in-detail stage. I have assumed in the setting of the program for this week that that is something they would wish to see. It is something we can accommodate over the course of this week because of course this is a substantial step forward in supporting Aboriginal Victorians. It is a nationally significant piece of legislation that we have brought to the Parliament. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has done a huge amount of work to bring it to the point that we have a piece of legislation to consider. A significant amount of time will be available to us over the course of this week to devote to debating and considering in detail that bill should the Greens political party continue to wish to do that. I look forward to that debate because, as I have said, it is nationally significant. This is something that is yet to be done in this country and we have a historic opportunity in the Victorian Parliament to progress these matters in a substantial way for Aboriginal Victorians.

With those few comments, as I always do at this time of the week, I optimistically commend the motion to the house and optimistically look forward to its support from the Parliament.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (13:11) — The Leader of the House's motion proposes three bills for inclusion on the government business program, and she has also indicated the government's intention to make time for further debate on the take-note motion for the budget papers. The three bills proposed raise a range of issues. As the Leader of the House has referred to, the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018 is one on which a number of members in this house are seeking to make a contribution, and she understands that in particular the Greens party is keen for this bill to be considered in detail and for a range of amendments to be put forward on it. Consistent with the view of the Liberal-Nationals coalition that there should be adequate time made available for consideration in detail of all bills that require it in line in fact with the government's election commitment, which to date it has not honoured, that it would make consideration in detail a usual part of all bills in the Assembly we are very willing to accommodate the wishes of the Greens party that the advancing the treaty process bill be considered in detail.

There is also a bill relating to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, TAFE and other matters, and I am sure that will provide an opportunity for extensive canvassing of the government's very poor record in relation to TAFE and the falling student numbers and cuts to the availability of places that have occurred under the Labor government. That certainly deserves intensive scrutiny.

There is also the Justice Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2018, which seeks to respond to the Harper-Lay review. It is important that that bill be examined closely to make sure that everything that can be done is being done to keep this state safe from terrorism and that it is being done in an effective and just manner.

The Leader of the House, in concluding her remarks, said that she was looking forward with optimism to potential support for her program. Unfortunately that would seem to be a disingenuous sentiment on her part because she would well know that we on this side of the house remain of the view that there are very significant matters that need to be dealt with by this house, and it is continually disappointing that the government refuses to do so. It is not only disappointing but it reinforces the fact that the government is determined to do everything within its power to avoid accountability for the rotting that has occurred amongst its members — the very

serious allegations that have been made against the former Speaker and former Deputy Speaker — and for the report of the Ombudsman into the red shirts roting and indeed issues that have previously been referred to IBAC which may now need this house's attention.

I have said it before and I will continue to make the point that this house should be dealing with those matters. It was something that the then Labor opposition said needed to be done in relation to the allegations against the then member for Frankston, and it was done in relation to those allegations, and it was done on the initiative of the Liberal-Nationals government of the day. Regardless of which side of the house a member comes from, if serious issues are raised in relation to their misconduct, this house as a whole should be prepared to deal with them.

The Labor government needs to stop trying to cover up and protect their own members. It needs to do the right thing and have these matters dealt with either through the Privileges Committee or through a select committee of this house. These matters need to be investigated and reported on, and if appropriate, sanctions applied. Particularly as other authorities have now completed their inquiries, these matters do become matters for this house. It has been a longstanding practice of Westminster parliaments here and abroad to take responsibility and to do the right thing, and it is disgraceful that this Labor government has been shirking that responsibility. We, on that basis, continue to oppose this government business program.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (13:16) — I am pleased to make a contribution on the government business program, and I acknowledge the opportunity to speak on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018 and in particular to pass reference to the fact that we had a very significant event with our Indigenous communities and many of our water corporations, local government communities and environmental groups on the Yarra River for some further work around the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Bill 2017 just recently. That of course was to talk about the 50-year vision coming out of that for the Yarra River but also to pick up on the Wurundjeri water policy.

This week the Parliament seeks to, I hope, not so much debate but have a thorough discussion of the issues and the concerns in relation to the advancing the treaty process. I think there has been a lot of momentum and good work to springboard off, and I want to commend that bill and the debate and discussion that the house will have over the course of the week. I certainly have great respect for the range of views that I have heard

through the passing of judgement, communication and contributions on that matter in the public realm in the past few months. I certainly commend the work of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs but also of other leaders in the community and legislators who have taken a very active and productive role in bringing that bill to the Parliament as part of our program for this week.

Can I say also regarding the Education Legislation Amendment (Victorian Institute of Teaching, TAFE and Other Matters) Bill 2018 that the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) has an interesting history administratively, and I think there will be a lot to canvass and cover as we continue to seek to improve the work, the accountability and the opportunity for the teaching profession to engage in the work of the VIT. And of course there is the Justice Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2018 to round out the week.

With the take-note motion that the Leader of the Government has mentioned I, like many of my colleagues, have taken that opportunity to speak on the budget, and I certainly commend that to members who have not done so. If only I had more time to outline for the house further initiatives in the budget for the Ivanhoe electorate and certainly across the north-east. I would be happy to seek an extension of time, but as it is I will just have to communicate more directly with my electorate. They were very pleased to receive details on the free TAFE courses that the government is providing access to for young people in our community.

Can I say also regarding the consideration-in-detail stage that the Greens party has raised in relation to the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018 that we certainly commend that opportunity this week. I hope members avail themselves of that opportunity, just as the government has provided such opportunities on a range of bills for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on the bill about moving cattle from Alpine National Park — I certainly recall spending some time on that in the consideration-in-detail stage — as well as some of the bills that the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation has been engaged in. I would say consideration in detail has been common practice in this term of Parliament in the Assembly, with the Leader of the Government overseeing engagement with other parties in consideration-in-detail stages.

This week, rather than getting bogged down on the roadside verge delaying or obstructing the government's legislative agenda, as the opposition would like, I think the opportunity to have consideration in detail on

matters of importance and the opportunity to clarify issues is critically important and gives confidence to the community about the work that we are doing in this place. I think it will be valuable in the treaty process for members to have the opportunity to discuss in detail many of the commitments, the work that has been undertaken and the collaboration with our Indigenous communities and also with many others across Victoria that has brought us to a point where we have a bill that allows us to take forward many of the community's concerns and issues in advancing the treaty process. I look forward to hearing and understanding more of the views of the opposition in relation to those matters, and hopefully that will come to light through the consideration-in-detail stage. I commend the government business program to the house.

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) (13:21) — I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the government business program. As the manager of opposition business has indicated, the opposition will not be supporting the government business program, which I will highlight in a moment. There are three bills up, so it is a relatively light program this week. For the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018 the government has indicated they will go into consideration in detail. One might say that that policy announcement before the 2014 election has become an abject failure of this government. The Labor Party said that they would make consideration in detail a standard practice of this house. That clearly has not been the case during the 58th Parliament. It has not been a standard practice of this house or a standard feature. There is the Education Legislation Amendment (Victorian Institute of Teaching, TAFE and Other Matters) Bill 2018, the Justice Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2018 and also the take-note motion on the budget.

There are still 12 Liberal Party members to make their contributions on the budget. Obviously the Leader of the House has not been walking down a street in the South Barwon electorate, because no-one is coming up to me with joy about this year's state budget. There has been very little for the South Barwon electorate and indeed Geelong as a whole. So I do not know what street the minister is going down. It is obviously not a street in the Geelong area.

Primarily the opposition parties are opposing the government business program for its failure to deal with the roting members for Melton and Tarneit. They need to be dealt with now. As the manager of opposition business quite rightly pointed out, there have been investigations which have taken place that have previously been the excuse as to why the members have

not been dealt with by this house. There is the Privileges Committee, to which they could be sent for investigation, but also a select committee, as per the notice of motion that the Leader of the Opposition has put on the notice paper. As we saw last week, Speaker, if someone is getting a bit rowdy in the house, I can understand why you may eject them, but you could see in the last adjournment debate with the member for Bass the frustration felt on this side of the house that those members have not been dealt with. Unfortunately both the member for Melton and the member for Bass were ejected last sitting week, Speaker — and I certainly do not question your decision there — but there is a lot of frustration with members as to why they have not been dealt with.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr KATOS — The member for Essendon, I said that I respect the Speaker's decision. There is just frustration felt by members on this side of the house as to why the members for Tarneit and Melton have not been dealt with by this house. That clearly needs to occur. That clearly needs to happen. As I said earlier, the opposition will not be supporting the government business program.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (13:24) — Protecting our community, protecting our children and advancing a historic treaty process with Aboriginal Victorians are the themes highlighting this week's government business program. The objective of the Justice Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2018 is to acquit the government's commitment to introduce a bill this year to implement the legislative recommendations from the expert panel on terrorism. The manager of opposition business has echoed how significant these issues are, and they will be addressed with, I would have thought, a rigorous debate in this chamber.

Then we have the Education Legislation Amendment (Victorian Institute of Teaching, TAFE and Other Matters) Bill 2018, and this is a response to the McClellan Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and also the review into the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). Basically what this aims to achieve is to put the VIT teacher registration scheme into alignment with the working with children check scheme. The basis behind that is to reduce the risk to children's safety while maintaining the exemption for registered teachers and early childhood teachers undertaking work outside school in everyday environments. The proposition here is that it aims to improve the consistency of decisions made by the Victorian Institute of Teaching and the working

with children check unit in respect of charges or convictions for serious offences and to improve information sharing between the VIT, the working with children check unit and the out-of-home care suitability panel to enable better decision-making to protect our children. I am presuming that even though it was not specified, there would be support for that legislation across the chamber.

The next piece of legislation is the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. This is the bill that has a historic proposition in it. What it seeks to do is provide the mechanism for the state to recognise the Aboriginal Representative Body as the sole counterpart and representative of Aboriginal Victoria and establish the elements necessary to support treaty negotiations. This is the critical architecture that the government is trying to put in place. The bill enshrines principles for the treaty process to govern the relationship between the Aboriginal Representative Body and the state and then provides for how they should be applied to future participants in the process. Underpinning this are the propositions of self-determination and empowerment, fairness and equity, partnership and good faith, mutual benefit and sustainability, and transparency and accountability.

What will be needed is an independent treaty authority to facilitate the negotiations, a framework that sets out the process and a self-determination fund to empower Aboriginal Victorians to participate in the treaty process on an equal footing with the state and to build capacity, wealth and prosperity. They are the aims and the aspirations behind this bill. It is extremely timely — we have just had the Long Walk to the MCG, a feature of Reconciliation Week, where I was delighted to join the Prime Minister and the Premier and people of goodwill who want to advance this cause. ‘The past is never dead’, as William Faulkner noted, ‘It’s not even past’. Life is short, government is shorter, so I hope that this historic opportunity is not missed. We know that the Greens political party wants to examine this in detail, so I hope that overall there is goodwill to actually drive a historic result.

Then of course we also have the take-note motion continuing on the budget, and what a fantastic budget — a AAA-rated economy being driven by the Premier and the Treasurer, record investment, a reimagining of the world’s most livable city with infrastructure, delivering the results for jobs and opportunities right throughout our state and how we actually do this, and trying to get a better alignment with the Australian government now that that has been signalled through both the budgets. I think that is absolutely in the public interest. Australians are crying

out for leadership to defeat procrastination and political partisanship on some of these big-ticket items. If you look at the rail link to the Melbourne Airport and the missing link on our road network, these are multibillion-dollar projects that would be of significance, so I recommend this motion to the house.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) (13:29) — I rise to speak on the government business program, and The Nationals in coalition are opposing the program. We are opposing the program for the reason very much laid out by the manager of opposition business, and that is the failure to resolve the rorting issues. This is a matter that simply must be dealt with.

There are three bills on the program this week, the first one being the Education Legislation Amendment (Victorian Institute of Teaching, TAFE and Other Matters) Bill 2018. This is very much about tidying up some of the teacher qualifications for working with children. I think this will be an interesting debate because it is broad-ranging and does deal with a number of issues around education. The one I will be particularly focusing on in my contribution will be the ability to merge our TAFE and our adult education facilities.

The Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018 is also to be debated, and I do note that this bill will be considered in detail on Thursday afternoon, which I think will be an interesting debate given the comments around the possibility of amendments.

The final bill for this week is of course the Justice Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2018, which is around terrorism and other matters. This comes out of wise advice over some issues that have happened, particularly around the siege in recent times. Keeping our community safe is of course what we should be ensuring in this place as one of our primary responsibilities. I notice that again there are a number of things here, including the amendments to the Bail Act 1977, something that all of us are very keen to see happen. As we know, bail is a privilege, not a right, and we do want to make sure that for those who are considered for bail, particularly when there is a risk of serious offences, this is wisely considered.

Also we are involved in the take-note motion on the budget. The Nationals have finished their contributions, and I hope that most members will be able to do so, particularly before we get to the end of the financial year. Once we get past the end of the financial year, I think still having a budget response outstanding is an opportunity lost. I do certainly encourage those who

have not done so to make their contributions, and I ask that sufficient time be allowed in the house for this task to be completed in a timely manner before we get to the end of financial year, when people's minds undoubtedly move on.

To return to where we started, which was the roting again, I do support all that both the member for South Barwon and the manager of opposition business have said. This is a matter that needs to be dealt with, and we will continue to oppose the government business program until it is.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 44

Allan, Ms	Knight, Ms
Andrews, Mr	Languiller, Mr
Bull, Mr J.	Lim, Mr
Carbines, Mr	McGuire, Mr
Carroll, Mr	Merlino, Mr
Couzens, Ms	Nardella, Mr
D'Ambrosio, Ms	Neville, Ms
Dimopoulos, Mr	Noonan, Mr
Donnellan, Mr	Pakula, Mr
Edbrooke, Mr	Pallas, Mr
Edwards, Ms	Pearson, Mr
Eren, Mr	Perera, Mr
Foley, Mr	Richardson, Mr
Garrett, Ms	Scott, Mr
Graley, 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 D.
Asher, Ms	O'Brien, Mr M.
Battin, Mr	Paynter, Mr
Blackwood, Mr	Pesutto, Mr
Britnell, Ms	Riordan, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Ryall, Ms
Burgess, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Clark, Mr	Sandell, Ms
Crisp, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Dixon, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Fyffe, Mrs	Smith, Mr T.
Gidley, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Guy, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Hibbins, Mr	Thorpe, Ms
Hodgett, Mr	Tilley, Mr
Katos, Mr	Victoria, Ms
Kealy, Ms	Wakeling, Mr
McCurdy, Mr	Walsh, Mr
McLeish, Ms	Watt, Mr
Morris, Mr	Wells, Mr
Northe, Mr	

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Point Leo boardwalk

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) (13:38) — This afternoon I rise to congratulate the Disabled Surfers Association Mornington Peninsula (DSAMP) on the great work they have done to bring to reality the new wheelchair-friendly boardwalk and beach access ramp at Point Leo. At 82 metres long, it crosses a gully between two sand dunes and coastal vegetation and provides beach access for everyone: mothers with prams, older members of the community, lifesavers and their equipment, and those with a disability.

Twice a year hundreds of volunteers descend on the beach to help give a surfing experience to a growing number of people with a disability who want to be able to have fun in the surf. Bill Hallet and John Bowers of DSAMP, Andrew Gibson from Point Leo Surf Life Saving Club and Tony Walkington from the Point Leo Foreshore Committee came up with the original concept. Support and assistance came from not only their own organisations but also the Mornington Peninsula shire, state and federal governments and many generous private businesses and individuals.

My congratulations to Bill, John, Andrew and Tony, and everyone who has contributed to this fantastic project. It is a great credit to you all.

HART Awards

Mr MORRIS — Last Friday afternoon I attended the HART Awards — Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together. The local government category was taken out by Greater Shepparton City Council for their Aboriginal street art project, and East Gippsland shire and Moonee Valley city were both highly commended.

On a personal note, I was honoured to present the winners awards for the Community Engagement category to the Lake Bolac Eel Festival, and the Changing the Way we Work category to the Inner North West Primary Care Partnership. These awards are about recognising local reconciliation outcomes, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working together. My congratulations to all the winners, but particularly to the Victorian Local Governance Association and Reconciliation Victoria, for their leadership in the field.

Newmarket fridge library

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (13:40) — Recently I was down at the Newmarket railway station handing out flyers when I saw an amazing old fridge, which has

been transformed into the Newmarket fridge library. The old fridge has had its engine and the seal removed so that it is completely safe. It is a place for people to drop off and borrow books. The fridge has been there for some time now — it is just near Pin Oak Crescent — and was the idea of Tam van der Kleij, who is a passionate bibliophile. The aspect of this fridge that I found most pleasing was that it spoke to the values of the Flemington community. Flemington is a community that is passionate about the arts and literature, and ensuring that people have the capacity to borrow books freely when they wish is a really important initiative.

Oromo community iftar dinner

Mr PEARSON — I was delighted to attend the Oromo iftar dinner on Sunday night. A big shout-out to the president of the Oromo community, Tarekegn Chimdi, for a fantastic event. I was particularly pleased to also see the inspector from Moonee Valley police there. Charmaine Hosking is an outstanding local representative of Victoria Police.

Flemington Green Ninja Army

Mr PEARSON — I do want to acknowledge the great work of Rob Karkut from the Flemington Green Ninja Army. The Green Ninjas have been planting native beds throughout Flemington for some period of time. Rob and his volunteers go there on a regular basis, and I am very pleased to have participated in this. Planting native vegetation in an inner urban landscape is fantastic.

Matt Arturi

Mr PEARSON — Finally, I do want to give a shout-out to Matt Arturi, my intern this year, who very kindly gave me a book of meditations by Marcus Aurelius. I look forward to reading it with great interest.

Hope Restart Centre

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) (13:41) — I wish to pay tribute to the volunteer committee behind the Hope Restart Centre, a drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation facility now to be built in Bairnsdale. I also acknowledge the federal government and philanthropic commitments that have been made towards this project that will service very well those who need that level of assistance to overcome their challenges. Funding was announced this week and I thank the minister for the meetings we have had to be able to arrive at the position that we did this week. A final word of congratulations specifically to Peter and

Margaret Down and their lieutenants, Richard Rijs and John Glynn, for their efforts in leading the volunteer committee.

National Reconciliation Week

Mr T. BULL — Last week during National Reconciliation Week I attended an event aimed at tackling Indigenous smoking. Organised primarily by Paul Patten, the regional coordinator of the Gippsland Tobacco Action and Healthy Lifestyle Team, some of the statistical information was alarming. Those present heard that the Indigenous smoking rate in the area of Gippsland is an amazing 58 per cent — that is just on six in every 10 people — with high rates of smoking during pregnancy. With the well-known connection to heart and cardiovascular disease, strokes, cancer and other poor health outcomes, it is an area all present committed to speaking out on. The group also recently won the 2017 VicHealth award for preventing tobacco use for its innovative Aboriginal Quiltline.

WorkSafe Game of the Month

Mr T. BULL — It was a pleasure on Sunday to attend the Worksafe Game of the Month at Boisdale-Briagolong versus Stratford. With a theme this year of addressing accidents on farms, it was a fitting location. Sports stars Peter Knights, Eloise Southby and Angus Monfries were in attendance, with Peter telling of his time in the game and realising the present opportunities.

Roseanne Rofael and Elandrah Feo

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (13:43) — I am very pleased to acknowledge the work of two exceptional young women from my electorate of Yuroke. Craigieburn woman Roseanne Rofael is doing exceptional work in providing important items to those doing it tough. Several years ago, Roseanne founded the Christmas on the Streets campaign to bring presents to homeless people. This program has now been expanded and operates all year round. In addition to Christmas presents, items that are now distributed include sleeping bags, warm clothes and food. Roseanne has teamed up with her old school, Kolbe Catholic College, with students generously getting on board to donate items and support the program. They include Roseanne's brother, year 12 student Gabriel, and her sister, year 10 student, Rihan. Well done to Roseanne, the Rofael family and all the students at Kolbe Catholic College for being so kind and generous. It is inspirational.

I would also like to acknowledge Elandrah Feo, an incredibly talented young woman who moved from New Zealand to Craigieburn 15 years ago. Elandrah will shortly be wowing audiences as the lead Danielle in the hit *Bring It On: The Musical*. Get down to the Athenaeum Theatre from 6 to 23 June to see this incredible Yuroke local. Elandrah has also performed as part of the Australian premiere of *In the Heights* and as the fragile yet feisty songbird Felicia in *Memphis*. One review I read of *Memphis* hailed her performance and that of her co-star James Elmer as one 'that would see them hailed as breakout stars in a mainstream production'. Elandrah: well done — I look forward to seeing your star shine bright.

Leader of the Greens

Ms ASHER (Brighton) (13:44) — I wish to refer to some ignorant and outrageous comments made by the Leader of the Greens party on 24 May 2018 in the other place. It was a statement about Liberal women members of Parliament in which she called us privileged and advantaged and said that our success had nothing to do with hard work. As I look around at my female colleagues, I do not see a lot of privilege.

I am happy to advise Dr Ratnam that I am the daughter of a migrant father who came here with nothing and who put himself through night school. My mother did not have the opportunity to finish secondary school. I attended Edithvale Primary School and Bonbeach High School, and I put myself through university on a studentship because my parents were not in a position to fund me. However, when I look at my Greens opponent in the last two elections, I note that she was a doctor married to a specialist and that they live on the Golden Mile of Brighton, the wealthiest part of the Brighton electorate — and I applaud her success. It is clear to me that Dr Ratnam does not know her Greens candidates and she does not even know who her voters are in suburbs like mine. I further advise Dr Ratnam not to make assumptions about people's backgrounds simply because of where they ended up. Dr Ratnam should get off her high horse and perhaps get to know a few of us or, failing this, she should at least acquaint herself with the parliamentary handbook — but that would be too much like hard work.

Spectrum Journeys

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) (13:46) — I rise today to talk about my recent visit to a great organisation in the eastern suburbs, Spectrum Journeys. People at Spectrum Journeys do important work supporting young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their carers. They work with educators,

schools and families to assist them in their support of young people with autism spectrum disorder. Spectrum Journeys offers a range of practical and low-cost workshops to increase understanding of ASD and to develop practical skills and strategies for supporting a child with ASD.

During my visit, I also learnt about Spectrum Journeys' Blessing Bag project. The donation-based project provides carers of children on the spectrum with beautifully packaged bags full of pampering goods and an uplifting message to show carers that they are important, valued and need to take care of themselves as well.

As the Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers I often meet people who care for children with autism and hear about the many wonderful and unique qualities of kids with ASD. There are so many rewards in caring but also some inherent challenges. Carers have a profound impact enriching the lives of others. However, this can often come at a cost to their own health and wellbeing. That is why organisations like Spectrum Journeys are so very important. They provide carers with the support, information and care they need to look after themselves and the ones they love.

I am so thrilled to announce that the Andrews Labor government has been able to give Spectrum Journeys a much-needed funding boost of \$100 000 to continue to expand their important work, and I thank the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing for his work on delivering that outcome. A big thankyou to Kate Johnson and her team from Spectrum Journeys.

North-east link

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (13:47) — This statement condemns the Andrews Labor government's reckless and frankly terrifying lack of foresight in developing Labor's major road project, the north-east link. We hear a lot of boasting from the Premier about his infrastructure plans, but planning is exactly what is missing when the Premier talks about infrastructure. Arup modelling comparing the east-west link and the north-east link in a recent report found the east-west link would cut inner-city congestion by 15 per cent. The north-east link will only cut inner-city congestion by 5.7 percent. The north-east link planned is not due to open until 2027. By that time Melbourne's population will be over 6 million people. The north-east link locks in Melbourne's already terrible congestion for another decade.

All this is purely so that Labor does not need to backflip on the horrendous decision to scrap the east–west link. It is just madness. The Liberal-Nationals back both projects but sensibly will build the east–west link first. We do not pretend that Melbourne’s stifling inner-city congestion can be fixed with a congestion tax and dedicated bike lanes. We do not pretend that the Eastern Freeway and the intersection at Hoddle Street can cope with an extra 100 000 traffic movements a day from the north-east link without first building the east–west link. Like the emperor’s new clothes, behind all the flashy media and public relations there is no substance to the north-east link plans.

Rosanna incident

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (13:49) — On the morning of Friday, 25 May, our local community lost a young person who died after a collision with a train at Rosanna station. On behalf of the residents of my Ivanhoe electorate, I express our heartfelt sympathies to the person’s family, their friends and their school community. We acknowledge the first responders and other health professionals who attended and provided their expertise and care. We also offer our support to the construction workers, Metro Trains Melbourne staff and commuters who were present at this very real human tragedy. We are thankful for the work of school support staff, counsellors and the dedicated professionalism of teaching staff who continue to draw on their experience and efforts to care for others to this day. The floral tributes at Rosanna station were a reminder of loss and a community’s grief and care.

In my time as a working journalist I attended incidents that were soon determined to have been the result of such indescribable human tragedy. I respect the conventions that such matters are not publicly canvassed in much detail. I simply say that we as legislators and fellow human beings will redouble our efforts to support our neighbours and our fellow citizens in our communities. We cannot predict every action. However, awareness, empathy, generosity of spirit, compassion and a desire to affirm the value of others and their contribution to society cost us nothing. The human dividend is incalculable. There is a place for everyone, for connectedness in our community. If you need assistance, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Apsley Primary School

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (13:50) — My office has been contacted many times regarding the ongoing battle Apsley Primary School is having with the Department of Education and Training to gain approval for a school bus route that collects students from over the South

Australian border. For the students in South Australia Apsley Primary School is their closest school and part of their local community. The students are essential to assist Apsley Primary School’s student numbers so it can continue operating. In fact 25 per cent of the school’s students use this bus route. If there were no state border at all, the children would immediately qualify under the school bus program. This is a key example of why we need a cross-border commissioner and why The Nationals have committed to implement that if we are elected in November. Currently the parents committee of Apsley Primary School are funding this bus run, which is just astounding, just because there is this border in the way. I ask the minister to again look at considering approving this run to ensure that there is support for Apsley Primary School.

Western Victoria power capacity

Ms KEALY — I ask the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change to urgently address critical capacity issues on the high-voltage powerline to western Victoria. The line is almost at capacity and this is restricting the ability to attract billions of dollars of local business investment in renewable energy opportunities in the region. Rather than stubbornly focusing on the Victorian renewable energy target, the minister must instead address this critical electricity capacity issue for western Victoria to allow vital business investment and jobs growth in our local region. I would like to congratulate —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The member for Buninyong.

Country Fire Authority Sebastopol brigade

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) (13:52) — Yesterday I joined Sebastopol Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigade captain Ben Cary along with other brigade members and Labor’s candidate for Buninyong, Michaela Settle — also a CFA volunteer — to celebrate a grant of \$23 000 to create an art installation featuring steel sculptures and lighting, to be located at the station building to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the brigade.

Celebrations will take place in November with the unveiling of the artwork that will recognise the brigade’s history from 1868 through to the present day. It will be designed by local artist Julie Collins in consultation with local brigade members and be constructed by steel fabricator Derek John. The sculpture, with the addition of specialised lighting, will be incorporated into the arches of the old station

building, casting a striking display that will no doubt engage many thousands of passers-by day and night.

Under this round of the Andrews Labor government's Enhancing Volunteerism Grants program six local brigades are sharing in over \$70 000 allocated across the Buninyong electorate. The other brigades are Ballan, Cape Clear, Glen Park, the Grenville group and Haddon, with funding to support the purchase of operational equipment, driver training and licensing, and to deliver local community events to recruit and engage volunteers.

Country Fire Authority Ballan brigade

Mr HOWARD — I would also like to make special mention of Ballan Country Fire Authority, with the Ballan junior leaders receiving the Inclusion and Fairness Champion Award at last month's inaugural Spirit of CFA Awards — great news. I would like to commend all at Ballan.

Latrobe Valley Soccer League

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) (13:53) — I wish to recognise the Churchill United and Fortuna 60 soccer clubs for their efforts on Anzac Day this year. The two clubs once again fought out a tight match and also raised a staggering \$4370 for the Morwell RSL. What a fantastic achievement. Congratulations must go to the Latrobe Valley Soccer League, players from both Churchill United and Fortuna 60 and the community for their support of this impressive fundraising effort.

Richard Jeffery

Mr NORTHE — On a more sombre note, our community has lost two extraordinary individuals recently, which has left our community reeling. Richard Jeffery was a pillar of our community, and his family business, Jeffery's stores, was an iconic feature of the Traralgon township for many decades. Having a lifelong passion for health and fitness, Richard was a dedicated runner and a participant in the very first Traralgon Marathon back in 1968. In the 1990s he switched his passion to cycling, completing over 60 events across Australia. Richard was also very active in his Rotary work and such a kind, gentle and respected man. Our sincere condolences to his beautiful wife, Elizabeth, and all the Jeffery family.

Joe Brouns

Mr NORTHE — Our community also tragically lost Joe 'Joey' Brouns, who passed away suddenly in May, aged 56 years. Joe was not only highly respected as a player and coach in country basketball circles, but

he was a wonderful family man and businessperson. His commitment to basketball in Morwell both on and off the court has been nothing short of extraordinary. I think the Morwell Basketball Association summed up this terrible loss to our community beautifully:

Death leaves a heartache no-one can heal, Joe leaves a memory no-one can steal.

To his soulmate, Colleen, his beloved children and family, we offer our heartfelt condolences.

Cheltenham Secondary College

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (13:55) — It was a special moment last week to join with the Cheltenham Secondary College school community as we celebrated the opening of their senior student centre. It was some four years ago that I stood with the then shadow Minister for Education, now Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, to make a very exciting \$7 million announcement that we would upgrade their school buildings and improve their facilities for the future. As Cheltenham Secondary College enter their 60th year next year, they will have state-of-the-art facilities, with a year 12 learning centre and the soon to be opened — in October–November — year 7 to year 9 learning centre, which we will be very excited to get back and open later in this year.

I wanted to pay tribute to the school community, who have done an extraordinary amount of work to bring this project forward. It was really exciting just to see all the pride from that school community, the more than 850 students there who call this school home, and to join my good friend the member for Clarinda to make that announcement to celebrate that opening with the school students. I want to acknowledge the former principals, Keith Muller and Jason Bek, the acting principal, Karl Russell, and those students who did so well on the day showing us around these new facilities. It is a real pride and honour to see that investment transition into supporting students and supporting the next generation, who will get on with their skills and needs in these brand-new facilities. I congratulate everyone involved.

Deer control

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) (13:56) — The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change has been bumping her gums and banging on in the past week about feral horses and the damage they do to the high plains. The hyperbole is overwhelming. For those who have been to and spent time in the High Country, the commentary demonstrates her ignorance. Had the minister ever visited the Bogong High Plains or the

resort at Falls Creek and talked with locals, then she would know that feral horses are not the problem. She would also call them brumbies, but I am tipping that some spin guru has told them that that term is too emotive. The minister will tell you, 'It is terrible; there are 100 brumbies close to Falls Creek'. Locals will tell you there is a black stallion with a mob of about 20.

Locals will also tell you that deer numbers are out of control and conservatively at 700 000 in the High Country alone. It is the deer who are the real threat; it is the deer who are turning the moss beds into wallows; it is the deer who are posing a threat to motorists; it is the deer who are removing the bark from the snow gums — not brumbies but deer.

Earlier this week I spoke with a High Country horseman. Two weekends ago he did not see a single brumby, but in his words 'deer were everywhere'. A farmer showed me night-vision filming of his paddocks. On just one night in May there were 177 deer on that place alone. Minister, stop trying to cleanse our country of its colonial history and its High Country heritage, stop ignoring the cultural value of the brumby and stop turning a blind eye to the elephant in the Alps that truly is a feral pest.

Metropolitan Fire Brigade enterprise bargaining agreement

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) (13:58) — I was so pleased to wake up this morning to hear that the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) will be able to participate in the Metropolitan Fire Brigade workplace deal at the Fair Work Commission. I want to thank and congratulate commissioner Kristen Hilton for her tenacity and courage in intervening in the process and expressing her concern that the deal was unfair and unfavourable towards employees that seek to work part-time, including women, parents and people with a disability.

Our firefighters do a wonderful job in often dangerous conditions, and it is rewarding work. It is so important that all our government-funded first responders reflect the diversity of the community in which they work and that everyone who is part of our community can have the opportunity to undertake this work. We cannot let barriers, such as the absence of part-time work, stop us from getting the best people for the job.

And to the conspiracy-theorist troll that is @EBATruth, let me explain something to you: part-time work is not the casualisation of the workforce. Part-time work strengthens workforces by allowing everyone the same opportunity at a career. This is particularly important

when that workforce is government-funded by taxpayers — taxpayers who include women, carers and people with disabilities. The Andrews Labor government has long been concerned about the culture of our fire services and has responded by investing in resources and recruitment campaigns encouraging diversity and with a commitment to implementing every single recommendation from the VEOHRC report. I look forward to the VEOHRC report being released to guide us further towards world-class fire services for Victorians and firefighters.

Lifesaving clubs

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) (13:59) — Twenty years ago almost 70 people drowned in Victorian coastal waters and inland waterways. The then coalition government initiated plans to strongly reinvest in lifesaving club infrastructure and water safety messaging. In March this year the shadow Minister for Emergency Services and the Liberal candidate for Sandringham, Brad Rowswell, announced that the coalition will work with Life Saving Victoria and local government to redevelop the Mentone Lifesaving Club. In May the shadow Minister for Emergency Services and Brad Rowswell announced that the coalition would work with Life Saving Victoria, local government and the Black Rock Life Saving Club to rebuild the Black Rock Life Saving Club following early visits to the club last year by the shadow minister and a visit in May 2018 by the Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party.

Today I especially pay tribute to the advocacy of president Rebecca Moncrieff and the current committee, together with past presidents Simon Tucker and Faye Powderly, who have worked together with all club members for over a decade to achieve this outcome. I also pay tribute to Graeme Eddiehausen, long-term secretary and advocate for clubhouse renewal. As a former state president of the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia, Victoria branch, I understand firsthand the outstanding work undertaken by Victorian lifesavers, and I also note the outstanding work done by the former coalition government and the redevelopment of the Mordialloc Life Saving Club.

Sandfield Reserve skate park

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (14:01) — Earlier this year I presented to a year 9 civics class at Carrum Downs Secondary College. Among other things, we spoke about how each of us can make a difference in our local community, and I invited students to contact me if they ever wanted to do something or if they had any ideas about what we could do for the local

community. Three months later and completely out of the blue I received a message from one of those students, Noah Douglas. He thought I probably would not remember him, but I did. He said that he had been thinking about what I said in class, about how everyone can make a difference. He said what he would really like to see happen is for the local skate park at Sandfield Reserve in Carrum Downs to be completed. I mentioned to Noah that the state government is running a community grants initiative called Pick My Project and that finishing the skate park would be a great project to put up. I let his teachers know about it too. What happened next was terrific.

Noah, supported by some of the other students, wrote me a three-page letter outlining his thoughts on the skate park project. His teachers told me they had never seen Noah apply himself like this. They said, 'Noah worked very, very hard on that letter. I've never seen him so proud of anything, or so passionate about any project'. I could not be prouder, and I hope he is too. And now Noah and the other students are about to start work with Frankston City Council to finalise their project submission. We will then most definitely be calling on the local Carrum Downs community to vote for Noah's project — to finish the skate park at Sandfield Reserve in Carrum Downs. Congratulations to Noah and the students at Carrum Downs Secondary College for taking such great initiative and showing such great leadership in our local community.

Santa Maria College

Ms THORPE (Northcote) (14:02) — Last week I had the honour of attending the Santa Maria College Sorry Day assembly. I was so moved by the ceremony. Every single student — that is about 1000 students — placed a eucalypt leaf in a fire as a symbol of recognition and respect. This took place in front of a big sign saying 'Sorry'. There was an amazing choir that did spoken word, and what they said was powerful. They spoke of truth and justice, and put a lump in my throat. I was also very impressed by the intellect and sense of social justice the young women demonstrated. I was asked about racism, treaty and a way forward for us all. I want to thank Santa Maria College for their invitation. I am proud to have such a socially conscious school in my electorate. It provides hope for our future.

Family violence prevention

Ms THOMSON (Footscray) (14:03) — Last Wednesday I had the pleasure of joining the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Women at the Footscray Park campus of Victoria University (VU), where she announced a

\$400 000 funding package for family violence prevention programs in Melbourne's west. Family violence is a scourge. It hurts people, families, communities and the economy. If we can stop it before it happens, we can reduce this hurt and eliminate the need to deal with family violence's devastating consequences. That is why I am so proud to be part of the Andrews Labor government, which has taken on the problem of family violence and is helping to find solutions.

Victoria University was given a grant of \$100 000 to help women on campus actually speak out against violence and expose it. The Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE) has secured \$100 000 to train WIRE volunteers to have conversations with the community on gender equality issues. HealthWest will receive \$140 000 to work with non-English speaking background students at VU and talk to them about what causes family violence and how to avoid it. The Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative will receive \$50 000, together with IPC Health, to engage elders in training to address the drivers of violence in the Aboriginal community.

Wilton 'Bill' Wells

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (14:05) — I rise to remember Wilton Wells, known to all in the Liberal Party as Bill Wells and Norma's ever reliable and trusty chauffeur. Bill died last week following an accident, and his funeral is today in Ararat. It is the volunteer stalwarts like Bill Wells who help make and support the Liberal Party, particularly in country and regional Victoria. For as long as I can remember in the Liberal Party, Norma and Bill Wells have been everywhere, supporting all manner of events and Liberal Party functions and committees. They have over a very long time always put their money where their mouth is and have supported electorates from one end of the state to the other. I for one will always be most grateful to Bill, who throughout my by-election campaign in 2015 supported my campaign, and between them, he and Norma gave up four full weeks to help me campaign. Thank you, Bill.

Rural and regional doctors

Mr RIORDAN — The plight of small rural towns in finding and keeping doctors is always a hard one. I wish to acknowledge the hard work, perseverance and commitment of the Skipton community in their quest to keep Dr Mohammed Al Naima. Dr Mohammed's quest to stay practising as the local GP in Skipton highlights the lack of real support from the accrediting authorities to help get real doctors in desperate communities.

Currently doctor-sponsoring agencies are the only ones that can support small hospitals and communities. These training agencies have the perverse incentive of turning over doctors in training places, rather than being rewarded for keeping doctors in high-need areas. In other words, training organisations make money from a throughput of doctors, whether they succeed or not, rather than being rewarded for fulfilling the needs of many desperate communities. I call on this government to immediately review the support currently in place for doctors who wish to work in rural areas such as Skipton.

Overton Road, Seaford, level crossing

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (14:06) — It was amazing to witness the 24th and final U-trough section being put into position at the Overton Road rail bridge last week. The final section went into place mid-afternoon last Sunday and completes the bridge structure, with rail already being installed, ready for trains to use. Later this month trains will begin using the bridge, and vehicles and pedestrians will have sole use of the roadway underneath, which means no more 20-minute waits and delays getting from the east side to the west side of the rail line in Frankston. I would like to put on record my huge thanks to all the crews on site. They are doing an absolutely amazing job.

Peninsula Health

Mr EDBROOKE — I was very proud last week to be a guest speaker at the Crazy Socks 4 Docs breakfast at Peninsula Health — at the Frankston Hospital. We never really stop to think about how the healthcare professionals that look after us manage the issues and trauma they are confronted with; that is not even to say that some of the personal issues that they have we all have as well. The latest statistics alarmingly show one in four doctors have had suicidal thoughts, one in 50 doctors have attempted suicide and one in four doctors have been treated for or are currently being treated for depression. I support Crazy Socks 4 Docs day, Dr Geoff Toogood at Peninsula Health. He is a great man.

Derinya Primary School

Mr EDBROOKE — Work started on the Derinya Primary School kitchen garden last week. Frankston South students will soon learn how to grow and prepare their own food. This program is being co-funded by the school community and the government. Last week the Minister for Education visited the school —

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

Chinese Australian oral history project

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) (14:08) — Today in the Parliament I rise to congratulate the Chinese Australian oral history project. I had the privilege of attending the inauguration ceremony last Sunday. The project will capture the significant contribution of Chinese Australians, not only to the state of Victoria but also to Australia. I want to thank all the volunteers involved with the project, in particular Mr Xu and Mr Sun, for all their hard work and dedication. I will continue to support the project.

BUDGET PAPERS 2018–19

Debate resumed from 22 May; motion of Mr SCOTT (Minister for Finance):

That this house takes note of the 2018–19 budget papers.

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) (14:09) — I will continue on from where I ended my contribution on the budget papers on 22 May. The current Victorian opposition is foolish not to enthusiastically support the TAFE funding initiatives in the budget after their appalling record in government in the TAFE space. This gives a very bad image to the Liberal-National coalition brand as TAFE haters, especially when the federal Liberal-National government is taking out \$277 million from TAFE funding in this federal budget.

It is not unreasonable for Victorians to believe that if the opposition falls into government accidentally this November, it will reverse the good budget initiatives of this government at the first opportunity available to it, as its members have not recorded their appreciation of any of these budget initiatives. Governments should plan their budgets in a fiscally responsible way. That is exactly the guiding principle of this budget — delivering an estimated operating surplus of \$1.4 billion and surpluses of \$2.4 billion over the forward estimates and also maintaining a AAA credit rating.

Victoria was leading the nation with growth in real gross state product of 3.3 per cent in 2016–17 — the strongest of all states and well above the national average of 2 per cent gross domestic product. Building Victoria will always be underpinned by a skilled workforce. The Andrews government deserves the badge of honour as the government skilling Victorians by opening up TAFE colleges that were closed down by the previous coalition regime. As previously mentioned, in this budget the government has invested \$172 million to make 30 priority TAFE courses and

18 preapprenticeship courses completely free of charge. These courses include certificates in the areas of mental health, disability, education, community support and many other important ones to provide good quality services to the Victorian community. TAFEs will also extend their hours so that they are open from 6.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. and operate on Saturdays to provide an opportunity for those who are currently working to enhance their skills. This will make sure every Victorian who wants to get a job in these important service areas can get free quality training and qualify themselves. What a sensible approach in this budget to building knowledge and skills in Victoria.

In Cranbourne, according to the 2016 census, technicians and trade workers represent 16.3 per cent of the working population compared to 13.1 per cent across Victoria. Machinery operators and drivers make up 10.9 per cent of the population in Cranbourne compared to Victoria, which is 5.8 per cent. This investment in skills and development is a great initiative for my constituents in Cranbourne. The Andrews government budget has delivered generously on knowledge enhancement for future generations in my electorate. The Andrews government has the vision to modernise new educational facility arrangements by building more co-located early years centres at new schools, making pick-up and drop-off times easier for parents. This arrangement also provides greater support for children transitioning from kinder to school. These initiatives enormously benefit Cranbourne and surrounding areas where middle-income families, invariably with both parents in the workforce, have chosen to live.

The Andrews government is making history in Australia by providing funding in this budget to provide language programs in kinders. What an exciting initiative. Starting next year a \$17.9 million rollout will see specialist language classes conducted in 120 kinders across Victoria. On top of this, another 10 kinders will have up to half of their daily curriculum delivered in another language. This will make Victoria the bilingual capital of Australia in the future.

As part of this budget's initiative of building and planning 28 new schools and upgrading 130 existing schools, \$16.5 million has been allocated to build the new Botanic Ridge Primary School with a co-located early learning centre. The school will be built for 475 students and is still scheduled to open in January 2020. There is also an allocation of \$20.1 million to build Casey Fields primary school. This school will also be built for 525 students and, again, it will also be open in January 2020. The budget allocates \$20.8 million to build Clyde north-east primary school and for land

acquisition for the new Cranbourne West Primary School and special school. Clyde north-east primary will be built for 525 students and, again, it will open in January 2020. What this means is that by 2020 primary school education capacity in my electorate will be increased by 1525 students. This certainly will alleviate enrolment pressures for surrounding schools in meeting the demands of a growing population. A budget allocation of this dimension in a single budget for the Cranbourne electorate is historic. Unfortunately under the coalition in 2014 there was not a single new school land acquisition in Victoria.

The Cranbourne community broadly and the Melbourne Football Club specifically are delighted by the budget announcement of a \$5 million investment into Casey Fields. The funding will enable Melbourne Football Club to accelerate the expansion of AFL Women's at Casey Fields. This funding for the facility will further strengthen the opportunities for girls in south-east Victoria to have a clear pathway to play elite football. This initiative is part of a \$241 million boost for women and community support in the Victorian budget. At present Cranbourne is one of the fastest-growing suburbs in Australia. Cranbourne has been attractive for young families starting life and moving into their first home due to comparatively moderate housing prices.

Among the rapid growth in population is a substantial number of young professionals who take the train to the city on a daily basis. Reliable train services from Cranbourne to the city and back are paramount to my constituents. That is why I am pleased about the budget announcement of \$572 million to upgrade power and signals on the Cranbourne rail line. This is fantastic news for the large number of Cranbourne commuters travelling daily to work in industrial pockets such as Dandenong, Mulgrave and the city centre. Furthermore, duplicating the 10 kilometres of single track on the Dandenong-Cranbourne line will minimise cancellations and commuters will be able to enjoy a direct ride from Cranbourne to Melbourne and back more frequently.

This upgrade is paving the way for the Cranbourne line duplication, and funding has been allocated to undertake detailed design work to enable the new high-capacity metro trains to run to Cranbourne. Cranbourne residents were thrilled to hear the announcement of the allocation of planning money to duplicate the Cranbourne line. This is on top of the Andrews Labor government's announcement that it will set aside \$3 million to buy land for a rail station in fast-growing Cranbourne East. This will make a huge

difference to car dependency, reducing clogged roads and environmental pollution.

Thompsons Road is the major east–west arterial running across the Cranbourne electorate and continuing through the Carrum electorate. On an average day estimated vehicle trips of around 26 000 take place along Thompsons Road. The duplication and upgrade of Thompsons Road has been a Labor legacy. I can proudly state that all upgrades of sections of this road have been undertaken only by successive Labor governments. When the opposition was in government between 2010 and 2014, shamefully nothing was done about this road. Cranbourne residents are thrilled to see that this government is getting on with upgrading our local roads. A previous budget allocated \$175 million to duplicate Thompsons Roads and remove the dangerous and congested level crossing at Merinda Park. On top of that previous funding, this budget has allocated funding to further upgrade Thompsons Road. It will fund the upgrade of two roundabout intersections on Thompsons Road to signalised intersections. These are the intersections at Thompsons Road and Frankston-Dandenong Road, and Thompsons Road and Narre Warren-Cranbourne Road. This makes a lot of sense since both Frankston-Dandenong Road and Thompsons Road carry heavy traffic volumes not just at peak hour but right throughout the day.

This budget also allocates funding to duplicate 4 kilometres of Narre Warren-Cranbourne Road from Thompsons Road to the South Gippsland Highway from two lanes to four lanes. This includes shared-use paths on both sides and continuous safety barriers wherever possible. This road enhancement will also include signalling for four intersections along the alignment — one new and three existing signalised intersections. I commend the motion to the house.

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) (14:21) — I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Victorian state budget. I do so with great regret for the residents of Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley, who unfortunately again are going to bear the brunt of the Victorian Labor government's callous cuts which will hurt local residents in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley.

I did hold out some hope that the cuts that the government had put in place for residents in my district in their first, their second and their third budgets may have been reversed. I hoped that the cuts which made life more difficult rather than less difficult may have been addressed. For over three years I have come into this Parliament and fought very strongly for the interests of Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley

residents against these cuts — cuts in education, cuts in health, cuts in police and emergency services, increases in taxes, increases in cost of living. I thought and held out some hope that the government may have heeded the advice, but unfortunately it is like groundhog day: we are back here again. There are more cuts and more hurt for the residents of my district.

Whilst those members on the other side will no doubt be hoping that this contribution is shorter rather than longer, I will continue to stand up for the interests of Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley. We do not have to look too far in relation to the damage that this government has done to schools in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley. Of course the previous Liberal-Nationals coalition government signed off on three significant rebuilds when we were in office for schools that even the Victorian branch of the Labor Party conceded needed to be done. They were Mount Waverley Secondary College — the middle and senior campus — the Glen Waverley Primary School rebuild and the Brentwood Secondary College rebuild. All three of those rebuild projects were cancelled — scrapped — by this government.

The cancellation of the Mount Waverley Secondary College rebuild has meant that students who are in one learning environment in the junior campus, rather than coming across and having a completed middle and senior campus, as would have been the case if those projects were not cancelled, are now going into facilities that are simply inadequate both in capacity and also in their condition. As I said, I just shake my head and ask, 'How can this government have implemented these cuts when we could have been celebrating the great opportunities at that school for students at the middle and senior campus?'

It is the same at Glen Waverley Primary School. Its rebuild was signed off by the previous Liberal-Nationals coalition government. It is a school in desperate need of a rebuild. It is a school that is bursting at the seams. It is a school that has some very, very good education outcomes, but it is being held back as a consequence of its facilities not being addressed by this government. That is why the previous government signed that rebuild off. Unfortunately again it has been cut by this government. The government is putting some money into a school hall rebuild at Glen Waverley Primary School — I welcome that — but a school hall rebuild does not cut the mustard in Glen Waverley for residents who have had a school rebuild cut.

Brentwood Secondary College is a school that has gone from 800 students to nearly 1700 students and has not had substantial state capital works done on it for many

decades. Again its rebuild was signed off by the previous Liberal-Nationals government and when the Victorian Labor government came to power, they cut the project. Rather than looking at Brentwood Secondary College in the last year of this parliamentary term and providing a facility that was appropriate to meet the needs of students, those students have the same tired, ageing infrastructure. It is just not good enough.

You can add that to the general decline in education standards that we have seen under this government on a number of key benchmarks. You can look at the fact that this government has not done anything to de-clutter the curriculum. When you look at this government's outrageous stripping of parental rights in education, whether it is by forcing gender-fluid theory on people through the Safe Schools program or other ways in which this government is removing the rights of parents to raise their children consistent with their values and principles, or when you look at the government's determination to strip non-government schools, faith-based schools, of equal opportunity exemptions, this all paints a really worrying picture, and it lets the communities of Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley down in the state budget.

Sadly in addition to the cuts in education, we have had significant cuts to police resources in the Monash police service area (PSA), particularly for victims. Not just in Monash, I should say, but the Chief Commissioner of Police has clearly identified that over this parliamentary term this government, rather than increase it, has cut the number of police in our state. We have felt that in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley and within Monash PSA, and I know that a number of other areas have felt it too. I know that the member for East Gippsland has felt it. The member for Nepean has talked about it, and the member for Burwood has also talked about it. These cuts actually have an impact on public safety.

What have we experienced in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley? The Mount Waverley police station is a station that the previous Liberal-Nationals government saved from the real estate agents and saved from the bulldozers coming through. It was planned to be shut and demolished by the Brumby government. It was renovated and restored by the Liberal-Nationals government, and resourcing was provided. It had a counter service from 7.00 a.m. until 11.00 p.m., seven days a week. Of course this government has cut that to 8.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. What that means is that if you need to go to the police station in Mount Waverley you have actually lost that service.

In addition to that, there have been cuts to the Glen Waverley police station, which have reduced the

capacity of officers to undertake the necessary patrols. Sadly we have heard of the ambition and plan of the Victorian branch of the Labor Party to shut not one, not two, not three but four police stations in the Monash PSA. That has been said on the record by senior members of the Labor Party: they want to shut the Mount Waverley, Glen Waverley Oakleigh and Clayton police stations. Senior members of the Labor Party have put that on the public record, whether it is in council meetings or other public forums. To this day they still believe these police stations should be shut, they should be sold and that our community should lose those services.

The Liberal-Nationals coalition will continue to fight for those stations. We saved Mount Waverley police station when we were in government last time. We will continue to fight to ensure our local communities have local policing. I note also that senior members of the Labor Party have labelled the plan to refurbish and reopen the Murrumbeena police station as — and I quote — 'ludicrous'. We do not think that is ludicrous. We think that is an important step in our plan to improve public safety, and we will continue to do that.

I spoke with great sadness in relation to those cuts to public safety because they really do flow through to the crime statistics in Mount Waverley and Glen Waverley. Of course since the Andrews government was elected there has been a 66 per cent increase in crime in Mount Waverley, based on statistics from the Crime Statistics Agency. There has been an 18 per cent increase in Glen Waverley over the same time. That is nothing to celebrate as a local member. That deeply disturbs me because behind all those statistics are victims — victims of crime who have been let down by this government because they have cut police resources in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley. They have failed to strengthen our bail laws. They have failed to act on sentencing. They have failed to plan for one of the most significant roles of government, and that is to keep our community safe.

I must say I do give credit to the current Minister for Police in that at least she indicated that people do not feel safe in their homes.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr GIDLEY — I note that the member for Essendon and others continue to seek to shout down the representative of Mount Waverley, but I will not stop fighting for my community. I will not stop fighting for victims of crime, who are laughed at by the Labor Party. Behind those statistics there are victims of serious crime, and that is why our plan is so

comprehensive — to ensure local police stations remain open, to ensure that our police resources continue to meet the growing needs of the crime trend —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr GIDLEY — and to ensure that those victims of crime do not get shouted at or laughed at by people like the member for Essendon, that those victims of crime are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve in contributions from members of the house. If members of the Victorian branch of the Labor Party want to laugh at victims of crime, then that is a matter for them, but we will continue to stand up for those victims.

Then we look at the increases in state government taxes and the increases in the cost of living as a consequence of this Victorian Labor government. Let us remember: what did the government say before the last election? What did the government say to people in relation to its plans for taxes and charges before the last election? The night before the 2014 state election the member for Mulgrave —

Mr Pearson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson) — The member for Essendon!

Mr GIDLEY — I know members of the Labor Party will not want to hear this because they do not like hearing the truth, but when the member for Mulgrave, the current Premier, was interviewed by Peter Mitchell on Seven News he said, and I quote:

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

What was the response of the member for Mulgrave, the current Premier?

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

They were the words of this Premier and this Victorian Labor Party before the election on what they would do for families and for small and medium-sized businesses. Let us contrast that with what they have delivered, which is 12 new or increased taxes. They have introduced a new city access tax for the West Gate tunnel, tripled the brown coal royalties, introduced Uber and taxi fare taxes, increased stamp duty on new cars, introduced a new stamp duty for off-the-plan purchases, introduced a new so-called vacant home tax, introduced new annual property valuations to increase land tax, introduced a new stamp duty on property transfers between spouses, introduced a new point-of-consumption gambling tax, introduced a new

land tax surcharge for absentee owners, introduced a new stamp duty surcharge for foreign purchasers and increased the fire services property levy. That is the record. They are the facts — compared to what this Premier said to households, to families and to small and medium-sized businesses before the last state election.

If you drill down on those figures, again, like the crime stats, the tragedy is that there are victims behind those statistics. There has been a 20 per cent payroll tax increase. There are victims behind the 20 per cent increase in payroll tax, because there is no question that that has led to less rather than more employment opportunities and all of the benefits that those employment opportunities bring to people — bring to households, bring to families.

Of course we know that whenever there is an increase in land tax — and I notice that land tax has increased 77 per cent under this government — that will flow through to small and medium-sized businesses. At Mount Waverley Village or at Syndal shopping centre or at Kerrie Road, all of those properties there — whether or not it is the Bakers Delight or it is another bakery or it is the butcher, the fruit shop or the milk bar — have got higher costs as a result of the 77 per cent increase in land tax under this government, and there is no question that that increase in land tax flows through to the prices of goods and services that households and families and individuals in my electorate are paying. Again, they are the victims behind those shocking figures, that shocking record of this Victorian Labor government.

Duty on vehicle registration and transfers has increased by 36 per cent. For some of us who live in our electorates — for some of us who do not live in Fitzroy, for example, or do not live in the very inner part of Melbourne — we actually do need a motor vehicle. You might have a family with somebody who has turned 18 years of age or a family whose circumstances have changed, and they therefore need another motor vehicle, but rather than making it easier for families and households to purchase another vehicle, this government has made it harder as a consequence of increasing that duty on vehicle registration transfers by 36 per cent.

They are the facts of this budget for the residents of Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley: higher taxes, higher costs of living, more pain, higher gas prices, higher electricity prices, school rebuilds cancelled and schools shut by this government — Brentwood Secondary College, Glen Waverley Primary School and Mount Waverley Secondary College, the middle and senior campus. In addition to that is the massive

increase in crime in Mount Waverley and Glen Waverley under the record of this government and the closure of the Mount Waverley police station after 4.00 p.m. Monday to Friday. As if it was not bad enough that residents in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley have been hit by higher taxes and charges or it was not bad enough that they have been hit by reductions in services — whether or not it is police, it is schools or it is other public services — they are now told by senior members of the Labor Party that there is more to come, that really those four police stations in Oakleigh, Mount Waverley, Glen Waverley and Clayton should also be shut.

The Victorian branch of the Labor Party has already closed Mount Waverley police station in the evening. The plans are there; what has been said is on the record. I just plead to this government: stop attacking the residents of Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley; stop making life harder for them, because whilst you keep seeking to shout us down, we will continue to fight very strongly for their interests against these cuts.

Mr LIM (Clarinda) (14:36) — I am very delighted to rise today to speak on the budget. It would be remiss of me not to mention that for the past 22 years that I have been a member of this place this is the best budget we have ever had for Victoria, and I am just so very pleased and so very proud to be speaking on it. Of course the Victorian budget for 2018–19 will deliver new skills, good jobs, more schools, more hospitals and better roads for all Victorians. For my constituents this means having the modern classrooms and school facilities they need to get the great education they deserve.

In late April I was delighted to announce that Westall Primary School and Westall Secondary College will share \$12.3 million in the 2018–19 budget to deliver on the first major stage of their regeneration project. That \$12.3 million will see the construction of a new library at the primary school, as well as a gymnasium, art and music facilities and new outdoor courts at the secondary college. Planning for the project is already well underway and they have since completed the masterplan. It really is a fantastic design, one that is based on the latest approach to education and incorporating learning and communal spaces that are flexible, open and friendly, and I am delighted to see the project moving forward.

Every student deserves access to a great local school with first-rate classrooms and facilities, and that is what we are delivering in my electorate and across the state. This \$12.3 million investment forms part of an unprecedented \$2.8 billion investment to improve

classrooms, upgrade facilities and build new schools across the Education State.

Funding has also been allocated to fully masterplan Huntingdale Primary School. Plans will be designed shortly to best fit the school's needs whilst providing the opportunity for more students to engage in the school's educational direction. An amount of \$400 000 has also been provided to undertake an immediate upgrade to the school oval.

And we cannot forget Monash Children's Hospital School — \$13.8 million. Monash Children's Hospital School is a wonderful school that I was lucky enough to visit early last month, together with the member for Oakleigh. We were just blown away by what is happening there. This amazing school was established to provide educational support for children who are inpatients and outpatients of Monash Children's Hospital. It was a privilege and an honour to see the staff at the school delivering education services alongside patient treatment and recovery. Some of the kids have significant health conditions and problems — some were at risk of disengaging or were unable to attend their regular schools due to their health condition — and to see them thriving was an amazing experience. I am delighted to see this funding of \$13.8 million. It is important funding that will ensure the continuity of education for all children, regardless of their health condition.

While I am talking about health, the budget will provide for the Monash Clayton emergency department crisis hub. This will be one of six new emergency department crisis hubs where those with a mental illness can get the urgent treatment they need, easing pressure on our hospitals. All up the total investment in these hubs will be \$100.5 million, which is unprecedented. Right now many local people are struggling with mental illness, and these new hubs will ensure that people presenting with mental health issues get the right support, sooner. We are talking about 24-hour, short-stay units to treat people in crisis, and patients being fully assessed and treated by an emergency doctor and mental health team made up of psychiatrists, mental health nurses and social workers. This is a really great initiative, and I am proud to see the funding allocated to make this happen. I am also proud of the \$543 million allocated to the Victorian Heart Hospital, Australia's first standalone cardiac hospital. We all should be very proud and walking tall with this hospital coming.

This year's budget also includes \$1 million for the Eastern Regional Trails Strategy to construct a network of shared hiking and cycling trails, while \$300 000 will

go towards sports field planning for Kingston's green wedge, an initiative that is very close to the hearts of many of my constituents.

In public transport it is great to see planning money for the future light rail connection to the Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster — \$3 million allocated there — and great to see increased train service frequency between Dandenong and the city from 7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m., which is part of the Andrews Labor government's commitment to more trains and less level crossings.

In roads, a planning study will help determine the treatments required to minimise congestion and reduce the number and severity of crashes on this stretch of road, and \$300 000 will be well spent on improving the safety of our roads and addressing congestion. There is also \$712 million being provided to the Monash corridor upgrade for the second stage of the project, which will expand the Monash Freeway, with additional lanes between Warrigal Road and EastLink reducing congestion and improving travel time for my constituents and for travellers through the south-east.

There is also the Mordialloc bypass. There is new funding in addition to the \$300 million that was provided in the 2017–18 budget. This additional funding of \$75 million will be provided to upgrade the proposed bypass from an arterial road to a freeway connection between Mornington Peninsula Freeway at Springvale Road and Dingley bypass in my electorate. This is significant. It means no traffic lights from start to finish. It means significant reductions in average travel time and decreased congestion along the route and other arterial roads in the south-east. This is something that a lot of my constituents were very happy to hear; they talk about it non-stop, as do so many of the member for Mordialloc's constituents.

It really is a fantastic budget. It is delivering for my constituents — delivering more schools, better schools and better roads for all of us. I have a very, very multicultural electorate. On the multicultural front — I could keep talking on this all day — I am really glad to see the \$17.1 million that the Minister for Multicultural Affairs had the honour to inform the house of. The investment in the Multicultural Community Infrastructure Fund is very significant. This is a really important initiative that helps improve community infrastructure, expands programs and provides security upgrades for multicultural community centres. Many of these community centres are located in my electorate and in the City of Greater Dandenong, which has long held claim to being the most culturally diverse city in Victoria.

One of these facilities is the Cambodian Association of Victoria. Earlier this year they received some support under the Community Infrastructure and Cultural Precincts Fund, probably one of the first supports for the community group ever. Soon the association will commence construction of a traditional gate and fencing there at the community facility. This will be for security, but it will also be an opportunity to showcase traditional Cambodian culture. The gate and fencing at the facility will be constructed in Banteay Srei temple style, which is dated from 967 to 1000 AD and attracts so many millions of tourists to Cambodia. It is known for its small-scale, extremely refined and delicate sculptures and carvings.

The cultural significance of these upgrades is very important for the growing Cambodian community in my electorate. However, the fence will also enhance the Springvale streetscape and showcase the Cambodian identity within this vibrant and dynamic cultural precinct. Located in full view of trains passing through Melbourne's busiest railway corridor, the new gate and fencing will join other prominent culturally themed infrastructure, such as the Chua Quan Thanh Chinese-Vietnamese Buddhist temple and the St Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church. So this investment in community infrastructure is a very welcome investment amongst my constituents.

Another welcome investment is the extra \$1.4 million to increase the multicultural festivals and events program for non-profit organisations. This is indeed a very popular program among many community groups in my electorate. I am really looking forward to many of the events that have been funded and those that will be funded under this program. I often hear from my constituents how important it is to have the opportunity to showcase one's culture here in Victoria. It has made me so happy and proud to see the pride and energy that has been invested in these festivals and events by our vibrant multicultural communities, and it makes me very happy to see these extra funds from our government made available to them.

There is also generous support for a whole-of-government approach to tackling youth offending at its source. Last month I rose to speak on the Serious Offenders Bill 2018 — another bill that continues to build on this government's commitment to community safety. I spoke about the significant decrease in recorded offences and criminal incidents in my electorate, which comes as a result of more police at the local level. That is why I was opposed to the member for Mount Waverley disparaging us for the crime rate — I do not know where his statistics were coming from. But here in my electorate of Clarinda I

am delighted to report that of all the cities in my electorate, it is the City of Greater Dandenong — Australia's most culturally diverse community — that has had the greatest decrease in criminal incidents. It pleases me to no end to again remind everyone that in the most multicultural community not only in this state but in this country crime is down by more than 11 per cent. These are very promising statistics, but we know that there is more work to be done, and this budget and this investment is just one more example of that.

The budget includes \$15 million to tackle youth offending at its source. I have been in the electorate for 22 years. I have been there; I have heard it and seen it. We saw the experience of the Indochinese youth when they came during the early 1980s and up to the mid-1990s. We had so many problems. We saw overdoses in Springvale public toilets almost every other week. There were many problems that they encountered which we had to handle. So we had that experience. This funding to now tackle youth offenders is indeed a very, very significant contribution from the government to look at this problem.

I am fully aware that time is running short, and I certainly have got a lot more to share with other members on the multicultural affairs front, but I am very happy to see that \$14.1 million will be provided to implement the recommendations of the independent Expert Panel on Terrorism and Violent Extremism Prevention and Response Powers to strengthen preventative efforts to counter all forms of violent extremism. There is no place for violent extremism in our state, in our country or in our communities. As I said, my constituents are looking for safer communities, more inclusive communities and more connected communities. I am proud to have recommended several community initiatives in my electorate and the surrounding suburbs that are working towards these goals. Some great community initiatives have been developed to support the development of disengaged and marginalised migrant youth through early intervention, through mentoring, through sport and recreational activities, through information sessions and through visits to various places of worship. It has been great to see so many things happening.

I have nothing but very, very great admiration for this government that has done so much and has put its money where its mouth is. We all have to be very, very grateful for this budget. We are very proud of this budget. I know this is going to be a talking point to no end. I have never seen so many happy faces among my colleagues. We keep smiling non-stop. We can continue to be proud.

Mr DIXON (Nepean) (14:51) — If you look at a map of Victoria and you draw a line along the southern boundary of the electorate of Frankston, there are three state electorates underneath it — Mornington, Nepean and Hastings — and between all three of us we actually got nothing in the budget. Unfortunately that has been the sorry story for my constituents and my communities — it is a very consistent story and a tale of woe — over successive Labor budgets. Labor have been in government in Victoria for 15 out of the last 19 years and the Mornington Peninsula has got very, very little to show from their governments. Even in 2002 when Nepean was the most marginal seat in the state there was still no money; we were just neglected. You might think, 'Yes, for one or two terms this might be the way it goes, this is the way politics is', but we are looking at decades now of total neglect and very, very little money being spent — in my last term representing the people of Nepean there has been absolutely nothing in the budget for all those vital services my community is missing out on.

There is a misconception about my community. People think of it as a place full of rich holidaymakers and superannuants and retirees rolling in money, but that is just not the case. In fact I have the oldest age profile electorate in the state by a long shot — 27 per cent of my electorate is aged above 65; the next nearest electorate is 20 per cent — and I have I think about the fifth poorest electorate in terms of income. That is the reality of my electorate. Even though there might be a high degree of home ownership, most of those home owners are pensioners — they are surviving on pensions or they are, as self-funded retirees, not earning very much on their investments at all. So there is very, very little disposable income in my electorate, hence that very, very low socio-economic ranking that we have. That is the everyday reality, and we are just not getting the services that state governments should provide to a community like that.

I want to run through some of those needs — for example, public transport. Public transport is very, very important to the people of the Mornington Peninsula. We have got a large elderly population and because of that many of my constituents do not drive. Many are of the generation where females did not drive; the husbands tended to do that. Obviously many wives outlive their husbands, and they are therefore stranded. With that incredibly high level of disadvantage that we have in the electorate as well, many people cannot afford to run a car. Because of the geography of the Mornington Peninsula, there is only one way to go to access services, and that is up the peninsula to the Frankston area for a lot of the services that are required, whether they be medical or shopping or a whole range

of other services that people require. Training, education, further education — the only way to get there if you do not have a car and cannot afford a car is the route 788 bus.

If you want to go to Melbourne, it takes longer to get from Rosebud to Melbourne than if you were travelling from Traralgon to Melbourne or Ballarat to Melbourne or Bendigo to Melbourne or Geelong to Melbourne. It takes longer by public transport if you get the bus and because the bus is so crowded it often just drives past bus stops. In fact a couple of families have mentioned to me recently that their schoolchildren have been left behind and have been late for school because the bus was too full and they were not allowed on. I recently referenced a Public Transport Victoria (PTV) document in this place which actually makes recommendations that the service should be improved. It says the bus is dangerous and dangerously overcrowded, and that is the reality. So we need more services. We need them to be brought up to the level of a city electorate. The bus goes to the Frankston railway station. If you get to Frankston station and you want to go to Frankston Hospital or to the medical precinct or to Monash University, you actually then have to catch another bus to get to those areas, which are only a matter of 1 or 2 kilometres away but are obviously unwalkable, especially for elderly residents.

For the bus to go past Frankston station and finish at Monash University via the Frankston Hospital and medical precinct I think would be a very good suggestion. That was put forward to the government as an option, as was having some express services because it actually takes an hour and a half to go from Rosebud to Frankston. If you drive, it takes about 35 minutes in a car. To relieve some of that congestion of cars on the freeway but also to relieve some of those overcrowded buses, it would be important to have some express services from the southern peninsula right through to Frankston, especially in the morning and afternoon in the peak times. Again, these are all options that have been given to the government, and consistently they have been ignored. When you see a report to PTV that says they are worried about the dangers and the safety issues on our buses, let alone the lack of service to a very poor electorate that needs that service because it is its only service, that is an indictment of this government.

Moving onto roads, after the construction of the Peninsula Link more traffic is coming down to the Mornington Peninsula. The Mornington Peninsula Freeway is the only freeway in Victoria running through a built-up area that has no sound barriers. As you can imagine the traffic has increased. The population has increased over the last 10 to

15 years, and now we have houses abutting the freeway with residents living in them — not holiday houses, but people living in those houses right up against the freeway. The noise levels are just incredible. In fact, VicRoads has tested the Mornington Peninsula Freeway, and the noise levels from Rosebud right through to Safety Beach and just about all of those areas are above the acceptable decibel level and actually qualify for sound barriers.

My constituents have seen — and we have seen right across the state, especially in Melbourne and some suburbs of Melbourne, probably some electorates of Melbourne — some retrofitting has gone on. Even walls have been made larger or higher to protect residents from noise. In my electorate we do not even have walls. The government just refuses, even though VicRoads has said that the decibel levels are too high. It is totally refusing to make the money available for those sound barriers.

My constituents are just livid at the moment because they are getting wire rope barriers. This has been going on for 12 months. Residents and locals have had massive traffic hold-ups for 12 months. The project was meant to be done in nine months and it is only, at best, two-thirds done so we have got all that going on at the same time. In parts of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway there are a lot of trees in the median strip; there are trees on the edge of the freeway, which actually are a sound and light buffer of some sort, at least, for the residents. So what VicRoads has decided to do for the wire barriers is to pull out the large majority of those trees. It is worth noting that when they were mulching those trees they forgot that because the trees have been there so long, there is a whole habitat of birds and possums living in the middle of the freeway and on the side of the freeway. When the mulcher came through, instead of just mulching the trees it mulched up all sorts of wildlife — birds and possums were all mulched up. It was just unbelievable. It was actually quite distressing for the workers, when you talk to them about what happened there, and at the same time the residents have lost what little buffer they had.

As far as my constituents are concerned and as far as I am concerned VicRoads have just turned around and given the one-finger salute to my constituents, saying, ‘Well, we know there is a noise problem here. We admit that there is a noise problem here and we are going to make it worse. We are going to knock down those trees and we are going to make it worse for you’. God knows when those trees might regrow. With all that traffic hold-up it would have been a golden opportunity to actually start construction of those noise barriers. VicRoads knows where they are needed; as I

said their testing showed that it was needed, and they could have done it at the same time.

I must read a letter I received from a constituent. There was a public meeting about this issue and there were a number of protests. I am trying to talk my locals out of a massive public order protest on Friday because with the long weekend there will be thousands of extra people coming down, and many of my constituents are talking about blockading the freeway which will, I think, be a major safety issue and is going to cause massive congestion as those tens of thousands of people come down for the long weekend.

But after the public meeting last week about this, one of my constituents emailed the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and said:

I attended a meeting last Wednesday night. So many people just like me, just trying to get some sleep.

I think you were invited but maybe you decided to reduce the traffic noise and stay off the freeway, possibly out of consideration to help reduce the noise levels, or maybe you were just not available.

The traffic was pretty busy last night. Not much sleep to be had, pretty noisy now also and only a few hours till the morning peak hour traffic gets underway.

I was reading the other day that it's recommended we get more sleep on the weekend. Not much chance of that around here.

Anyhow, could you please update me again on the progress of the funding and plans for reducing the noise outside my home?

Please feel free to visit me and see for yourself what I'm talking about.

So it is a bit tongue-in-cheek, but the reality is that people are having health issues, either due to the fumes or because they cannot sleep. Night after night, the traffic is going till all hours of the night and starts again at five in the morning — people are not getting the sleep that they need. It is just a continuous rumble and it is an incredible issue that needs to be addressed. It is a really good example of the neglect and the lack of funding that we have actually had with regard to roads and road infrastructure on the Mornington Peninsula, especially in the seat of Nepean.

Also we have an issue where the freeway finishes at Jetty Road in Rosebud where there are actually three roundabouts within about 500 metres. At the same time we have two large schools in the area, so you have all this traffic coming off the freeway and you have schoolchildren on bikes and on foot trying to cross those three roundabouts. It is just an absolute recipe for disaster, and has been identified by VicRoads as the

number two priority to relieve congestion on the Mornington Peninsula. So those are a couple of the road issues.

Education: my schools do not ask for much. Red Hill Consolidated School, which I know the minister knows about, is a school that was built, I think, in the 1940s or 50s and has never, ever received a capital grant. It is a school that raises a lot of money through hard work from its parents and that money, more and more over the years now, is just going into maintenance. It is a school that is not on mains water, it is not on mains sewage, it is in a bushfire-prone area and it is an area that rains a lot, up there at the top of Arthurs Seat.

They have a great school with a great program, but unfortunately all that extra money that the school is raising is just going into maintenance. You can imagine a school of that age and that size that has not had capital works. They proudly want to maintain the school themselves but at this stage, 60 years later, there is an absence of capital funding, so that is the major education issue.

Rosebud Secondary College now has a few hundred thousand dollars of commitments and in-kind support to build a wellness centre because there is a whole range of mental health issues and youth suicide in the area. Again, we have a very poor, low socio-economic constituency that goes to that school. The social needs are very high and they are after only a couple of hundred thousand dollars so that they can actually start construction of this wellness centre. They have gone out into the community, they have done the work themselves and what they need is just a hand up from this government. But as I said, beyond that line under Frankston absolutely nothing came down to the Mornington Peninsula for any services.

There are obviously issues with health services, including mental health services, planning, water and the future of Point Nepean. The last thing I will mention, because I went past it on the ferry last night, is Portsea beach, which no longer exists. The government has now said that Portsea beach will no longer exist and that it is going to put a pile of rocks on it so that the Portsea pub does not get washed into the bay. That is very nice for some people, but now that the local beach has now gone the local businesses have become bankrupt and it is an absolute blight because the cheap and nasty option has been taken. Because of the erosion, which it has now been established came from the channel deepening 10 years ago, Portsea beach is no longer there. The only money has been spent on rocks to ruin the beach. I think that is pretty indicative of the

contempt in which my electorate has been held by this government.

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) (15:06) — I am delighted to take part in the debate on this motion to take note of the 2018–19 budget papers. This is a state budget that delivers for education like none other. As you are aware, Deputy Speaker, we are in the middle of the biggest education construction boom that this state has seen in more than 100 years. You literally have to go back to the 19th century. In 1870 public education became universal and we had that gold rush boom with all those wonderful Bastow buildings being constructed around the state. You have literally got to go back to that period of time to see an equivalent in terms of the investment that we are making and have been making over the last four budgets now in building new schools and upgrading schools right across the state. So I am very proud to be the Minister for Education at this historic time.

Our government has pulled out all the stops with this budget. If you thought that the previous three budgets were fantastic for education, then this budget more than any other has delivered, both to deal with unprecedented demand and enrolment pressures in our schools and also to focus, as we have in the last few years, on in equal measure excellence and tackling disadvantage in our schools. In our recent budget we announced a further \$2.8 billion for education.

Now, budgets are a reflection of a government's values. Through this budget we are yelling. We are yelling from the mountain tops about the importance of education, the transformational role of education for individuals and for societies. We prosper as a society when governments choose to invest in education. Out of that \$2.8 billion, \$1.25 billion will go to more education infrastructure. We will continue to build new schools because every Victorian family, wherever they live, deserves a great quality local school. To put that investment in some perspective, the \$1.25 billion in this year's budget is the equivalent of the four budgets under the former coalition government. They took four budgets to deliver what we have delivered in this single budget this year. We have tripled investment in our schools. That brings our investment in education in both capital and output over our term of government to more than \$8.5 billion. Again, to contrast that with what was done by those opposite when they were in government, over the same time they invested just over \$3.8 billion — less than half — and at the same time they made \$1 billion worth of cuts.

The Andrews Labor government is transforming Victoria into the Education State. Just this morning I

was with the Premier and Neil Pharoah, who is our candidate in Prahran. We went to the very top of Prahran High School to the topping out. Topping out is when you get to the end of that phase of the construction, the last bit of structural concrete. So we have topped out at Prahran high and we will now be wrapping it in its facade and then doing the internal works. That vertical school is five storeys high and has outdoor learning at every level and a competition-grade gym. We had year 6 students there from Windsor Primary School who were just so excited. The three girls who were there this morning will be studying there. They will be the year 7 leaders at that brand-new school, and they were just so excited.

We are delivering schools like this right across the state, including Bannockburn P–12 College. In Golden Plains shire there was no government secondary school, so families had to travel to either Ballarat or Geelong for their kids to go to school. We are delivering a brand-new school. Whether it is inner-city Melbourne, our regional cities and regional municipalities or our growth corridors, we are investing in school buildings. And we need to. We will need to accommodate 90 000 additional students by 2022. If we do not build these schools and if the Catholic system does not build schools and if the independent sector does not open schools, we collectively will need to accommodate 90 000 additional students. We anticipate that the pressure on government schools will be around 56 000 to 60 000 additional students. So in just this budget there is \$353.2 million to plan and build 28 brand-new schools across Victoria. That takes our total to a construction pipeline of 70 new schools.

I have said it here before: in 2016, at the start of the school year, not one new school opened its doors — not one in the whole state of Victoria. The reason for that? It takes two years to design, fund and build a brand-new school, and because of the lack of investment, the criminal lack of investment, of those opposite, not one new school opened in 2016. We have gone from not one or zero to now a pipeline of 70. Just these new schools will accommodate 15 000 new students. We are also providing \$482.8 million to expand, upgrade and modernise 134 schools across the state. So in terms of our upgrade program, of which you, Deputy Speaker, would be well aware, it is now around 1300 schools.

We are also delivering an unprecedented investment to futureproof growth, with a \$271.7 million investment to purchase land for future school sites. Again, let me put that in some context. In the previous government's last budget not one dollar went to purchase land anywhere — nothing was purchased. We came into government with this massive enrolment spike, a spike

that the previous government was advised of in 2011–12. When we came to government there was no land bank; it was all gone. That is what they do: they close schools and they sell off land or they fail to make that investment. Overall we have a massive program and that is supporting more than 5000 construction jobs.

Let me go now to output funding. Back in opposition we made a promise that we would deliver in full, that we would to meet our obligations under the original Gonski agreement. It was a promise we made in 2017 and a commitment the Premier made when he was the Leader of the Opposition. Even though the Turnbull government shelved the original Gonski agreement, ran away from it after having promised not to under Abbott, we have kept our promise, and in this budget we have delivered in full what would have been the state's obligations for the final year of the original Gonski agreement.

After our budget we had the federal budget a week later and again that exposure: the Turnbull government did not fund the original Gonski agreement. For schools in Victoria — government, Catholic and independent schools — across the three sectors and across every single school we are talking about an opportunity lost, a cut of \$700 million to every school across every part of this state from 2019 and every year beyond.

We have started negotiating with the federal government on a new bilateral agreement and a new national agreement on education funding. We pinned our colours to the mast. We have committed to increase state funding. We are prepared to go to 75 per cent of the schooling resource standard (SRS) over the next 10 years, but what we are doing is calling on the federal government to commit to that remaining 5 per cent that they have failed to fund for government schools. The federal government's model is that non-government schools will go to 100 per cent of the SRS. For government schools, however, states and territories are required to fund up to 75 per cent and the federal government will only fund 20 per cent.

There is nothing needs-based about that model. There is nothing fair about that model. So we are saying we are prepared to go to 75 per cent of the SRS, but we want the feds to come up with that last 5 per cent. It is a shame that whether it is the member for Kew or whether it is other members opposite they are more concerned with ideological crusades and spreading myths and lies about education policy and about what is taught in our classrooms than arguing with their federal colleagues about this basic element of school funding.

There are many other highlights in this budget. I do not have time to go through them all, but there is a really strong focus on pathways, on reforming careers education, on vocational education and training (VET) in schools and on our Head Start apprenticeships and traineeships. It has been really interesting focusing on career education. Unfortunately the variation is too great. We have got some schools that deliver wonderful careers advice and careers support for students; we have got other schools where the careers education is no better than when I was at school or when you were at school, Deputy Speaker. They simply say, 'What are you interested in? This is the course you need. These are the marks you need', and that is it. So we are reforming careers education by allocating \$109 million to careers education.

We had a significant review. The review found we have got to start early. We have got to start engaging with students as soon as they enter secondary school and even before, in primary school. At the moment it may be one person in the school engaging with senior students. Under our new model we will engage with years 7, 8 and 9 students. From year 9, students will have an e-careers portfolio that will help them as they work through their pathway, whether it is into employment, TAFE, university or whatever it may be.

We will also have our Head Start apprenticeships, which I spoke about earlier today — the ability for a student to choose to do an additional year, year 13, but finish school qualified, or well on the way to qualification, for a trade. So you finish school with a Victorian certificate of education (VCE) or Victorian certificate of applied learning in one hand and a trade certificate in the other. We will roll that out for 1700 students across 100 secondary schools, and part of our funding — just under \$50 million — will fund 50 Head Start coordinators. So there will be 50 Head Start coordinators working across 100 schools, making those connections between companies, industry and students, and case managing those students as they are undertaking their apprenticeship or traineeship.

It is really exciting stuff. When I went to the P-12 Maryborough Education Centre I announced it to a group of students. You should have seen it — there were a couple of year 10 boys and their minds started to click. When I said year 13 there was a groan amongst all the students, but I said, 'But wait. Imagine you do that year 13 but then when you finish you are fully qualified to go out into the workforce', and you could see the interest immediately in those kids.

We have also tackled VET in Schools. VET in Schools is where you go down a vocational pathway. It has been

unreasonable and it has been an issue for quite some time for parents, for students and for schools that it is much more expensive to go down that path than an academic, purely VCE path. So what we have done in our budget is deliver a further \$25.9 million, and that will be provided as part of the school's student resource package to increase their base funding for VET in Schools, and that has been really well received by schools and principals.

There is a big focus on student health and wellbeing — \$65.5 million — and a further focus on inclusion, which I note is something that you are passionate about, Deputy Speaker, with \$233 million allocated across a suite of initiatives.

In terms of my local community, firstly with schools, there are two secondary schools in my electorate — Monbulk College and Upwey High School — but beyond that in the Shire of Yarra Ranges we have invested just under \$50 million for six secondary schools in the Shire of Yarra Ranges — the biggest investment in secondary schools in the outer east that we have ever seen. I am really proud of it. It is investment in Lilydale High School, Lilydale Heights College, Mooroolbark College, Upper Yarra Secondary College, Monbulk College and Upwey high. This forms part of the Lilydale education plan, including the two Lilydale schools and Upper Yarra, a long overdue investment in Mooroolbark College and the next big stages for Upwey and Monbulk.

The Olinda precinct is a 34-hectare former golf course. Can you imagine a golf course in Olinda, Deputy Speaker?

Ms Asher — Cold.

Mr MERLINO — Cold and very steep. The golf course itself closed down back in 2013. We are now transforming that. We will be providing an additional almost \$3 million in this budget. There will be a second oval for the Olinda Ferny Creek Football Netball Club and additional netball courts. There will be paths. There will be a playground. We have excised a section of that land that will go to the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden. So there is great investment in my local community, whether it is sport, whether it is education, whether it is community infrastructure. I am really proud of this budget.

Ms ASHER (Brighton) (15:21) — This is my 26th budget, and you can throw in a couple of mini-budgets along the way. I am very pleased this will be my last. I look forward to things that I can do, but hopefully I can still continue to make a decent

contribution for my own community up until the election in November. There is very, very little for my electorate in this budget, and as I listen to my colleagues on this side of the house speak, that seems to be a universal theme. As the Deputy Premier said, budgets express governments' values, and they do.

The government has deliberately chosen to expend money in its own seats, particularly in the marginal seats it needs to hold. For those of us on the other side of the house, we do not get very much at all. Every election night whoever wins stands up there and says, 'I promise to govern for all of Victoria, not just for those who voted for me'. I have a vague recollection of the current Premier saying that, but of course with this budget, in expressing its values, the government has not governed for all of Victoria, because it certainly has not governed for the seats it does not hold.

However, I was terribly excited to see the word 'Brighton' mentioned at page 45 of budget paper 4, *State Capital Program*. Of course — just in case the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, who is at the table, thinks that they have made an error — this was a reference to an existing project funded by the previous government for an \$8 million upgrade for Brighton Secondary College in Brighton East. So the only reason the name 'Brighton' has made it to the budget papers is in relation to a project which was funded by the previous government. I also make reference to a previous project listed at page 57 of *State Capital Program*, and that is a project for Elwood College, which is a current project — a \$10 million project which will be completed in quarter 3 of 2019–20. Again that was a project that the previous government announced prior to the election, and that obviously still gets a mention because it is an existing project.

The only piece of funding that I can find for my electorate is something for the northern part of the electorate, Elwood College. This is a new project of \$600 000, and again, as I hear the amounts of money expended, for example, in my neighbouring seat of Bentleigh, I realise that \$600 000 is not the largest sum spent on any school in Victoria. I am pleased that this funding is here, because the government will know that the Liberal Party has a record. Since the Elwood College was redistributed into the Brighton electorate the Liberal Party have a record of supporting this school, and I would imagine the government would have thought that during the election campaign there would be a funding announcement for Elwood. I am pleased the government has responded to pressure from the school to fund, and no doubt the school will embark on telling the government what additional funds it needs in the run-up to the election. I also note that my

constituent the member for Albert Park made reference to this funding for Elwood College, and of course I would remind him that that is no longer in his electorate, but if he wants to have a paternal interest in the school, then we would be very, very happy for his active support.

So nothing for Brighton at all — for the suburb of Brighton, absolutely nothing. Simple requests have been ignored in my electorate. I instance, for example, that we have two requests for pedestrian crossings in the electorate. I know the minister at the table has received questions and adjournment issues from me and is aware of both of these issues. There is a very strong community demand for a pedestrian crossing at what is called the Dendy shopping centre in Hampton Street. Unfortunately there was a death in Hampton Street some time ago, and there is a very, very strong push by traders and locals alike to have a pedestrian crossing there. That still has not been funded.

I also draw to the minister's attention that there is a very, very strong push — and I know that he is aware of this — for a pedestrian crossing close to Elwood Primary School, not only for the use of the school children but also for use by the general public. There was a very, very nasty near miss there recently, which has been covered in the local press.

These are two really good examples of small projects that people in my electorate would like to see, but they have not been funded. I keep getting responses from the minister saying, 'The Elwood Primary School proposal has been scoped by VicRoads, and we will look at it in the future'. He has been telling me for four years now that we are going to look at it in the future, and it is still not forthcoming.

There is a project being done in Brighton at the moment, and that is a sewer upgrade. It is maintenance. I reckon that is probably what the government thinks of Brighton. I bet you that got through without the minister even being aware of it. We have some maintenance on our sewer lines, funded obviously in the previous budget.

Mr J. Bull — A very important project.

Ms ASHER — It is an important project, but I think there is a symbolism in that project — that there is nothing for the suburb of Brighton and \$600 000 for the suburb of Elwood in this budget whilst there are some very, very worthwhile community projects that could have been funded.

I want to look at some of the assumptions of the budget. The table I always look at first when I look at budgets is

on page 17 of budget paper 2, *Strategy and Outlook* — the Victorian economic forecasts — because this table, in my opinion, is the most important table in the budget and it sets the government's assumptions and directions. I note that the wage price index assumptions are particularly interesting. For 2018–19 there is a wage price index assumption of 2.5 per cent; for 2019–20, 2.75 per cent; for 2020–2021, 3 per cent; and for 2021–22, 3.25 per cent. I would say that I think these assumptions may prove to be unrealistic given the public sector wage blowout that we have already seen under this government. The Auditor-General has referred to the public sector wage blowout under this government previously, and I find that those assumptions are at odds with public sector wage rises over 10 per cent, which have happened under this administration.

I then turn to the chart I always look at second when I receive the budget. It is in *Statement of Finances*, budget paper 5, and it is the table which is at page 142 of this budget paper relating to tax, because this tells the story of how the government obviously intends to fund all of these projects, for example, that we just heard the Deputy Premier speaking about, and of course all the other members on the government side have spoken a lot about their projects.

But how these projects are being funded is of course the important issue for me. We are going to see an increase, for example, in payroll tax from 2017–18 revised of \$5.9 billion to 2021–22 estimate of \$7.2 billion. We are going to see — surprise, surprise — total taxes on property, which impact so adversely on the Brighton electorate, go up from 2017–18 revised of \$3.487 billion to 2021–22 estimate of \$4.918 billion. Again that is a significant increase. If one looks at land tax, which is a tax that many, many people in my electorate pay, it is a tax that causes a lot of concern. We are seeing an increase in the fire services property levy, and properties in electorates such as mine are ripe for the Labor raid on things like fire services property levies — and have they raided! Look at page 142.

If we will look at stamp duty, there are very, very high levels of stamp duty being paid on median value houses in the Brighton electorate. Then there is land transfer duty. The government is anticipating land transfer duty to rise from \$6.8 billion in 2017–18 to \$7.773 billion in 2021–22. Again it is no surprise that stamp duties are going to come from electorates where there are high property values, and it causes a great degree of financial difficulty for people to just hand over very, very large amounts of money to the government.

But the proof of this is in total taxation. The government at 2017–18 revised has a tax collection of \$22.446 billion, and that will go up in 2021–22 to \$27.483 billion. That really tells a story. The government is taking from payroll tax, from land tax, from stamp duties and from a whole range of other taxes and allowing those taxes to continue to rise. That is funding their marginal seats budget and their campaign to re-elect themselves by sandbagging their seats.

But the thing that irks many on this side of politics about those taxes I just referred to is that the Premier made a promise in the run-up to the last state election that there would be no new taxes and no increased taxes. Of course he has tripled brown coal royalties; introduced a new vacant residential property tax — you cannot even use your own property, talk about a violation of property law; introduced new annual property valuations to increase land tax; increased stamp duties on new cars; increased fire services property levies, which I have already referred to; removed off-the-plan stamp duty concessions for investors; introduced a new stamp duty on property transfers between spouses — of all the interventions in private lives; introduced Uber and taxi fare taxes; introduced a new point-of-consumption betting tax; introduced a new city access tax for the West Gate tunnel; introduced new stamp duty surcharges for foreign purchasers, and they have been increased; and introduced a new land tax surcharge for foreign owners, which has also been increased.

All of these new taxes have been introduced, and the tax collection, as I have just read out, is anticipated to rise significantly. I suppose in some ways that if the government was actually using the taxation well, the electorate might be happy with it, but when you look at the cost blowouts for things such as the Melbourne Metro project and the level crossing removals program, people have a right to be irked about the government's use of their hard-earned taxation dollars.

There are a number of things missing from the budget overall. What is missing is any meaningful attempt to look at the cost of living — a significant community concern. There is a \$50 gimmick for people to get \$50 off their electricity bills — and this from a government that deliberately allowed Hazelwood to shut and is forcing up the price of electricity through the increased use of renewables. There is nothing in here for community safety, and if there is an issue about which people feel scared in my part of the world, it is crime. Crime has gone up in the bayside area, unfortunately, and it is random, I concede, that we had a terrorist attack in Brighton. People are scared in my electorate, and I do not see a great deal in this budget to address

that, nor do I see a great deal in this house by way of legislation to address that.

I also do not see much in relation to the removal of congestion. Again for people who live in Brighton, Elwood and the northern bit of Hampton, which I represent, congestion is a very, very serious issue. I note that the Liberal Party have a policy to remove traffic lights, and of relevance to my electorate is its proposal to remove the traffic lights at the corner of North Road and Nepean Highway, the corner of South Road and Nepean Highway and the corner of Glen Huntly Road and Nepean Highway. At least that is a plan. It is something to try to deal with the congestion in the southern suburbs, going down the Nepean Highway. This is the series of suburbs that do not have access to a freeway to come into town. Most people do drive — they choose to drive — and there is no plan to bust the congestion for the electorate along the Nepean Highway generally, Punt Road and sometimes St Kilda Road.

On the big issues — cost of living, community safety and congestion — we are not seeing anything. On smaller funding dollops the government has deliberately chosen, as a reflection of its values, to fund its own seats — to sandbag its own seats. This is not a government that governs for all Victorians. I think this is a very shameful budget in that sense. It is a budget where there has been blatant bias to the government's own seats, particularly their marginal seats. This is a government more concerned in its budget with a view to its own re-election rather than to a fair allocation of resources across electorates in Victoria, and that includes electorates they do not hold.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (15:36) — It is always exciting to rise to speak on the take-note motion on the budget papers, especially following the member for Brighton. I can say that it is a very exciting budget for the people of Frankston. It is another catalyst for exciting change in our state and also in my community of Frankston. I would just like to bring up that that is the first time I have heard someone talk about the traffic light removal policy for quite some time. I thought it had died a natural death. In Frankston we heard about it. The plan was to remove the set of traffic lights at the intersection of the Frankston Freeway and Cranbourne Road. To do that, you would stop the level crossing removal program. Ironically, if you did that, you would remove a set of lights, you would acquire a hell of a lot of land and put businesses out of business, and then drivers would be held up 200 metres down the road at another level crossing. It was not a very well thought out plan, and I think that is the reason it died a natural death. I just wanted to put that on the record.

I would like to start off by connecting my speech to that of the Minister for Education on the appropriation bill, because education was definitely a hallmark of this budget for Frankston and rightly so: this budget should have been focused on education for Frankston; it is what the community asked for — more investment in our schools and our TAFE — because we were horribly ignored for four years between 2010 and 2014. As most reasonable people know, government investment in education is a long-term investment in communities, in economic development and in providing positive pathways for our youth. I would go so far as to say to previous speakers who stated that this budget does not make any investment in community safety that an investment in TAFE is a long-term investment in community safety. It really is.

From next year, 30 TAFE priority qualifications and preapprenticeship pathways will cost people in Victoria nothing to complete. There are no course fees — nothing — and that is driving future pathways for many, many people in my community. In fact I think we have over 4000 people in the Frankston community that have a TAFE qualification already, so it is already a very popular option and we are making it easier to go down that pathway. So whether it is getting a start in nursing, plumbing, construction, engineering, horticulture, accounting or even auto body repairs, as my good friend the member for Eltham said on social media this morning, Frankston will be the place to do a lot of those courses. Of course in Frankston we have the \$79.5 million Chisholm redevelopment, which makes our Chisholm campus the flagship, some would say, of Chisholm for the south-east, but I would say for Victoria. People in the south-east can come to Frankston and get the skills they need for the job they want.

We know that 30 000 of these courses will be available from next year. That is to make sure we have got people with the skills ready to keep on working in the infrastructure pipeline that this government has created. Because we were dead in the water under the last government, this government has had to create all of these projects and get them going — and we need the workforce behind us to do that. So essentially, this is a great piece of investment by the government. It has been very, very well received in my community. I have had some listening posts and some street stalls, and this is the one thing that people are raving about, because everyone has got a mother, son, father or daughter that might be looking to make a career change, to re-skill or to get a job. This is so important for those people in our community.

The budget also provided Frankston with one of six emergency department mental health crisis units. Again,

this is a very important investment in the Frankston community in an area that had been ignored by the previous government. We know mental illness is hurting families in all communities across Victoria, and these six hubs will make a hell of a difference. The budget also put money towards rehab facilities and funding for suicide prevention, which is extremely important.

We have also made history for Frankston in this budget. We have been able to — for the first time ever — fund every single state school that submitted a case for funding for infrastructure projects over the last three and half years. Every single school that put a project together and asked for money has received it. That equals almost 100 per cent of state schools in Frankston getting new projects in just three years. And it has been a lot of hard work, because I believe some of these schools were not even sure how to go about meeting with their local MP to discuss their needs and requirements, and some of these schools were absolutely hurting. For four years under a Liberal government there were no ribbons to cut — nothing happening in Frankston — and no one was taking any notice of us at all. We heard all these promises, including Doncaster rail, airport rail and Rowville rail, and not one inch of rail was laid in four years. We know that talk is cheap and promises are easy to give; getting this work done is a lot harder.

I would like to commend all the schools in Frankston that have either finished projects under funding from this government, are about to finish them or are starting projects, because the school communities in the Frankston area are strong and are only getting stronger. It is fantastic to be able to go to, say, Monterey Secondary College and see a spark in the eyes of the kids. They have got a brand-new wing, and they are part of the Frankston North education precinct now. You can see teachers and kids looking at the money they have received in previous budgets, and it has made a school that befits them; it has made a school that makes them proud to be there. It has actually given that community a lot of faith in themselves and a lot of confidence as well. It is affecting not just the kids but the whole school community — the families, the grandparents. And it is a great feeling to be able to start some more projects off with this 2018–19 budget.

As well as the Frankston North education plan, which includes the aforementioned school, Monterey Secondary College, Aldercourt Primary School and Mahogany Rise Primary School, we have also funded in this budget a hockey field for Mount Erin College, which is something that that principal and that school community have been after for quite some time. We have been able to fund Belvedere Park primary and a

redevelopment at Nepean School. Nepean School would bring a tear to the eye. From what I understand they were not able to drag the previous member out to the school to have a look. This is a school I actually worked at prior to being an MP, and there are some amazing students and people at the school and in the school community. I was lucky enough to be able to get a piece of funding with my good friend, the member for Carrum, to ensure that those toilets at that school were redeveloped. This might seem a very trivial thing for most people; toileting is one of those things we take for granted. Unfortunately, in these schools where the kids have different needs, toileting sometimes means lying on the ground. At this school it meant using shower curtains. They need lifts and the carers need apparatus as well so they do not injure themselves or the kids. To actually be able to deliver that at this school — it just brought a tear to the eye. To see these kids so happy over something the rest of us take for granted was quite amazing, and I know it brought a tear to the eye of the member for Carrum as well.

We have been able to budget for a redevelopment at Frankston Special Developmental School as well, Ballam Park Primary School, Kingsley Park Primary School, Karingal Heights Primary School, Frankston Heights Primary School and Naranga School. As recently as last week we turned sods on projects for the Derinya Primary School kitchen garden and the McClelland College redevelopment, which includes a gym and basketball court. Again, these are projects that our community have been passionate about and they have been asking for for years. It is an Andrews Labor government that is delivering those projects. They were ignored — totally ignored — by the previous government.

As I alluded to before, I have worked in Nepean School. I have worked in many of these other schools in Frankston as well, and I can tell the chamber today that the effect this is having on our community is not just in the schools. This is bringing a whole community of people together, and it is making a difference in the way they view themselves and the way they view Frankston, which is just terrific to see. And I would say congratulations to those school communities on their strong advocacy to get this funding and their successful advocacy as well.

Essentially, in Frankston, we have got a situation where our community is rapidly evolving. We have had so much change in Frankston over three and half years that people are saying, ‘Whoa! Slow down!’. But I believe that if we are not actually going forward, we are going backwards. Crime is down; the crime rate in Frankston is down by 16 per cent. TAFE is now funded, and we

have got a new TAFE redevelopment on the way to being delivered. Schools are being funded. The state has created 340 000 jobs during our time in government and most of these are full-time. And we have the strongest economy in the nation.

At the heart of our plan for Frankston in the future is our \$2.8 million for Frankston line rail projects. In Frankston that equals a new station, a redeveloped Young Street and also the Overton Road level crossing removal. The Overton Road level crossing removal is going great guns. By 18 June we will have trains going across a rail bridge at Overton Road. This is an intersection where previously people like myself waited 20 minutes at that rail line. This caused many people to be frustrated and caused some people to take some fairly ill-advised manoeuvres in their vehicles. I remember responding when I was a firefighter to an incident involving one particular gentleman who was so frustrated that he started to cross the line against the boom gates and he instead turned onto the actual rail line and the train collected the car and squished it between the platform and the train after dragging it for 300 metres. We will not see that anymore because the trains will be on the rail up in the air. The sole purpose of the road below the rail will be that the cars own it and the pedestrian own it. It will be much safer and it will save people a hell of a lot of time.

In the Frankston CBD we have redeveloped Young Street, and the Frankston station development will very, very soon be open. It is a brand-new competition-winning station. It really is a bespoke piece of architecture in Frankston. I think more and more people are going to visit Frankston and see that the perception of Frankston locals has changed but also their perception as visitors to Frankston will change. It will be a safe new street — a place where you would want to come to shop. It will be a place where you want to bring your family to live, to love, to learn and a place where we can actually attract tourists once more. I thank members of our local community for endorsing the new vision for Frankston that we have had over the past three and a half years and for supporting this vision as well.

The funny thing about the Young Street redevelopment is that during it we had a bit of a political tug of war. It was kind of a one-sided tug of war; it was not much of a war at all actually. We had the federal member for Dunkley come out and say that 26 businesses had closed during the redevelopment of that street. I can now tell you, using Frankston council’s own statistics, that the vacancy rates in the CBD in Frankston are quite stable, and the one street that is bucking that trend with more occupancies than ever is Young Street. We have had more shops move into our CBD than ever before

because of our vision for Frankston and sticking to it and getting it done.

Every single day of a Labor government in Frankston is a good day when families are looked after, kids are educated, crime rates go down and public transport is getting better and better. Of course the Overton Road level crossing removal means that we can run more trains more often with the Melbourne Metro project. We are also at the moment carrying out the Baxter electrification duplication business case, of which we have already funded \$1 million, to ensure that the Frankston station is a no-regrets build where we can plug the Baxter electrification signalling straight into that station and we do not have to spend any more money retrofitting. We have already gone to the step of making sure that we can do that when the federal government actually funds that properly.

This government has spent four years lifting Frankston to where it should be in the state. That has meant investing in our community and injecting more reasons to be proud and not just calling Frankston the gateway to the peninsula or, as the last federal member used to call it, the Riviera of the peninsula, but actually doing something and getting it done. We are not just called that; we are known as the gateway to the peninsula, we are known as the major city on the peninsula and we are known as the transport hub. You only get these changes when you actually invest, not because an MP comes out constantly and says it in the media or says it in the chamber, like we have heard in the past.

We are the best city in the bay, and I am very proud to be the member for Frankston. I know that under a re-elected Labor government my community will continue to prosper. We will continue to go down a path where everyone has opportunity, and the feedback I have from my community about this budget is very, very positive. We hear some negative feedback from those opposite, but in my community the feedback is tremendous, and I think we are seeing more support for an Andrews Labor government.

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (15:51) — I rise today to make comment on the 2018–19 ‘Getting Things Done’ budget or, as we like to call it down in Polwarth, the ‘Forgetting about Polwarth’ budget. It has been somewhat depressing listening to the member for Frankston and his pork-barrelled nirvana down by the bay, rattling off the various wins that this government is prepared to put on the board in order to keep a seat at the next election. Good luck to the people of Frankston on that.

But of course we are a big state, and the fine electorate of Polwarth in fact covers 5 per cent of the state of Victoria. In that 5 per cent of the state we have over 50 distinct communities and townships, we cover six local government areas, we include the nation’s busiest tourism strip along the Great Ocean Road and of course we are famed throughout the world for our highly productive agricultural, dairy, cropping and cattle industries that have been the backbone of the Victorian economy now for 150 years. Polwarth, for all of that, with all that it contributes to the state, had a budget handed down that one would think, from trawling through the six booklets of the budget, the documents involved and the endless days of press releases that went on and on and on for months, that 5 per cent of the state of Victoria had in fact been excised, cut off and sent somewhere else in the world.

Our rural towns and our community of Polwarth are holding their own in the state. We have some marvellous export-oriented businesses such as the Australian Lamb Company, Associated Kiln Dryers and Bulla Foods, to name but a few. It is businesses like these that do not rely on government handouts and being propped up by the largesse of government. They rely on getting on with business and doing things well, and providing jobs and opportunities in our region. What they want from government of course is investment and support for their infrastructure and for government to play the role that it needs to.

Consistently in communities throughout my region we are still completely left behind and forgotten about when it comes to basic infrastructure needs so that business can get on with what it needs to do. We still have towns such as Terang that have gone on and on and on waiting to be connected to natural gas. We have towns and communities still waiting to be sewered and still waiting to have mains water connection hooked up. We even have the bizarre situation at the moment in the regional city of Colac that the town continues to grow to the west but it is not sewered, it does not have mains gas and it does not have mains water. The national broadband network lines and telephone connections are in the middle of the road, and there are no safe turn-out lanes. The infrastructure that this state is responsible for providing is severely lacking. These are the types of investments that we need to make in rural and regional Victoria if we are to create what so many people in this state want: a state of cities and not a city state.

This budget focuses heavily on pork-barrel seats in Melbourne. We hear the government talking about endless billions and billions being invested in more freeways, more railways, more infrastructure and more of the basic components of life here in the city of

Melbourne, but the rest of the state is laid bare. It is a real shame because it is opportunities that are created outside Melbourne that will provide this state with continued growth into the future, as well as good and safe places for people to live, raise their families and do their business. Until this government recognises that, we will continue to see what I can only describe as incredibly expensive bandaid solutions, which are continually thrown at solving Melbourne's problems when proper support from government could create opportunities for populations and businesses outside of Melbourne.

What has this government achieved with this budget from the point of view of the people of Polwarth? The answer is, quite simply, very little. They are taxing us a lot more and they are racking up a lot more debt — two things that the hardworking people of Polwarth are really concerned about. They are concerned about the legacy of continuing to pay more tax for smaller outcomes for them as people who live in this area and contribute to society.

They are also concerned about debt. We know that under Labor governments debt builds up, builds up and builds up until the house of cards of spending and not focusing on what is important finally collapses. We have seen it time and time again. Sadly, when we look at the figures in their own documents, debt in this state will have gone from the relatively high levels of \$15.8 billion today to well in excess of \$30 billion within three or four years time. Why have these borrowings gotten out of control? Why are taxes up? All of these things are happening because of the blowouts in the bandaid solutions that are being rolled out by this government at every level. It does not matter whether it is a hospital build or the Melbourne Metro tunnel. We all know about the infamous east–west link blowout and the level crossing blowouts. This government has a poor approach to managing and sustaining projects that are needed for this city. It is a build-at-all-costs, press-release-at-all-costs government. It is a no-responsibility, no-care government that just wants to be seen to be doing something, no matter how achieves it.

The big issue for many people in my electorate is energy. An electorate like Polwarth supplies energy to the state in the form of onshore and offshore gas. It provides what many are pushing for now in the renewable space, whether it is solar or wind power. The seat of Polwarth is an energy super giant by Australian standards. Did we get clear direction on energy from this government in this budget? It still has a very confused and cloudy position on gas. On the one hand the government's drive to renewables relies on gas and

it is providing gas as a low-cost alternative to keep people's homes heated and industry alive and viable in this state. On the other hand the government is very happy to keep that energy locked up and inaccessible to both industry and consumers. We are not sure where it is going, but we do know that someone in Treasury had a bit of a laugh at the expense of the community of Victoria because their energy policy pretty much consists of a *Reader's Digest* approach. In a sector that is so critical to the wellbeing of Victorians, the government has come up with a sign-up on the internet, you beaut, super-duper, don't look now and we'll send you some steak knives and a \$50 voucher to help keep your energy costs down approach. Without doubt people in my electorate and I know that people throughout Victoria saw that for what it was — a cheap stunt. Anyone who is familiar with these types of approaches knows that this is a cheap marketing campaign. It is a gimmick, and it is being used by this government to data trawl for the upcoming election. It is a real pity that something as important as energy policy in this state could be treated so flippantly.

People in my electorate have real concerns about energy. Not only do they want much better clarity around policy on onshore and offshore gas drilling, but they also want to know that, for people who need energy, who need electricity, who need power in their businesses and on their farms, in their bed-and-breakfasts and in their tourism businesses, the power will be there.

There is an energy transmission supply crisis in my electorate. On the one hand, wind farm companies supported by this government can put up whatever transmission lines and infrastructure to whatever size, whatever specification and whatever scale they like. Whether they work or not is irrelevant to this government — they just put them up. On the other hand, the poor old farmer, the person who is generating income, generating jobs and generating export dollars is left with glorified cotton reels as energy supply lines to their farm. You have the ludicrous situation of farmers being unable to invest in the latest and greatest dairy equipment and other technology for their farms because their power supply is so poor. This is an issue that has been going on for a long time, and this government continues to ignore it. This budget continues to ignore it, at the expense once again of keeping people in Melbourne happy and feeling good about themselves with renewable energy policies but not the people who live in the area where energy is actually going — the businesses and industries and farmers who need that energy. They have been forgotten.

We have the Minister for Roads and Road Safety here, and of course roads are a great topic in western Victoria. Some money was put towards Hamilton Highway and Princes Highway west, but it is but a drop in the ocean. Communities continually raise with me their desire to understand what is happening with road funding, what the government's priorities are and when the main connections in their area are going to be fixed and brought to a standard that is suitable and appropriate for this day and age. Everyone in country Victoria knows how much more we rely now on roads than ever before. Our transports are now two, three and four times larger than they were only 30 years ago. We are moving product in a way that we never moved it before. We are moving it out of Victoria and around the world, and road transport is that crucial link that links farms to the ports and to other countries. We still do not know when these main connections are going to be fixed. The transport industry in particular constantly reports back to me the unnecessary wear and tear on their vehicles and their infrastructure just from trying to do business here in the state of Victoria. We do not have a cohesive plan and direction for people to understand and to work towards.

We of course had the terrible situation earlier in the year with a fatal accident at one of the many dangerous intersections in my electorate. Of course VicRoads have more recently announced an upgrade of that, and that is something that everybody has looked forward to in my community. However, they continue with their policy of telling communities and telling people and telling the Country Fire Authority and telling the Victoria State Emergency Service that they will not upgrade or improve known danger spots unless someone is mortally wounded or killed at such an intersection, which is a terrible way to run road policy — we have to kill people before we will fix an intersection.

It is a shame that that is the case, because I am still continually lobbied and pressed on some key intersections such as the infamous blue church corner, the Murray Street and Armstrong Street intersection in Colac and the Cape Otway Road–Deans Marsh–Winchelsea Road intersection — three key intersections in my region that continually come up. The police, emergency services, volunteer groups and others and the local farmers have to put up with accidents year in, year out at these intersections.

We know of course that the law and order space is a big issue in metropolitan areas but it is also a big issue in rural and regional areas. In some of my country towns that once probably only recorded some slight misdeed once every few years crime is now a regular

occurrence. We have the terrible situation that they no longer backfill or support country police stations, even ones as large as Colac, where we are seeing a significant investment in a new police station but no investment in the police when they are sick or away. We had the appalling situation over January where for the whole month of January, the whole busy tourism season, there were no highway policemen on the Great Ocean Road, Princes Highway west or the Hamilton Highway. These are major, major thoroughfares, with people driving in huge numbers in this region. There are no police resources to look after our roads and to maintain safety for all. We saw the consequences of that with some terrible, terrible occurrences on our roads at that time.

We have seen the undertaking of a new police station — the long-awaited police station — but unfortunately that came at the expense of our court facilities being repaired. We have the situation where a public building as important as a courthouse has no disability provision whatsoever, no toilets. There are no safe spaces for domestic violence people. There are no proper rooms or breakout spaces for families in crisis. So we have on the one hand a huge Taj Mahal police station being built that is minus the police numbers it needs but adjacent is a courthouse that is just simply not fit for purpose.

This budget has left people in Polwarth with critical services, critical road infrastructure and other critical infrastructure feeling very underdone. It is an indictment of this government that it has so heavily invested — or is telling itself and telling us through press release that it has heavily invested — in parts of Victoria but it has clearly left big swathes of this state untouched by its financial largesse. It has racked up debt, it has increased taxes and it is not giving back to the people that contribute to that in a meaningful and useful way that ensures the prosperity for all of Victoria.

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (16:06) — Well, what can I say about that? Obviously the member for Polwarth was not here or was not paying attention during the dark period of 2010 to 2014. I am very pleased to be speaking on the motion to take note of the 2018–19 budget papers of the state Labor government. Once again the Andrews Labor government has delivered a very strong budget that delivers the things that matter most to people living in Victoria. It also continues on from its other strong budgets since being elected in 2014 when it comes to real investments to improve education, health, roads and infrastructure throughout the state. Not only that but it really has put such a strong and important focus on economic development.

For now we actually have a vision. We have a vision for the state and where people need to go whether it is around sport or tourism or whether it is about manufacturing into the future or about health, both health care as well as the health industry. These things are all coming into play and coming into place to make Victoria a very vibrant and strong and economically developed and active state. That of course is why so many people are coming to the state. They are attracted by the fact that there are so many things happening. There is so much job creation and there really is a sense that Victoria is a vibrant and thriving part of the Australian economy and part of Australian society.

Because we are talking about the budget and I am representing the residents of the Thomastown electorate, I want to confine most of my comments to some of the local things that are going on in the electorate that are really going to benefit so many people living there, because there is so much that needs to be done. Before the redistribution the Thomastown electorate was very well established and made up of the older suburbs of Thomastown, Epping, Lalor and Reservoir. The redistribution has meant that the seat of Thomastown has quite a great coverage of the northern growth corridor. This of course means there are a whole lot of other demands and needs of those people living in the area.

Of course infrastructure takes time, and we are well behind because during the 2010–14 period when the Baillieu-Napthine Liberal-National coalition was the state government in Victoria there was very little that happened in those four years. In fact in the growth area of Thomastown I think we calculated that something like \$200 000 was all that was spent in an area that has unprecedented growth. That growth was projected at the time of the Liberal-National Party government but nothing was done to really protect or start the planning or even some of the works that are needed for the community that is coming into that area. Earlier we heard from the Minister for Education who gave us the staggering figure that in 2016 there were zero new schools opened, and that was as a result of the inaction and inactivity of the previous government. Yet to date something like 70 new schools, under the state Labor government, have been built over this term.

The budget for the Thomastown residents does actually benefit all residents of Thomastown whether they live in the established areas or whether they live in some of the new estates that are being built on the outer northern fringes. We know that with population growth there is a greater demand for things like schools, health services and of course roads, and these are all things that the Andrews Labor government is building and is planning

in the Thomastown electorate and in the north, particularly around the Epping and Wollert areas. I think all residents are benefiting from the huge investments in education, for example, in Thomastown. There are many new schools planned, and land has been purchased. There is the about-to-be opened Edgars Creek Secondary School, and in this budget, as I said, there has been land purchased to cater for further growth out further in Wollert as well as land purchased for the primary school section of the Edgars Creek P–12 school and education precinct.

This budget has also catered for the established areas. We have seen Lalor Gardens Primary School receiving \$3.8 million to upgrade and modernise and build a gymnasium and hall on their grounds.

I recently visited the school to make that announcement. It was really fantastic to see the laughs and the smiles on the faces of the students when they got the news they would be getting a great new facility with a gymnasium, netball and basketball courts, a canteen and even a music room, which is something the school is lacking. We have also got Epping Secondary College. This current budget provides for the modernisation and refurbishment of classrooms at that school so we can get 21st-century education programs and learning happening through new and upgraded facilities worth over \$3 million. This is a very popular school. Lalor Secondary College is already zoned because of the great number of families wanting to send their children to that school. Epping Secondary College is also bursting at the seams with the number of students who want to go to that school.

When we talk about education, it is not just infrastructure that is important. Yes, it is important to have good schools, good facilities and good buildings that students can be proud of, and to have facilities within schools that allow for the most modern and up-to-date learning to take place and the equipment that you need to do that, whether it is for science, technology, engineering, mathematics, music or performing arts. But we also need education programs and things that ensure students are acquiring the skills and knowledge they need for their adult lives and for getting jobs. It was great to hear that there is money in this budget for proper careers education, because so often we hear — and I hear this particularly in the northern suburbs — that students are just not getting the information they need to choose a career.

When we look at all the building and infrastructure going on, we see that skilled tradespeople are needed to work on these projects. Often students in schools are not getting the information that allows them to make

decisions about whether or not they would actually like to be an electrician, a carpenter or a fitter and turner. For too long in days past these occupations have been considered to be not as good as an academic career, but in actual fact they are. The Andrews Labor government is putting those manual trades and occupations on the map as being just as important, just as needed and having just as high a status as others, whether they be academic jobs, white-collar jobs or working in an office.

In addition to careers education we have got the Head Start apprenticeship and traineeship program that allows students to actually stay at school, get their Victorian certificate of applied learning or their Victorian certificate of education and come out with a trade or an apprenticeship that they can use in real jobs when they finish school.

Many people have talked about the great changes to TAFE. We are rebuilding TAFE and saving TAFE from what the Liberal-National coalition did previously. We are also now building on that with the 30 nominated and free courses that young people or others can enrol in. They will be provided free to make sure that we encourage people to enrol in courses that provide the skills that we will need into the future as we build this state up, as we build the infrastructure and the things that we need in this growing state with our increasing population. In Thomastown there is something like 11 000 residents who have TAFE qualifications now, but of course we hope to see many more starting those TAFE courses and coming out with good TAFE qualifications as a result of this incentive of free courses. TAFE provides students with fantastic skills and expertise, and if you have got good skills and expertise, then you have got a much better chance to get good, secure work or even perhaps, because of one of these courses, set up your own business.

The Thomastown electorate is a very multicultural electorate. In the last census we saw that for something like 50 per cent of its residents English is not the first language spoken at home. There is a growing number of new migrant families moving into the area, as well as the well-established families that are maybe second or third-generation Australians. There are also many who are first-generation migrants to Australia. They have found that TAFE qualifications really allow them to flourish and contribute to Australian and Victorian society. Just getting that bit of support and that bit of training ensures that they have skills that are matched to the work that is offered and the jobs that are being provided in Victoria.

I will talk a little bit about roads. Whether you drive in to work or whether you drive to school — because

often students get dropped off at school by their parents — we need roads. This is an ongoing theme, and most of the queries I get through Facebook comments are from residents who are very frustrated with the roads. Of course roads do take time to build. We are building them, but of course they are never finished quickly enough. There are now many road projects in the pipeline that were included in the last budget. In earlier budgets we funded and are now working on the O'Herns Road project that connects O'Herns Road to the Hume Freeway. Then we have the roundabout being removed at the Epping Road and O'Herns Road junction, which is well overdue. It has been announced that there is going to be a duplication of Epping Road from Memorial Drive up to Craigieburn Road East, which again is going to bust up congestion in the area and allow people to get home much more quickly.

At the moment we hear stories — and I know this from driving around the northern suburbs on the weekends to go to sports functions or to drop my children off — about it taking people half an hour to drive 1 to 2 kilometres. That is just on the weekends, let alone during the work time peak hours when it takes some people who work in the city up to 2 hours to get home after a busy day at work. Of course we are looking forward to all these projects. They build on one another and will make the livability of the area better.

The Northern Hospital is another really important place within the northern suburbs and a place that is dear to many people's hearts. It was the replacement for the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital in Preston that was actually built by the community; in fact it was donations and fundraising mainly that built that hospital, and then it was closed down, I think, under Jeff Kennett. Labor later built a new hospital in the north, the Northern Hospital. Again, it was the last budget that committed \$170 million to build a seven-storey block on this hospital to cater for the increasing demand and also to upgrade the hospital, because while the staff at the hospital are first class, the facilities and the system really were not. But now there is some really great management and great staff — some that have always been there and some new people — and they are starting to get the facilities that they need to really put the Northern Hospital on the map, both in the landscape and in the forefront of people's minds.

In finishing I just wanted to do a comparison: \$40 million from the Liberal-National party government from 2010 to 2014; nearly \$400 million over the last four years from the Labor Andrews government.

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) (16:21) — I rise to make my contribution on the 2018–19 budget take-note motion. I want to begin with a portfolio overview, and then I will talk more specifically about my electorate of Kew. There was not one new dollar in this budget for Catholic and independent schools, which educate almost 40 per cent of Victorian school students. Victoria has the highest rate of students being educated outside of the government system anywhere in Australia except for the ACT, and I think it was a huge snub by the Andrews Labor government to put not one new cent of money into capital for Catholic and independent schools. I refer to a media release from Stephen Elder, who is the head of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. He made these very well-made points:

We all know the challenges Melbourne's booming population is creating for essential services such as education. Catholic education is playing our part in easing the pressure on government schools — and the taxpayer — by building schools of our own in key growth areas.

This year alone we opened five new schools across the greater Melbourne area, providing vital social capital as well as educational facilities in rapidly developing areas.

Our reward has been a massive snub from the Andrews government. The Premier has been happy to hand over money in the lead-up to November's poll, but there has been no program allocation stretching into the future in this month's state budget. Funding has been choked off.

Starving our system is bad for the 100 000 families across the state with children at a Catholic school, bad for the taxpayer and bad for the public purse.

Stephen Elder has made very poignant criticisms of this Andrews state Labor government and has made a number of criticisms more broadly across the political landscape in recent months. I would have thought that this Labor government in Victoria might want to start considering if it should fund capital for Catholic and independent schools in the lead-up to the November state election.

But that is not the only part of this budget that I have great difficulties in understanding from an education perspective. I refer to the 411 extra bureaucrats in the Department of Education and Training, an increase of 18 per cent in just one year. That is compared with only a 2 per cent rise in teachers and principals. We all know how much population is affecting every system within state government, particularly education, so to see 411 new bureaucrats sitting in Treasury Place while there is only a 2 per cent rise in teachers on the front line delivering key education services to our kids is a complete misallocation of resources, and it shows the warped priorities of the Andrews Labor government in education.

Earlier this year there was a communications adviser position advertised for \$330 000. That is about what a minister gets paid. I think for many parents in the state system to see communications directors being offered jobs for \$300 000-plus when various upgrades cannot be completed at their school — minor upgrades, minor maintenance issues — just shows that the priorities of the so-called Education State are frankly not worth the numberplates they are written on. It is merely a slogan, and it does not bear much scrutiny. During question time the Minister for Education tried to fob off our questions about this misallocation of resources. He said that they were speech pathologists and the like. That is simply not the case. The auxiliary staff in schools has actually risen, and we make no bones about how important they are to the education system. Our criticism was mainly around a misallocation of resources between bureaucrats in Treasury Place compared with teachers on the front line teaching kids. Not one of these 411 new bureaucrats taught one child, and it shows just how out of touch the Minister for Education and his senior staff in the education department have become over the last three years.

The so-called Education State is fine for some but not for everyone. There are a number of schools that have missed out terribly in this budget. Cobden Technical School, which was raised in question time some weeks ago, was essentially fibbed to by the education department. It was offered an upgrade for Joe Kellemeir, a student who needed some works undertaken at the school to enable his access requirements, but then a Mr Peter Clements from the education department said, 'You will not be receiving any funding this financial year'. We asked the minister during question time about these issues. The minister at first was not candid with this house. I hope that in the weeks subsequent to those questions being asked the minister has an opportunity to reallocate those resources so those important upgrades can take place at Cobden Technical School for Joe, so he can have equality of access with all the other kids at that school.

Middle Indigo Primary School has received quite a degree of media attention in recent times, because the former Brumby Labor government decided it was appropriate to have long-drop toilets at a primary school in Victoria in the 21st century. These long-drop toilets are disgusting. They require a number of teachers to manually clear them every couple of weeks with pitchforks, and the excrement is then essentially cast away on paddocks nearby the school. It is a vile and unacceptable process that should not be happening in Victorian schools in 2018, yet it still does.

We asked the minister about it during question time and he informed us that works were underway as he was speaking. Well, my good friend the member for Benambra spoke to the school and it became apparent that once again the Minister for Education, who is often liberal with the truth, had told a porky. It was a totally humiliating performance by the education minister during question time, where he could not answer the question. It showed once again that the Education State slogan is not worth the numberplates it is written on, because Middle Indigo Primary School still has long-drop toilets — disgusting long-drop toilets that the children hate using — and will do so for, I would expect, the remainder of this year. If the Liberal-Nationals are elected in November, those long-drop toilets will go immediately. That is an election commitment from the member for Benambra and myself, and I will be delighted to see them gone.

Elsternwick Primary School is another primary school that suffers from an all-too-common problem in Victorian schools, and that is a lack of air conditioning. The school has gone to great efforts to fundraise for air conditioning for its grade 5 and 6 classrooms, yet it has received no assistance from this Labor government. I would have thought that air conditioning was a very important aspect of providing a working environment for children so that they can learn, but we hear from the bureaucrats in the department of education that there will be no air conditioners in any new school building or any upgraded school building south of the Great Divide — so that means for any schoolkid in Melbourne, air conditioning is an optional extra, which I think for a lot of people is highly illogical. I hope Elsternwick Primary School has an opportunity to get new air conditioning, and I would implore the minister to look seriously at the grade 5 and 6 classrooms at Elsternwick Primary School.

South Yarra Primary School is another school which has been forgotten by the Andrews Labor government. South Yarra Primary School has a number of issues around road signage and access points. Equally, Caulfield South Primary School has real issues with its toilets. Its toilets, according to the member for Caulfield — and there has been some media attention in the local area about this — are vile and require an immediate upgrade. I congratulate my friend and colleague, the member for Caulfield, for raising these issues in this place and with me, and I look forward to visiting that school with him as soon as I possibly can. Those toilets are simply disgusting.

I move on to Richmond West Primary School. I met with a parent at Richmond West Primary School last week who is aghast at and appalled by the ice injecting

facility that the Andrews Labor government has plonked right next door to his children's school, a simply outrageous situation that will endanger that school community.

Labor have been talking up what the acting principal has said about this issue, but they certainly have not been listening to the parents because the parents are appalled by what the injecting centre next door to the school will do to that local area. It will drag drug dealers and ice addicts into the proximity of the school in far greater numbers than is the case at the moment. They are very fearful about what is going to happen in that local area, and they were disgusted to learn that there has been not one new security upgrade for the school since it was announced that there is going to be an ice injecting room next door.

I asked at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) budget estimates hearings on a number of occasions of the minister, and indeed of the secretary of the department, Gill Callister, if there had been a risk assessment undertaken and if there will be extra CCTV in the school. Apparently the added security upgrade will be a locked back gate, a totally ridiculous situation. There should not be an ice injecting room next to a primary school. Logic would suggest that. Clearly logic is lacking from the department of education and indeed this minister. The Minister for Mental Health was asked on Neil Mitchell's program whether or not there were going to be added security upgrades, and he talked about a couple of 'extra-large Samoan security guards' — that sort of racist, horrid remark that he still has not apologised for. It is a shocking situation.

I move on. The government talks often about improving literacy and numeracy standards in our schools. This Labor government has refused to sign up to a compulsory phonics screening check in grade 1. The former South Australian Labor government undertook a 50-school trial of this very important reform to our early years learning. At a PAEC hearing in February the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training in Victoria was asked on a number of occasions about this, and quite frankly her answers did not fill me with any confidence whatsoever. She seemed to suggest that the English Online Interview assessment tool that is used in Victoria is the same thing, but on pages 36 and 37 of an expert panel report to the commonwealth government, it is shown that the English Online Interview assessment covers a small proportion of the phonics content knowledge contained in the year 1 phonics screening check. The panel concluded that this was insufficient to assess student knowledge in this

important foundation skill at a critical point in their schooling or to guide phonics instruction and intervention.

The secretary went on to talk about David Gonski. Well, David Gonski in his review did not talk about phonics at all, and that is probably quite rightly so because Mr Gonski is a banker and not a teacher. Unfortunately, Secretary Callister conflates phonological and phonemic awareness with phonics; they are not the same thing. This suggests that her understanding of early reading instruction and assessment is somewhat questionable. This secretary is advising this minister, who frankly has done nothing to improve literacy and numeracy in our early years. These are the vital building blocks to improve standards across our education system that have been going backwards under Labor.

Labor has been in government in this state for 14 of the last 18 years and year 9 reading, decline; year 7, flatline; year 9 numeracy, decline; and year 5 numeracy, decline — they are the NAPLAN results for Victoria in 2017. Of the government's own Education State targets, in seven out of nine the government failed to meet its own targets. This Labor government has failed in its basic duty to improve standards in our schools, and I am not seeing any evidence that it is going to improve them between now and November.

In the minute that I have left, I will talk about my electorate of Kew. Kew received absolutely nothing in this Labor government's budget. Kew Primary School received nothing. Kew East Primary School, which is a relatively old school now, is in dire need of infrastructure upgrades and it received nothing. Guide Dogs Victoria, a magnificent institution in our society, has been completely ignored by the Andrews Labor government. Josh Frydenberg, the federal member, has secured funding for that wonderful institution but there has been nothing from the Premier and his crew in Victoria — and for that they stand condemned. I hope, if a coalition government is elected in November, that particularly Kew East Primary School will receive the upgrades it so desperately needs and deserves.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

ADVANCING THE TREATY PROCESS WITH ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed from 28 March; motion of Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs).

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) (16:38) — I rise to make a contribution on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. I commence by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the people of the Kulin nations, and pay my respects to elders past, present and also future.

In starting off this debate, I have been advised that there are likely to be some amendments that will be considered in this house. I have not seen them as yet, so it is difficult to comment on them, but I certainly hope to receive them during the course of this discussion. I understand also that this bill is likely to go into consideration in detail on Thursday and there will possibly be the opportunity to have amendments while the bill is between houses. I certainly look to monitor them.

This is a debate that needs to be undertaken with a level of respect and a level of understanding. In recent weeks I have seen contributions and exchanges on this matter that, while presenting opposing views, have been thoughtful and have been very well considered. Unfortunately I have also seen some that have not been entirely pleasant and I would hope that the debate from here on in can be carried out in a respectful and understanding manner, no matter in which forum it is discussed.

When we talk about this topic, we consider a number of elements that sit underneath it relating to matters including social, cultural and economic needs of Indigenous Victorians. I think that every member of this chamber, no matter which side they sit on, would agree that these are very important. There is no doubt that governments also have a role to play in this process to improve outcomes for Indigenous peoples through policies and programs developed in an environment of meaningful engagement. This is one of the reasons obviously why we have the *Closing the Gap* report and also have the Victorian Aboriginal affairs framework. These are objectives that have had the support of all sides of politics.

There is no doubt that with European settlement came enormous mistreatment of our Indigenous

communities. This included but of course is not limited to murders and massacres; removal from traditional lands; introduction of diseases that were foreign to this land and which decimated populations; and from a landscape perspective, the introduction of pest species that have caused untold damage over many, many generations. In relation to these matters, I note that there has been formal recognition of the injustices of the past in this chamber on a number of occasions.

Treaty has been discussed both federally and in state and territory jurisdictions for some time, but particularly in the federal jurisdiction. This is where we believe this discussion should take place, rather than at state level, and I will explain why. While there has been much differing discussion around what it would or should include, when receiving feedback on this bill a range of responses were provided from different stakeholder groups but there did appear and there certainly were some constants within that feedback, one of those being that it should or would recognise the history and occupation of Australia by Indigenous people pre-European settlement. This very point strongly lends this matter to be considered federally rather than at state level. Whether we talk about a treaty, an agreement of another description or use a completely different set of words, and whether it is a single agreement or one with smaller Indigenous representative groups, it is our view that this should be done on the national scale.

One of the other elements that comes up when this issue is discussed is the creation of a national Aboriginal body that would consider Aboriginal interests in any decisions that are made, which is another reason that this should be considered on the national scale. Indeed, if progressed, many of the issues an agreement or treaty would or could include are certainly not confined to Victoria but are relevant to our Indigenous peoples right across the nation.

If you were sitting down to plan the perfect process, you would be dealing with this nationally, rather than having different discussions in different states, having vastly different viewpoints across different states and the potential for vastly different cross-border outcomes. And right at this particular time there is significant movement in this space at the federal level. We presently have a federal bipartisan parliamentary joint select committee inquiring into matters specifically and directly relating to self-determination from a national perspective. Given this, we should allow this committee, which I would add includes members of the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the Greens, the National Party and Independents, to report back by its due date later this year.

I want to mention some of the specific terms of reference of this current inquiry that is going on at the federal level. They are to consider if and how self-determination can be advanced in a way that leads to greater local decision-making, economic advancement and improved social outcomes. Another one of the terms of reference is to recommend options for constitutional change and any potential complementary legislative measures which meet the expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and which will secure cross-party parliamentary support and the support of the Australian people. These are areas that are currently being inquired into at the federal level in a bipartisan manner, and no-one could argue that these terms of reference do not go to the heart of this very topic that we have before us today.

The notion has been put forth that this inquiry can complement this bill at the state level, and that is something that I would like to make a few comments on because I do not think that quite stacks up when we have a look at the detail. What if the federal committee determines, for instance, that these matters are best determined by a common national approach? That could well be one of the outcomes, or something similar. I also note the recent commentary from the New South Wales minister that any process leading towards treaty or treaties with Aboriginal people must be led by the commonwealth government, and that is a view that we share. Given the proceedings that are taking place at the national level right now with this inquiry, it is happening and that is the commonsense approach. This stance should not in any way, shape or form be seen as our not supporting some of the key elements of the outcomes that this process is seeking to achieve. To suggest that would not be accurate, and I think our actions when in government show this. It is simply that we believe this discussion belongs at the federal level rather than a state-by-state approach that could potentially produce very different outcomes.

As far back as the 1970s the National Aboriginal Conference called for a treaty between First Nations people and the Australian government, and it was 1998 of course when Bob Hawke committed to a federal treaty. The more recent Uluru statement called for a Makarrata commission — a national Indigenous representative body to be established at the federal level that would be tasked with seeking Makarrata agreements or treaties. The final report of Reconciliation Australia refers to a range of outcomes in the areas of self-determination. Each one of those seeks action at the national level, and that is why we believe that that is where this discussion firmly belongs.

In recent weeks I have had several discussions with representatives of Indigenous groups where I have been told of their support for this process as outlined, and I have also had discussions with many others who have raised concerns relating to the process. The major concern that was raised with me was that there is clearly an element within our Indigenous community that feel that they have not been included in this process to date, and they are opposed to the basic structure that this bill proposes. They state that they have certainly been told that this interaction will now occur as part of the process that this bill outlines but they remain aggrieved that they have not been included to date, and I note that other MPs have also made this point. Unfortunately this process, which is generally aimed at gaining understanding and acceptance, has proved divisive for some, as we have read in some media reports and as we also saw on the floor of the Parliament in a recent sitting week.

One key point that has surprised me somewhat over recent weeks is that, while I have had feedback from some groups expressing an opinion one way or the other, the amount of individuals, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who know very little, if anything, about this bill and the general proposal around treaty is huge. I have a number of Indigenous friends in my own electorate, developed mainly through years of football interactions, and over recent weeks — particularly last week — I have had several discussions about what their views on this topic are. The vast majority said they knew absolutely nothing about it, and those who had heard of it knew no detail.

I understand and I appreciate that the government has said that this liaison will now come about as part of the process, but if we have legislation in this chamber and in this house setting up a framework, there clearly should be a much wider understanding that this is proceeding than we currently have. There also appears to be very little knowledge of this amongst the non-Indigenous community. If we are to have an agreement, treaty or document of some description aimed at a reconciliatory outcome, our entire community must be aware of its development and be brought forward with it.

In discussions on this bill feedback was received, as I mentioned earlier, from several groups. Among them was the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporations, and I thank Marcus and Janine for their time, their views and their very sensible discussion on this. I also extend my thanks to the many other groups that provided feedback, whether it was supportive or whether it was raising concerns.

While what the treaty should be is still to be determined under the model that has been put forth, as I said earlier, there were some commonalities in the feedback that was received. This was not limited to but certainly included recognition of past injustices, a commitment towards Closing the Gap initiatives and a commitment to supporting employment, economic independence and positive outcomes. These are areas that governments of both persuasions have focused on over recent times, and while there obviously still remains more work to be done in certain areas around the Closing the Gap targets, these are areas that we will continue to commit to.

We are pleased with some of the achievements from our last term when we were in government, which we believe speak for themselves. We declared ongoing protection for the historically significant Aboriginal heritage site down at Point Ritchie. We were also the initial government to seek World Heritage status for the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, and I certainly acknowledge that the current government has progressed that and done an admirable job there. We also established the Victorian Indigenous Honour Roll to honour those who have excelled in so many different areas in our community.

Of great significance was the passing of the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010, recognising the Dja Dja Wurrung as the traditional owners in central Victoria. We ended almost a decade of administration at Lake Tyers by initiating the process to establish a committee of administrators that again the current government has taken over and overseen. We supported the work of the Koorie Heritage Trust and their relocation from King Street on the outskirts of the Melbourne CBD into the city centre. We were also heavily involved in investing \$100 000 a year towards the invaluable Aboriginal oral history collection, and we restored funding to Reconciliation Victoria. I think our record of support for the Indigenous community is very strong. That has been bipartisan and I certainly acknowledge that.

Before I finish I just want to go back to where I think this discussion sits. We believe this is best pursued on a national basis, as the existence of the current federal inquiry would indicate, and this is an inquiry we support. We also believe the money that has been earmarked for this process could be invested in achieving very positive outcomes in relation to Closing the Gap initiatives and spending that on the ground in our communities while discussions around self-determination matters are dealt with at the federal level for all Australians.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) (16:53) — I am

very, very pleased and proud to speak on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. In doing so I also want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we stand today. I pay my respects to the elders, past and present, and any who may be here in the precinct and certainly acknowledge the many tragedies that have faced our traditional owners for a number of years now and how, importantly, this bill begins or continues on what has been a very long journey but an absolutely necessary one to make reparations for centuries of disengagement and removal of ownership of land. I acknowledge and congratulate the thousands of Indigenous voices who have pushed for this for many, many years. This would not have happened without their constant struggle.

This is the first piece of Victorian legislation to acknowledge the Indigenous community's fundamental right to self-determination. Despite this being a new introduction to the Victorian Parliament, this standard has been around for quite some time, certainly on the international scene. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* recognises the right to self-determination as crucial to economic and social equality.

This piece of legislation has been driven by Victoria's strong and proud Indigenous communities, and the Aboriginal Treaty Working Group has gone to great lengths to broadcast the voices of all Indigenous Victorians, engaged with thousands of Victorians, and those voices certainly demand a treaty. Consultation has been driven by Indigenous Victoria for Indigenous Victoria, and that has been fundamental in the development of this bill. I commend both the Aboriginal Treaty Working Group and also the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for enacting a very, very strong process, one that has been based on the foundations of inclusiveness and listening and learning. Ultimately it is about enacting a strong process to ensure that the Indigenous community will lead the way for themselves in the next steps of self-determination. The path to collaboration between groups has been paved and will put us in good stead going into further negotiations with the passing of this bill, and I certainly hope that will be the case.

The bill also serves to separate symbolic change from real and practical change. It was around this time last year that the federal government failed to listen to the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and a gathering that called for a First Nations voice to the federal Parliament and for the establishment of a Makarrata commission, which would have laid the foundations for treaty. The

Prime Minister unfortunately rejected this statement out of hand.

Recognition of our country's past is absolutely necessary, but it is not enough in itself. It does not solve the years of economic, social and political inequality Indigenous communities have faced. The Aboriginal Representative Body (ARB) will act to ensure that the focus is set on addressing these issues. Having an Indigenous representative body at the top of the negotiating table is fundamental and will address any structural barriers previously unseen due to any personal privileges. The ARB will also seek to ensure that the changes proposed in the treaty are not just symbolic, but instead are tangible exercises that will lead Victoria's Aboriginal community towards self-determination.

The Andrews Labor government believes in more than just the handshakes and the false promises. This is a bill about self-determination on the terms of Victoria's Indigenous community and not on the terms of white Australia. As part of the bill, the self-determination fund will seek to address this imbalance. The self-determination fund will be entirely dedicated to the economic and social growth of Victoria's Indigenous community and their progress on achieving treaty. This autonomy is fundamental. The government acknowledges that telling the Indigenous community what they need is not self-determination, and too often it is an easy pattern to fall into. It is nothing more than condescending paternalism, which certainly has no place in any modern government at all. Unlike our federal counterparts we trust Australia's traditional owners to express their self-determination how they see fit. I look forward to seeing the fund take its first steps in addressing the equality gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians.

As I touched on previously, the bill at its core has reflected the advice received through the Aboriginal representative working group's extensive consultation process. With over 7000 individual Indigenous members contributing to the consultation, the process is reminiscent of incredibly successful first peoples treaty processes internationally. I am confident that this bill represents a majority of our Indigenous population in their views and their hopes and their aspirations, and I believe that many in the community share that belief with me. To quote the Victorian treaty advancement commissioner, Jill Gallagher:

... it's exciting that it's now being taken seriously.

This is an incredibly exciting and relieving period for people across Victoria, and I am very proud to stand

with a government that puts the rights of the Indigenous communities first. The legislation that is being debated today is one of many steps that are being taken to enshrine Indigenous participation, consultation and self-determination in legislation.

Through my own portfolios I have had the privilege to witness these changes in action. In the environment and land portfolio, our joint management policies between the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Indigenous owners enable the knowledge and culture of traditional landowner groups to be recognised and implemented in the management of the land. Agreements have been made with the Gonnai/Kurnai people and the Dja Dja Wurrung people to formally recognise these groups as the traditional owners of Gippsland and part of central Victoria. This is manifested in many ways, including workshops, park employment, access to and use of the land and having seats at the table for future land management.

In the fire management portfolio area, our government has worked with Indigenous communities to see traditional burning make a historic return. Such traditional burning has been incorporated into forest fire management programs as a holistic approach to bushfire reduction and preparedness. I certainly do want to see more of this activity happening so that we can learn a number of the ways that do exist to better manage our land. In May last year two traditional burns were undertaken by Forest Fire Management Victoria and Dja Dja Wurrung firefighters through Victoria's Safer Together program. This was unbelievably successful, and we saw for the first time many of the younger firefighters, who are employees of DELWP, walking with their elders through the country to learn firsthand, in situ, the role that fire management actually plays in terms of culture — and not just culture, but in fact in terms of the role it played in the management of the land in previous times.

This was very, very successful, and since then on our government has announced a targeted \$250 000 in seed funding to enable Victorian Aboriginal leaders to develop a statewide traditional burning strategy. These techniques have been around for thousands of years, and yet they have only recently been legislated. It is with processes such as treaties that we can work together to create the best outcomes, not just for our environment but also to enrich what makes this state great, and that includes our people — all of our people, fully integrated and in a real partnership — managing our land.

The generational atrocities committed against Australia's first peoples cannot be undone, nor can they be solved overnight, but this bill will begin to heal those

wounds. It will be a long journey, but one that this government is absolutely committed to, working in partnership and in lock step with the community. Our government is committed to a process that aids all Indigenous Victorians in their personal and collective fight towards self-determination. This bill is not about political pointscore; it is not about making things right, although that is always the best thing to do. But it is not the only thing to do; there are many things beyond that, including of course making sure that equality is real in a tangible sense in terms of relationship with land and ensuring that we do get to a real point of being able to say, 'Yes, we have made amends and we have given the full strength to Indigenous communities to self-determine their future'.

I commend this bill wholeheartedly. It begins the very, very long and robust work to come, and that it is one that everyone I think has committed themselves to with trust and commitment and all seriousness to get the outcomes that we need.

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) (17:03) — I rise to speak on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. I do so not only as a member of this house but also as a former shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in this state. Having served in that role, I have watched this process with great interest. I have been very involved and I have listened to a lot of the debate. I have listened to a lot of people and had a lot of meetings one on one with interested parties from all different angles. There are not just two sides to this particular debate. There are so many views around the issues — around process and around the question as to whether a treaty is actually needed. There seem to be so many views that I do not know how we can express them all in this place in just 10 minutes.

Much of the conversation has been around what tangible outcomes would come with a treaty. How would the gaps be closed as a result of this bill? The current statistics, as we know, are absolutely unacceptable. Aboriginal Australians are 10 times more likely to develop kidney disease, 17 times more likely to be hospitalised for assault, four times less likely to finish school and three times less likely to find employment. They are also 13 times more likely to be imprisoned and — a horrible statistic — two and a half times more likely to commit suicide. They also have an average life expectancy of around 11 years less than non-Aboriginal Australians. This is 2018, and it is simply not acceptable. There has been a lot of money spent over the years on trying to change these outcomes. A huge amount has been spent on programs to close the gap and yet these statistics are not

improving. This is not the future the world's oldest surviving culture wants or deserves.

There are some very good programs for young Aboriginal people that are having very tangible outcomes, and I want to highlight one of those in my area. I was very proud to be at Heathmont College last week for National Reconciliation Week. Heathmont College have been working with Eastern Access and Community Health and Knox City Council for some time now. In fact this is the second year in a program called Journey Tracks. The facilitators are Vanessa and Zoe, and I want to put on record the amazing work that they do. The program is about embedding Aboriginal culture right throughout the curriculum for all students. The program is not only for the 11 participants who are there this year — that represents about 75 per cent of the Aboriginal students attending Heathmont College — it is also about educating the wider school and also the local community. It is about exploring and celebrating their culture. I acknowledge that they are helping to nurture and bring out the emerging leaders. They are dedicated to teaching them about their heritage, and these children are learning how to be leaders in the years to come.

I want to make special mention of this year's participants: Ebonee, Dakota, Maddison, Michael, Tanika, Jennifer, Kaiya, Zak, Ashleigh, Kayla and Jayden. Three of the assemblies last week were conducted by these students. They lead the assemblies, they do the welcome to country and we even got them up there participating in some of the dances. They sang along and of course helped their fellow students to understand what it is to be an Aboriginal person growing up as a teenager these days. They educate the wider school community about their identity: things like — as they explained to me — how assuming that they should all look the same, that they should all be the same colour, is indeed racist. As I said, they shared their dance and they shared their stories.

Last year I was very proud to be there when they did the installation of the new flagpole that very proudly, every day, flies the Aboriginal flag. It was an initiative of the very bright young students from years 7 to 12 last year, and it was led by Kelsey, a young Aboriginal woman who also happened to be the school captain. They have also included artworks around the school grounds, and later this year they will be working with elders to map out their heritage on a possum skin cloak.

There are major benefits to this program: the genuine connection with the students' families is so real and so obvious, and the self-belief these young people gain is immeasurable. So I am so pleased that the success of

Heathmont College in participating in this program has led to nearby Marlborough Primary School starting their program, with three young primary school children involved in this program. That is 50 per cent of their Aboriginal community.

I want to read into the record something from the Reconciliation Australia website. They say:

Our vision of national reconciliation is based on five critical dimensions: race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance. These five dimensions do not exist in isolation; they are interrelated and Australia can only achieve full reconciliation if we progress in all five.

These five dimensions also cannot just exist in one location in one state. They have to be embraced nationally, and so I agree with the governments of New South Wales and South Australia that any approach to treaty should be done nationally.

Federally there is a multiparty committee currently doing very in-depth work around the possibility of a treaty and other matters. They are due to report back to the Australian Parliament over the coming months, and it is my belief that any state going it alone may hamper broader developments. We need practical reconciliation for all. I understand that the road to this point in Victoria has been a long one, but waiting just a little while longer to resolve so many questions that still remain amongst the Aboriginal people themselves could surely be worth the wait.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (17:10) — I am a bit nonplussed that the member for Bayswater, a former minister, would not have even spoken for her full time on such an important issue. I am absolutely gobsmacked, especially as she indicated that basically she is not going to be supporting something that is so significant to Indigenous people in Victoria.

I did start with outrage; I should not have. I want to begin my contribution to this very important bill by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet here today and pay my respects to elders past and present, the Wurundjeri people. I was born just around the corner from here, but I spent my formative years in the Warrnambool area in Gunditjmara country and then in Mildura. I learned so much from those people during my teenage years, at a time when our Indigenous people were not respected at all.

One of the great joys of being in public life for me is to see that we are taking these steps to right those wrongs. Wherever I go across the state as the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria and parliamentary secretary for tourism, I am absolutely amazed at the

capacity of Indigenous people, whichever country they come from across this state, to forgive what has happened. For those of us who came later and are descendants of the colonising powers, I do not think that our culture is anywhere near as forgiving as our Indigenous people are and have been. They are generous and they want to put aside the past and share what is humanity's longest continuous culture. I just want to thank every single one of them from the bottom of my heart for the wisdom that they have passed on to me and for how they are able to forgive. I think as community leaders we should learn so much from that and we should listen.

I rose to speak after the member for Bayswater, who could not even manage 10 minutes despite having been a minister. I have heard her rabbit on in here, but she never really skimmed more than the surface of how nice Aboriginal art is. I do not think she has ever really felt or understood or tried to understand. She just epitomises what is wrong with community leadership that does not understand why this is so important. I want to commend Jill Gallagher and everyone who has done the work. This is not about treaty; it is not the finalising of it. It is 'Let's get into the process'. I assume the member for Bayswater is indicating that the Liberal Party and the coalition are not going to support this. I am absolutely gobsmacked, after the amount of consultation and well-meaning conversations across this state, how they could not be respectful of that.

I was in Kerang last week and I heard a welcome to country from Aunty Elsie. I reckon Aunty Elsie must be one of the funniest aunts in Victoria. Her welcome to country, her sharing of her culture and how she wanted us to be there for the regional partnership forum — I will just never forget it. I had been at another welcome to country that she had done in Koondrook a year or so back, and I was saying to my colleagues, 'You have got to hear this woman'. When she talked about traditional remedies for all sorts of things it was very instructive and hilarious. She talked about looking out for the children there, how there is a collective responsibility for children and how they have a collective responsibility to grow and take responsibility for their community and for the land — it just says so much about their culture.

I am really privileged that so many of the localities in my electorate, including my electorate name, come from this fabulous culture. Yan Yean means boy. Mernda means girl. Wollert, which is a neighbouring suburb, means possum. Yarrambat is high hill, and Tuerong — actually I forget whether it is kookaburra or laughter but it is a really happy word. I love it when I

go to Tuerong; it makes me feel really happy and it makes me want to laugh.

I think there is so much cause for celebration of this wonderful culture. Mernda Central College has a scarred tree in the middle of the campus. Forty of the children at that school are Indigenous kids, and the whole school community is benefiting from learning from the wisdom of those kids. Those kids take pride in who they are and their families are such a welcome and integral part of the school. When the Mernda police station was opened last year and Uncle Perry Wandin did a welcome to country, the connection of our law enforcement officers with the local community was just such a contrast to our colonial past.

I think the member for Bayswater was reading something into *Hansard* that seemed to say that we should not go down the path of treaty, we have got to do it nationally. This colonial past happened via colonies. This was a colony of Victoria. This is the Parliament of Victoria. We are a sovereign state. Her Majesty the Queen of Australia is also the head of state in this state. We ought respect that and we should respect the fact of how this colony came into being. It is not beyond this Parliament to take responsibility and to go down the path of treaty with our Indigenous people. I would urge those on the other side before it gets to the upper house to really consider this. It is time; it is beyond time.

I talked earlier about how I had grown up in country Victoria, and I saw some pretty awful things in terms of the way in which Indigenous people were treated, including Indigenous friends of mine whom I had grown to love. I have now seen some of those same community leaders who were horribly cruel when I was a teenager — anyone who knows me knows that it was not yesterday when I was a teenager — opening their hearts. They have opened their ears and hearts and minds to the wonder of this community. Why would we not want to take that opportunity right now? There is something in the air. There is something in the water. We can actually do this. We can achieve it. Our Indigenous people deserve nothing less.

My electorate is on Wurundjeri land, but at the top of it is Taungurung country. I want to read a statement from the Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation CEO, Matthew Burns, who said that treaty is an opportunity for politicians to demonstrate that they acknowledge, support and respect the traditional owners. He said:

We as the Taungurung nation support the treaty bill as it provides the platform to acknowledge and cement our status, culture and history upon the state of Victoria ...

It means a great deal to the traditional owners to see the bill progress through Parliament.

I think that those words really epitomise why we should do this. To those opposite I say: if you do not want to do it for that reason, actually do it for the reason that it is going to be good for our economy. I have no doubt that when UNESCO comes here in the middle of next year that Budj Bim will get World Heritage listing, and we will have tourists from all over the world wanting to come and see stone structures of housing and eel traps that predate Stonehenge. I think it would be a terrible shame if those people from all over the world do not come to a state where treaty has moved down the path that this bill indicates it should. I think it is incumbent on this house and the upper house to pass this bill and to do the right thing — to go down the path, to walk hand in hand with the traditional owners of this great state. I commend the work of everyone that has been involved in this and the passionate minister and her staff. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms THORPE (Northcote) (17:20) — Under standing orders I wish to advise the house of amendments to the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018 and request that they be circulated.

Greens amendments circulated by Ms THORPE (Northcote) under standing orders.

Ms THORPE — I would like to begin my speech on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018 by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we stand: the Kulin nation and the Wurundjeri-willam clan and the Boon Wurrung First Nation. I pay my respects to their struggle, survival and resistance, proven in never ceding their country. I am honoured today to have the opportunity to speak on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018.

I feel the weight of my ancestors on my shoulders today as I speak. I know how long my people and all the other clans and First Nations have fought for treaty. I would like to take a moment to say a few words in my traditional Gonnai language:

Deetgung gurruwungo boorun gurruwungo.

This means ‘blue wren dreaming, pelican dreaming’. It is an acknowledgement of the spirits of my people, the spirits that guide me today.

The lack of treaty in Victoria and Australia has been a longstanding injustice against the first peoples of this land. It denies people’s land and means to achieve

economic independence, self-governance, proper freedom to live in accordance with their culture and even proper recognition of their identity. Through treaties it is these things that must be fully revealed in a truth-telling process. It is also these things that the first peoples of this land should receive redress for. Treaties have the potential to settle these matters and create peace between the first peoples and the state of Victoria.

As I see it we have two choices regarding the treaty process. Victoria can have a process that is led by government-appointed officials, where representation and thus power is handed to those who already have a lot of power and sway with the government. If this happens, treaty risks doing nothing to empower and reach the grassroots communities, and nothing will change. Alternatively we can take a different path. We can have a process that understands that treaty is about justice and providing an opportunity for the marginalised to be empowered. So I say to all members of this house: the futures of not just tens of thousands of people but many nations of people are in our hands. We must strive to get this right. We must put party politics aside. We must be humble and open to any suggestions that strengthen this legislation. The Greens have done our best to consult with elders, clans and First Nations, as well as lawyers and organisations, but with only a few weeks to do so this has only just touched the surface. We have done what we can with limited time. We have heard and responded to feedback from a range of opinions to develop our position.

I want to start by talking about the positive aspects of this proposed legislation from the Greens’ perspective. First and foremost, it is heartening to have a bill that would actually lock in a process for advancing treaty after so many years of injustice and inaction. This bill achieves a number of things. It provides a basis for establishing a representative body for Aboriginal people of Victoria, which will work with the minister to shape the framework for negotiations. It provides guiding principles for the treaty negotiation process. These principles are all very worthy and commendable. I was very pleased to see the language in the self-determination and empowerment principle mirroring language laid out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). The other principles of fairness and equality, partnership and good faith, mutual benefit and sustainability and transparency and accountability are all elements essential to the negotiating process.

The bill also sets up a treaty authority to oversee the treaty process, outlines the elements of a treaty negotiating framework, sets up a process for dispute resolution and reporting, and establishes the

much-needed self-determination fund that funds Aboriginal Victorians to negotiate on equal footing with the state. The use of the term ‘on equal footing’ is most welcome and needed in recognition of the power imbalance between the state and the clans.

All of these elements provide a good starting point, but we believe this bill must be strengthened in a number of ways which I will outline. Firstly, we need to know the government is serious about treaty and fully committed to a true treaty process. If they want the sovereign clans and First Nations to participate, fundamental to a true treaty is recognition by the state that this is Aboriginal land — that sovereignty has never, ever been ceded by the clans. The preamble to this bill states:

Victorian traditional owners maintain that their sovereignty has never been ceded, and ... have long called for treaty.

But that is not the same as the government recognising it for themselves.

The government must acknowledge the sovereign clans as the owners and occupiers of the land now claimed by this state. Further, we must specifically rule out anything in this bill that is ceding the sovereignty of clans. The reason this needs to be spelt out is twofold: firstly, we must ensure that no clan enters into an agreement that unintentionally has the effect of ceding their sovereignty; and secondly, while Victoria is currently progressing this treaty agenda, there is still hope that a commonwealth process will also occur. It is crucial that clans and First Nations in Victoria are not excluded from participating in a commonwealth process.

The last aspect of sovereignty is recognising each of the sovereign clans as distinct political peoples and each as a separate party to the negotiations. That is not to say the First Nations or groups of clans cannot self-determine to collectively negotiate treaty, but any such collective efforts must occur with the free, prior and informed consent of the sovereign peoples — the clans they represent.

Currently this bill speaks of ‘Aboriginal Victorians’, a term that potentially treats us as if we were one homogenous ethnic group. We are the first peoples of this land. Once there were some 300 clans; today about 100 clans survive. There are 38 language groups among these clans, and each has its own culture, traditions, beliefs, customs, law and territory. As it stands, the structures envisaged by this bill have the potential to undermine existing Aboriginal law and culture and the principle of free, prior and informed consent. The lack of recognition in this bill of Aboriginal culture, including the different clans and First Nations and

indeed the role of elders, is concerning from a human rights perspective.

In addition to cultural appropriateness, it is critical from a legal perspective to recognise who the parties are. A treaty is negotiated between two sovereign parties and as such cannot be negotiated and agreed to with just anyone from the Aboriginal community. There is extensive international law and precedent and academic literature to support this position. The bill, however, uses the term ‘Aboriginal Victorians’ as part of the process and does not define it further in any clauses, leaving it open as to who may be party to the process. I note the amendments circulated by the government to provide explicit recognition in the bill of the traditional owners of the land known as Victoria, and I welcome these amendments.

We continue to assert that it is the Aboriginal clans of Victoria that are the sovereign peoples and that the clans should be referenced in the bill as such, while acknowledging they often choose to organise and represent themselves at the level of First Nation language groups in accordance with self-determination. Added to this, we will take the step of suggesting that the clans and First Nations should be listed in a schedule to this bill. Listing the clans may help avoid a lengthy process of clans having to prove who they are and their right to participate. It is critical that as the treaty process continues the free, prior and informed consent of the first peoples of this land is front and centre. The Greens will be putting forth amendments to make these changes to the bill.

Next I want to build on this theme of true treaties. A treaty is not just any agreement. It is a particular type of agreement, one between two sovereign parties. It is a settlement of claims and an opportunity to make peace. This bill makes some statements in the preamble about what a treaty might be. It states that a treaty or treaties might provide recognition for historic wrongs, address ongoing injustices, support reconciliation and promote the fundamental human rights of Aboriginal peoples, including the right to self-determination.

A recent article by Harry Hobbs and George Williams, the dean of law at the University of New South Wales, called ‘The Noongar Settlement: Australia’s First Treaty’ discusses the key elements of a treaty. It says, and I quote:

While the content of negotiated agreements differs, however, to constitute a treaty, an agreement must contain more than mere symbolic recognition; an inherent right to some level of sovereignty or self-government must be recognised and provided for.

Again, I welcome the government moving to insert a definition of treaty into the bill that explicitly recognises the right of Aboriginal people to self-determination. A treaty may include matters additional to these, but this is the minimum.

Moving on to the issue of representation, this bill before us does not define who will make up the Aboriginal Representative Body. It simply states that the commissioner for advancing the treaty process will make recommendations to the minister regarding the name of the entity, how the entity is established and the legal structure of the entity. It also does not specify that only Aboriginal Victorians, let alone people from the sovereign clans or First Nations or even traditional owners, can sit on the representative body. We are not alone in these concerns. The Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee raised concerns regarding the cultural rights of Aboriginal persons in respect of the Aboriginal Representative Body. *Alert Digest* No. 5 of 2018 states, and I quote:

The choice of representatives may be an expression of cultural identity or it could be considered to be a cultural practice. Because certain representatives carry authority within Aboriginal culture, such as elders, allowing those elders to represent the community in establishing the treaty process may allow the expression of that cultural identity and respect that cultural practice.

The government is moving to fix this by an amendment providing that only traditional owners can be on the Aboriginal Representative Body. A further problem is that proposals so far for the representative body have elections based on regions and population. Our way is for the sovereign clans to self-determine who they want representing them via their own self-determined processes, not via a process imposed on us.

Article 18 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* states, and I quote:

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions.

The key words here are ‘in accordance with their own procedures’. I can only speak for my clans and my experience, but we do not have an election to establish who our representatives are. Any attempt to rely on the community assembly recommendations to determine the process for establishing the Aboriginal Representative Body risks undermining the treaty process in the eyes of many Aboriginal people.

The community assembly had no mandate — no mandate — to be formed. When the government put the

proposal to the 28 April 2017 community consultation, it was rejected. Yet the government went ahead anyway. We are proposing a new way forward — that the treaty advancement commissioner work with the clan elders council to re-think this process and develop a more culturally appropriate way forward.

A clan elders council is something that has long been called for by Aboriginal people. In the government’s February 2016 self-determination forum the people called for treaty, for efforts for constitutional recognition to be halted while treaties progress and for resources to establish a clan elders council. At many subsequent government consultations people again called for a clan elders council.

In response to the failure to resource and support the establishment of the clan elders council, the Victorian Traditional Owner Land Justice Group, with the support of the Greens, organised the inaugural clan elders council on treaty. This meeting was held here at Parliament on 14 May 2018. Roughly 40 elders from tens of clans and First Nations attended, and unanimously supported formation of the clan elders council and agreed to the following statement:

We clan elders, gathered at the Victorian Parliament House in Melbourne, meeting on the land of the Kulin First Nation, coming from places across the land now known as Victoria, make this statement:

Our clans and nations are the first sovereign peoples of the land now known as Victoria. We have existed on our land from the beginning of time. Our culture and connection to country remain strong.

Our sovereignty has never been ceded or extinguished.

We seek justice and reparations for past and present wrongs and truth telling about our history.

We long for a chance to create peace and prosperity for our children based on self-determination, freedom and economic independence.

We acknowledge and welcome that the Victorian government has begun a process for advancing treaty for all Victorians.

We believe that the treaty consultation process so far has been flawed and failed to engage with the sovereign clans and First Nations.

We call for a treaty process that respects and acknowledges our clans’ sovereignty, our culture and our inherent rights. Our sovereignty, and each of the 38 language groups and 300 clans, must be clearly recognised in the government’s treaty advancement legislation.

We assert our right to self-determination, and free, prior and informed consent regarding any decisions that affect us.

We call for our rightful place and voice in all decision-making that advances the treaty process.

Inaugural clan elders council on treaty
14 May 2018

We are pleased that the government now recognises the importance of an elders council. It is essential that the treaty commission act quickly to fully form the elders council by inviting all clans and First Nations to self-determine their representatives on the council and bring the elders council formally into the treaty process.

I was pleased to see the government has allocated some \$9 million for establishing the Aboriginal Representative Body and for advancing the treaty process in the recent budget papers. I would assert that resourcing this clan elders council is an essential part of this. To ensure the elders and their clans and First Nations are no longer sidelined in the consultation and decision-making process, the treaty advancement commissioner must work in partnership with the clan elders council in devising her recommendations to the minister on the Aboriginal Representative Body.

Next I will turn to the guiding principles. As I previously mentioned, the Greens are happy with the principles so far articulated, but we believe these could be further strengthened by a more explicit reference to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We continually see our governments act in contravention of UN declarations, which our country is a party to, particularly in respect of the rights of asylum seekers but also on other issues. With this in mind, we think it is essential that the UNDRIP be more deeply embedded in this treaty process. For our confidence in the process it is important that it be named in the legislation, and we welcome that the government is open to this.

Turning to the self-determination fund, as I said, we strongly support it being directed to support Aboriginal clans to negotiate on equal footing with the state. But there are a few other things that we believe are essential to be funded if we are to have a fair and proper treaty process.

Firstly, there should be financial support for further cultural mapping of Aboriginal people's genealogy. Due to the ravages of colonisation, lots of knowledge about our history and ancestors has been lost to many people. Some clans are so decimated that the knowledge is very fragmented. But the knowledge is there, amongst the elders, if we can be supported to bring it all together.

Secondly, we believe funding should be provided for a process of truth telling about the true history of Victoria. As it stands, very few people understand what happened here. There is little discussion or recognition of the frontier wars and all the Aboriginal warriors who lost their lives fighting against the colonial invaders.

Finally, I would like to turn to the treaty authority. This is an important body with the responsibility of overseeing the treaty negotiations. We believe the legislation should explicitly reference the independence of the treaty authority and are pleased the government has also adopted this recommendation.

I would like to conclude today by stating that this bill has a basis for moving forward. Treaty is not about moral appeasement or legitimacy for the Victorian government; it is about securing justice and political and economic rights for the first peoples of this land. There is nothing more important to the future of the first peoples of Victoria than this treaty process. It is not going to happen overnight. It will take time for our first peoples to truly understand what treaty means and to engage in the process. It will also take time for the wider Victorian population to understand treaty and be part of the process of healing. It is history in the making and has the potential to change the course of our future if we get it right.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (17:40) — I too would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and pay my respects to their elders, past and present. I am delighted to make a contribution on this bill because I am extremely proud of the great work that Labor governments have done in recent history in terms of addressing some of the systemic problems and failings of previous governments. I think you can go back to the Whitlam years as evidence of that. But I do acknowledge in so doing and rising in this place that I am what I am, and I have my own limited experience. I am a white, middle-aged male, and as a consequence of that —

Ms Ward — Congratulations.

Mr PEARSON — The member for Eltham says, 'Congratulations'. As a consequence of that, my learnings and my experience on this are limited. I am, though, indebted to an electorate officer of mine, Rachael Davies, who is a Palawa woman. I asked her what this treaty means to her — to a young, Indigenous woman who works for me, with a bright future in front of her. She wrote me a statement, which I would like to read to the house:

As a young Palawa woman growing up on Wurundjeri land, although I may not be living on country in Lutruwita —

which is Tasmania —

being able to live in a state where Indigenous communities are so strong, proud and organised results not only in this legislation, but also in a sense of incredible pride that our voices are well represented and will be well represented in the process of developing treaty. The significance of this moment in the movement to self-determination is not something that should ever be underestimated. I for one enjoy so many privileges that those before me have laid the path towards. Communities have laid the path for this legislation during decades of advocacy and action. Knowing that this process is now being led by such resilient leaders is incredible to observe as an Indigenous person living on and visiting lands which are not my own. The leadership and action of Minister Hutchins, Jill Gallagher, AO, the Aboriginal Community Assembly, the Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission and the Aboriginal Treaty Working Group is to be commended and admired. The work they do and the issues they give voice to will continue to transcend time, generation and nation.

The magnitude of this process is also symbolised by its place in the nation's history. Being able to write our own history, to be the voice of our own communities and to share the truth of our journeys has been something that continues to be a challenge in many environments. I hope this moment of truth telling can allow us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, to share in coming to terms with the violent histories of these lands and the injustices that continue today in a way that is centred on Indigenous peoples' voices and realities. There is something so powerful in these moments where the decisions that are made in this place have the potential to redefine our futures in a way that allows for greater self-determination. Its impacts transcend state borders. This legislation furthers the principles and messages of the Uluru statement and contributions to a national conversation of our rightful place as Indigenous people in the nation.

Where the trauma and pain of the legacies of ancestors lay, so does a pathway of healing through truth telling and sharing. I hope that the success of this legislation and consequential treaty negotiations and processes brings optimism to Indigenous peoples across other states, to realise what is possible under progressive and pragmatic governments. Observing and listening to communities in Victoria aspire to progressively achieve treaty and now seeing how those aspirations can become a reality are a source of deep appreciation and optimism for what can be possible for Palawa people in Lutruwita ... as well.

As a state representative, I would hope that you never underestimate your ability to be a part of this movement as an ally. There is so much power in solidarity. All of us are better off for being able to have respectful public conversations where Indigenous communities are not stereotyped and misrepresented but our realities are understood and our truths accepted.

I acknowledge that this process is not purely a means to an end and that we continue to confront many diverse challenges throughout the country. However, it is important that we pause, reflect and understand the magnitude of what we are realising, something that Aboriginal Victorians have fought for decades is coming to fruition. I hope that this treaty and

continuing processes of self-determination will eventuate into young Aboriginal men and women reading their own speeches in places like this in the future.

I feel incredibly proud to be able to speak on a bill like this today. This is about doing what is right and doing what is fair. We will never as a nation be able to achieve our full potential unless we do this and unless we come to terms with the way in which we treated our first Australians.

I am disappointed that the opposition have indicated their opposition to this bill. I note the member for Gippsland East indicated that we should wait and work with the federal government and that it is really a role for the federal government to pursue, but we know that the federal government has rejected the Uluru statement. We know that they have ignored Aboriginal Victorians. The member for Gippsland East in his contribution said that there had been a lack of consultation, yet my understanding is that approximately 7000 Indigenous Victorians have been consulted on this bill.

The bill itself looks at establishing a treaty authority, a treaty negotiation framework and a self-determination fund. This has been the result of extensive work. The government has spent an enormous amount of time consulting and trying to get this right to bring before this place a bill which provides a means by which treaty can be achieved, a negotiation framework that can provide some structure and process around that and a fund to do the things that need to be done.

I listened to the member for Northcote's contribution, and I appreciate the level of work that the member for Northcote has done in terms of providing the extensive amendments that she has laid before the house. I would plead to the Greens and I would plead to the member for Northcote that this is an opportunity to have a treaty in place. I would hope that ultimately the Greens would rather a situation where they have a treaty in place, an authority in place, a fund in place and a dispute resolution process in place and in structure now than having this bill defeated in the dying days of the 58th Parliament, because we know those opposite do not support this and we do not know what the outcome of the election in November will be. And if not now, I say to the member for Northcote, when? There is a bill that is before the house. This has been the result of extensive consultation.

I appreciate the member for Northcote's contribution, and I appreciate the fact that she has a lived experience that is vastly different to mine and has experienced a way of life and prejudice and racism I have never confronted in my life, but there is an opportunity for the

member for Northcote to be associated with something that is great, with something that will be enduring and with something that will change the lives of Indigenous Victorians for generations to come. This is the opportunity. I can appreciate the fact that in the member's mind it might not be perfect, and I do not doubt for a moment the sincerity of her arguments, but the time is now. We can do this now. As we all know as legislators, down the track governments change and people might have a different slant or a different take on things and might choose to amend the legislation, but they are amending an act — they are not introducing new legislation, they are not starting the process all over again. This is the time. The time is now.

For me, to be a representative of the labour movement and to be a representative of the Labor Party, a party which has striven in recent times to do the right things by Indigenous Victorians and Indigenous Australians — going back to when Whitlam passed the first land rights legislation in the dying days of his government — gives me enormous pride. Like many of us here, we stand on the shoulders of giants. We are continuing a great Labor tradition. It gives me great pleasure to be able to speak on a bill like this and to also give a young woman like Rachael an opportunity to have her say and tell her story about what this means for her and her people. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (17:49) — I rise to make a contribution on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018, and I acknowledge that we are standing on lands that were under the custodianship of the Kulin nations. I think it is an opportunity to also recognise those elders who are here today and will be here during the week and also those existing in the communities already, past and present. I look at my electorate, and it is divided north-south by the Great Divide. The Wurundjeri are south of the Divide and the Taungurung are north of the Divide. It is fairly well how it is at the moment; I am not sure it is going to remain exactly like that.

I think it is very important that we all acknowledge the first Australians, the initial custodians of the land, and acknowledge their supports and the challenges that they continue to have and respect them and respect each other for the process that we are going through here today. When we look at the Aboriginals, they are the oldest living culture in history, and I find that absolutely remarkable. It is so important that that is not lost, that we are all working towards making sure that for this culture things are as good as they can be.

I noticed with regard to the treaty that the bill includes establishing an Aboriginal Representative Body to

negotiate the treaty; establishing the general guiding principles for the treaty process; establishing a treaty authority as an independent umpire to be established by agreement, though I am not quite sure how that will exactly work; and setting up a treaty negotiation framework and of course a self-determination fund to be administered by the established representative body.

I know that most of the feedback has been received from the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations. When the opposition met with them, we were advised that there were three key issues for them. One is the recognition of past injustices, and I think that we all understand the injustices that have happened — horrific things, from the introduction of disease to the removal of their land and the removal of their children. It has been absolutely horrible. I look at my electorate, and Coranderrk down at Healesville has been central to that when many different mobs were moved down there. To a degree that depleted the Taungurung in and around the Murrindindi shire and the Mansfield shire. Many of them went on and moved down to Coranderrk and then went and lived in other places.

The second key issue was the commitment to working towards closing the gap. Sadly there is still so much work to be done in this field, and I think everyone in this chamber would certainly agree that it is so important. The educational outcomes for Aboriginals are not what they should be, nor are employment rates. The incarceration rate is something that is of great concern, and we need to really work hard to get to the bottom of that. If we have a look at health as well, Indigenous people have higher rates of diabetes and smoking and kidney disease in particular. I want to acknowledge the work of the Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association, which the member for South-West Coast and I visited down at Lakes Entrance. They were doing some great work and had been acknowledged for their work in getting the smoking rates down. I think that was particularly good, because they have set up a framework to show that it can be done — it is hard work, but it can be done. I am sure that everybody in this place certainly agrees with that.

The third concern that the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations raised with the opposition is the commitment to supporting employment and economic independence initiatives. I really do not think that there is any dispute with that. Regardless of who is in government, we will continue to work along these points, as we have done in the past.

I want to reflect on being the oldest living culture. I found myself at Reconciliation Week last week, and I attended four events. It was terrific, because they are

quite varied. I will start with one in Murrindindi shire. Murrindindi shire is in the area of the Taungurung. Angela ten Buuren is a Franklin, one of the traditional families in that area, and her father grew up with my father and his brothers in Yea. Angela of course is the sister of Aunty Bernadette. Angela recounted the work that she has done in researching her family history in and around Yea, Kilmore and Mansfield. They have gone on as a family and visited places that were of significance and really developed a bit of a story around that. She is finding out more all the time.

What I am really pleased about is that there is evidence and a documentary history there that helps her put the pieces together, because as we hear, it is so important that these family histories are passed down. However, we need to acknowledge that they are not always passed down, because Angela is finding out things that she did not know and is still trying to piece together the bits and pieces. As she was talking, I thought, 'I must ask her about this'. I wanted to know about how we fit in and also mention some things that I thought might be able to help her in her effort to establish not just Franklin history but also key Taungurung history in the area.

With that, she mentioned a number of Taungurung words that are towns that we know and are very familiar with and Taungurung place names. She said Toolangi means 'stringybark tree' and Narbethong means 'a cheerful place'. Taggerty was the blue-grey clay used for body painting, but as yet she has been unable to establish where exactly that blue-grey clay could be sourced from. One of my favourites is that Murrindindi means 'mountainous misty place'. If the Aboriginal culture has been going for some 60 000 years, nothing has changed in Murrindindi for some 60 000 years, because it remains misty and foggy, and it is well renowned in that regard. I thought that was actually quite accurate. Also, Ghin Ghin is a meeting place for all nine Taungurung clans. It was a meeting of the waters, and Ghin Ghin was on the Goulburn. The clans would come together there to share food and lore and to dance and settle disputes and more. I certainly enjoyed hearing Angela's recounting of the history of what she had found.

I also went to the Yarra Ranges reconciliation event, and I was pleased to see the return of the firestick was front and centre. Uncle Dave Wandin has done quite a bit of work in that space, learning about that and helping to grow that. Of course the other great speaker is Bruce Pascoe. I always enjoy him because he is reframing, I think, what Aboriginal culture was like before the white man came to Australia. He has gone through the diaries of the early explorers. Regardless of where they were in Australia, they all recounted very

similar stories about how the Aboriginals nurtured and cultivated the land and how they cropped and they fished in particular ways. It really changed the way a lot of us thought about what we have been led to believe.

On Thursday of last week I attended the Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Service at the shrine. I want to acknowledge Aunty Dot Peters, a Healesville local whose father went to war and was killed in Burma, and remains there. It was only 13 years ago that she fought for and got recognition for Aboriginal soldiers, and I think that was fantastic. My father told me a story of one of the Franklins who had volunteered, and he did not get in because of flat feet, but he wore very proudly his 'V' for volunteering to show everybody that he was ready to step in and help his Australian friends.

Aunty Dot was accompanied by her son Andrew and Sam Halim, part of the Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Committee, and we had the girls from Worawa Aboriginal College, an independent boarding school for Aboriginal people from all over the state. It is led by Aunty Lois Peeler and she is a Yorta Yorta woman, a leader in her own right, and has been a model and a singer as part of the Sapphires. I think she is doing some great things with those girls from around Australia.

To cap it off, on Saturday night I attended the Indigenous round, where I was able to join Aunty Joy on the ground while her nephew Perry did the smoking ceremony. Her daughter Jodie was with us, and also many of her brothers and sisters were there, and her nieces and grandchildren were also there.

I have always worked with the local Aboriginal groups in my electorate, and I will continue to do so. I will continue to acknowledge and support and respect them and their struggles and their challenges. In this house we undo so much state-based legislation to have a national overarching legislation for the country, and I think that this is where this should belong, because we often find ourselves arguing to bring different state-based legislation to the one federal-based legislation.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (18:00) — 'The past is never dead', as William Faulkner observed, 'It's not even past'. Australia's Indigenous culture is the oldest living culture known to man. We stand here at a historic moment with a wonderful opportunity to have a treaty.

I want to acknowledge the elders past and present and also the member for Northcote, who is the first Indigenous woman elected to the Victorian Parliament. With the ebb and flow of history I want to also make

the point that life is short; government is shorter. When opportunities of historic note arise, I think it is incumbent on all of us to actually try to seize the opportunity. There have been too many failed opportunities for Australia's Indigenous community for too long.

Colonisation has had a devastating impact on Indigenous peoples worldwide. Treaty is a practical and tangible way to support Aboriginal Victorians to realise self-determination and deliver results for their communities. As a necessary step towards reconciliation, treaty will benefit all Victorians. I think that is a proposition that must be emphasised.

On Saturday night I was privileged to join Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, the Premier and a range of people from right across the community for the Long Walk to the Dreamtime at the G. That represents how important these issues are and how difficult history is to change.

I have had the great opportunity to get to know Michael Long over time, and I know how football can sometimes be a connector culturally, and how the issues of the past that were flashpoint moments about racial abuse and other issues have now been turned around and become a positive to actually acknowledge what needs to be done for the future. I remember at the time in 1995 when Michael Long went through this issue and had to address racial abuse, he stood up and defined what needs to happen and the way that we need to address each other. On the issue of racial abuse he said, 'It's degrading a person for not only who they are but for their colour as well'. With one of those classic sentiments he has said that nobody worries about the colour of their car or their dog, so why does it matter about a person's colour? It is about the person themselves and it is about their character. It was just one of those heartfelt movements that carried the weight of history and an undeniable truth.

That is what is at the heart of this debate tonight to try to get to treaty. Aboriginal people have long demanded treaty as a way to provide recognition of the enduring sovereign nature of Aboriginal people, as well as to provide redress for the dispossession of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands and the harm that they have felt and suffered at the hands of non-Aboriginal people.

To put it into context, Australia is the only commonwealth country of its kind that does not have a history of treaties with its first people. Before the Victorian government's commitment to advancing a treaty process in 2016 there had been no government

commitment to a treaty process in Australia since one was proposed way back in 1988 by then Prime Minister Bob Hawke. Despite this, Aboriginal people have continued to express their desire for a treaty. In the absence of commonwealth leadership, states are increasingly looking to develop their own structures and processes to transform relations with Aboriginal people.

The Victorian Aboriginal community and the Victorian government have a long tradition of leading the national conversation on Aboriginal affairs, and Victoria is now leading the way nationally by progressing its commitment to treaty. International studies have shown clear links between self-determination and treaty and improved results for Indigenous peoples. The treaty negotiating framework will set out eligibility and standards for entering into negotiations and the process by which any treaties will be negotiated. The framework will be negotiated between the state and the traditional owners through the Aboriginal Representative Body. Of course there may be one or more treaties agreed with the Aboriginal community or communities.

It is expected that the Aboriginal Representative Body, made up of elected traditional owners, will be in place by July next year. At that time, the government will work with the Aboriginal Representative Body to establish the elements necessary to enable treaty negotiations to commence: a treaty authority, a treaty negotiation framework and a self-determination fund. These are the critical pillars to establish this process. My argument is that this is an opportunity that must not be missed to pass this bill, to get the process formalised by the Victorian Parliament and to make sure it happens as soon as possible.

Respecting that this process is one based on partnerships and self-determination, the government cannot unilaterally state or commit to a time line for when these elements may be in place. It may be that treaty negotiations between negotiating parties and the state could commence as early as mid-2020. That is the ambition. The length of time it may take for any treaty to be finalised depends on a range of factors, including some outside the government's control. The scope of the treaty, however, including what it may address, will be set out in the future treaty negotiation framework. This will be agreed on between traditional owners through the Aboriginal Representative Body and the state. A state-based treaty can address only issues that are within Victoria's jurisdiction.

I want to make the point that sometimes you need to take these matters jurisdiction by jurisdiction, but to get a result is the critical proposition. I would argue that we

should not make perfect the enemy of good but, instead, get this bill through the Parliament, get the process up and running, and then see how it can evolve.

As far as the Victorian government is concerned, the treaty may cover a broad range of issues. Those commonly raised by the Aboriginal community in consultation forums include rights to land, natural resources and services; representation — a voice to government; reconciliation — truth, language, education; and reparation — compensation and concessions.

The Victorian government recognises that truth telling and healing are a crucial part of the treaty process. That I think is really significant as well. If you look at the New Zealand Treaty of Waitangi, the settlement process provided opportunity for healing when the Crown acknowledged and apologised for past wrongs committed against the Maori peoples. I think there is enormous goodwill to try to make this happen, and the opportunity should not be missed. There have been calls from some Aboriginal community members that treaties in Victoria should be clan based. Smaller in size than an Aboriginal nation, clans are groups of Aboriginal people that share ties to land and kinship. At no stage in the discussions on treaty with Aboriginal Victorians has that been ruled out.

The opportunity is here now, in the 58th Parliament of Victoria. It has taken an enormous amount of time to be able to do this. I think that it is important when these moments present themselves that you actually try to unite people, that you build bridges and you bring people together and you do not miss this historic moment. This can be done in a way that provides the opportunity because for too long we have seen Bridging the Gap issues. We have seen, more than a quarter of a century after the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, that on some occasions matters are becoming worse, not better. I think there needs to be a whole-of-government approach to how this is resolved. The treaty can be the cornerstone of this and it can be delivered by the Victorian government. I think it is really important because the Long Walk continues slowly, courageously. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) (18:10) — I commence by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the people of the Kulin nation, and pay my respects to their elders present, past and future.

I am here to make a contribution on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. The purpose of the bill is to establish a framework for the advancement of treaty. The provisions of the bill

will establish an Aboriginal Representative Body to negotiate treaty; establish general guiding principles for the treaty process; establish a treaty authority, an independent umpire to be established by agreement; set up a treaty negotiation framework by agreement; and establish a self-determination fund to be administered by the established Aboriginal Representative Body.

Treaty has been discussed in both federal and state jurisdictions for some time. In Victoria, it gained momentum after 500 elders across Victoria came together in 2016 for discussions around self-determination, unanimously choosing treaty as a means of self-determination. There are a number of aspects to this. This is indeed a debate that needs to be undertaken with a great deal of respect and understanding. When we talk about this topic, we must consider a number of elements that sit underneath it relating to matters including social, cultural and economic needs. I think that every member of this chamber would agree that these are important. No doubt governments have a role to play in the process of improving outcomes for Indigenous people through policies and programs developed in an environment of meaningful engagement. There are a number of reasons why we have the *Closing the Gap* report and also the Victorian Aboriginal affairs framework. These are objectives that have had the support of all sides of politics.

Treaty has been discussed both federally and in state and territory jurisdictions for some time, but particularly federally — and this is where we believe the discussion should take place, rather than at state level. One of the areas that I think is of note is in my area along the border, in Mildura and in south-west New South Wales, which includes the lands of both the Latji Latji and the Paakantyi peoples. Although it is a state border, it has been a notional clan or nation boundary as well. When we are dealing with this at a state level there will be issues when we get to state borders. That is why I think that this matter should be considered at a federal level rather than at a state level, so that we do not disenfranchise or divide peoples along the state borders. Whether it is treaty, an agreement, another set of words or a single agreement, it needs to be done on a national scale.

I would like to talk about particularly bridging the gap and the work that has been done. I would like to pay tribute to the Mallee District Aboriginal Services that has been vital in bridging the gap in my region. The people there provide a number of services, principally health based, that are making a difference to Aboriginal people in my region. In the past I have served on a health governance board, which was also responsible

for a fairly extensive area of western New South Wales, and therefore Aboriginal health was a key part of the business of providing health services. We achieved a number of things there that I think did help.

However, in looking at this, there are always a number of pillars you have to build a platform upon in improving Aboriginal wellbeing in our community. Health is but one of them; education, employment, housing and cultural awareness are but some of the others, and you cannot move one of those pillars very far ahead of the others, so it is a real challenge to bring those services together. I think that Mallee District Aboriginal Services, under their board and CEO, have done a great job in north-western Victoria.

However, in returning briefly to where we are, if you are sitting down to plan a perfect process, you would be dealing with this nationally rather than having the different discussions with different states. We do note that South Australia has abandoned its treaty process, and New South Wales has been very strong in where it is at. We note that the New South Wales government position is that any process leading to a treaty or treaties with Aboriginal people must be led by the commonwealth, that New South Wales understands that the commonwealth government is actively considering issues related to self-determination through a bipartisan parliamentary joint committee and that committee is due to report on 29 November. It is looking into constitutional recognition, but other matters in its terms of reference are to:

... consider if, and how, self-determination can be advanced, in a way that leads to greater local decision-making, economic advancement and improved social outcomes;

recommend options for constitutional change and any potential complementary legislative measures which meet the expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and which will secure cross-party parliamentary support and the support of the Australian people ...

They are the two elements that go to the heart of what the treaty discussions are about.

When I look again back to those cross-border issues, New South Wales is looking to the federal government and Victoria is going it alone. I fear that we will have a period of confusion and misunderstanding that will occur around these matters as they are progressed along the border regions. Everybody will need to be sensitive of this because the last thing we want is to further confuse people or cause any more heartache than has already been caused to Aboriginal people. With those words, and particularly considering those people who live in cross-border situations, I think we will have difficulties with this until we resolve those matters.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (18:17) — I am pleased to support the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. I start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the country on which we meet and pass our laws in this Parliament and pay my respects to elders, both past and present.

Growing up in West Preston, one of my original engagements with Aboriginal people in a metropolitan, inner suburban electorate was at Bell Primary School, which is now in the Northcote electorate. I look back and I think about what I remembered from those times. I do not remember people of great wealth, and I do not remember people who were widely accepted. I remember people who wore T-shirts or had other identifying traits, and I remember they had a story to tell about their identity and wanted to be accepted in their community. It was a very different place and it was a difficult place in the early to mid-1980s, more so than it is today — and thankfully so for everybody in that community.

But it was a place where you got an understanding. Whether or not it was always the right one, you certainly got views put to you. It was a place where you met a lot of people and you were immersed in a culture and an understanding as people from different communities came together for their education and came to learn and understand more about each other. It is only as you get older that you start to reflect on that. Then of course you move across to places in the north-eastern suburbs, into Viewbank, to chase a better education and better opportunities, and perhaps your engagement with Indigenous communities is suddenly less because other people's ability to seek out better opportunities is not as great as your own.

Then you have other engagements. As a staffer to former ministers in the Bracks and Brumby Labor governments, travelling particularly to aged-care facilities and regional hospitals while working for the former member for Melbourne, Bronwyn Pike, I got the opportunity to travel to regional Victorian locations that I had not had all that much experience visiting. I saw many of the legislators here, particularly from the National Party, and the way in which they represented the views and aspirations in their day-to-day engagement with significant portions of their communities, which were Indigenous communities. I picked up some aspects and understandings about that engagement, and then I got the opportunity to serve as an elected representative myself. Certainly Banyule City Council, I believe, have done great and progressive work over time in relation to their engagement, relationships and advancement of Indigenous matters.

At citizenship ceremonies there was a common refrain that was talked about by one of my fellow councillors when I was there, a former mayor who is a ward councillor these days. Often in his engagement with new citizens he would talk about the Indigenous community and the Indigenous population. When we talk today about putting up borders and when we talk about putting up barriers to people, here was a community that had endured many travails, and we have heard of those from the lead opposition speaker, the member for Gippsland East. We have talked about the dispossession, disease, death and destruction, and when we reflect on those matters, as he outlined, and the significant communities that he represents in eastern Victoria, we also reflect on our own citizenship ceremonies, where we would try to talk to people — whether they were newly arrived or had been here for some time and were now becoming Australian citizens — about an understanding of the oldest cultures in our history.

We would talk about what they have endured. Yet still at the beginning of those ceremonies, when talking about becoming an Australian citizen, we would also hear them say to us, ‘Whether it is from the tips of the trees to the roots of the earth, it all belongs to each and every one of us’. To have that self-reflection, that generosity and that capacity, given all that you have endured, is very significant, and at those occasions where people step up to become full citizens of this country, they get a very clear understanding, certainly in my community, of their obligations and of the commitments that have been made from those who came here long before us all.

I think it is very reflective as well listening to the contributions of those opposite. I think the obligations many of them have are not to find points of difference and rely on our commonwealth Parliament to deal with these matters but to give strength to the arm for when the commonwealth Parliament is meeting so that they can point to jurisdictions, as we would choose to do if we were arguing the case with the commonwealth Parliament, that are showing leadership, jurisdictions that are showing a willingness to engage in these very difficult issues and find a way forward that is not everything, that is not absolutism.

Perhaps at times my observations and frustrations with the Greens party are that it is all or nothing. Climate change and particular matters in relation to the federal sphere come to mind, but I listened intently to the member for Northcote’s contribution and I have listened in the past when she has spoken in this place because I feel there is always something more you can

learn from others about their experiences and their understanding of these matters.

But I am not one to want to think that we leave it just to the commonwealth Parliament as it is today — to Cory Bernardi or Pauline Hanson or many other legislators up there. I think in shedding light, not heat, on these matters it is incumbent on us to do what we can. If we are asking people, whether it is in a range of forums that have dealt with suffering, with dispossession, with lack of trust — as you would know, Acting Speaker McGuire, in relation to a range of parliamentary committees you have been engaged with — it is easy to say it is difficult, to find fault and to find matters that are not pure in the work that we do. What I do think is important in the work that the member for Sydenham, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, has done on behalf of the government and in her engagement with communities that have made the sacrifice and the time to be engaged in these issues is that they do not do that so that we can handball it somewhere else. They do it because they are giving up their emotional capacity and time to these issues, and I would not disrespect that by not taking a step forward today.

I think it is incumbent on those opposite, who represent very significant communities across Victoria, Indigenous communities across our state, particularly those in the National Party, not to be hectoring and lectured by me but to make some serious considerations and decisions about what they are prepared to do for their local communities in relation to taking these matters forward today and sending a clear message — not passing the message on, not leaving it to others but sending a very clear message through their actions. Ultimately it is leadership that is required here to send a message from the state of Victoria to others across the country and to those in Canberra that we are not waiting for you, that we will set out the markers and that we will work with our Indigenous communities to make progress. We will not get everything, but we must not do nothing. That is just not the answer. So I would call on those opposite to find solutions and momentum, not to kick this to the kerb. That has happened for too long, and the Indigenous people who have committed themselves to this process deserve our respect and support in relation to this bill.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (18:27) — I too am very proud to rise to be able to contribute to the debate on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. I would also like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of this land with the longest, most enduring cultures in the world, and I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.

I speak today with the very firm belief that working towards a treaty is absolutely essential. We must do it because it is the right thing to do. Without a framework of responsibility provided for by a treaty, programs like Closing the Gap, programs which we know are not achieving the outcomes that are so crucial to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, will not reach their potential.

Can I start first with an admission: I was not aware that Australia is the only commonwealth country not to have a treaty with its Indigenous peoples. I think that is certainly to our enduring shame. But then again of course, up until 3 June 1992 when the High Court of Australia handed down its historic decision in the Mabo case we were living under the fictional legal concept that Australia and the Torres Strait Islands were not owned, that they were not occupied by Indigenous people, that the land belonged to no-one — that, in other words, our land was terra nullius. We know that the High Court turned that fiction on its head, finally recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have rights to the land, rights that existed long before colonisation and rights that still exist today. Of course following the Mabo decision in 1992 we got the Native Title Act 1993 and with that a system that operates to recognise native title where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can prove a continuing connection to their land.

I worked in Broome for several years with the Kimberley Land Council. Part of my work was to visit remote communities and take statements from community members and traditional owners which formed part of their evidence in native title claims. To me there was never any question about their connection to the land, and the requirement to have traditional owners prove their connection was and still is misplaced. I always felt that the burden, that onus, should have been reversed, because as far as I was concerned their connection to land was an absolute given.

Most of us understand the fundamental need and the fundamental right of every person to enjoy their culture, their heritage and their language, and the right to take part or participate in cultural life is widely recognised in human rights instruments and conventions. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* says in article 4 that Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination.

It is extraordinary that today we are here in Victoria having now introduced legislation, and it is history-making legislation, to create a legislative basis for negotiating a treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples. As we have heard, this is the first time in Australia that legislation of this nature has been introduced. The manner in which it was introduced is also worth noting. Members will recall that a motion was moved and passed which allowed the treaty commissioner and five members of the Aboriginal Treaty Working Group to come onto the floor of the house and to address the house in both English and Aboriginal languages. This was possibly the first time this had ever happened in the house, and it certainly added to the significance of this historic occasion.

I want to read part of the preamble to the bill because I think it is quite important and it goes into quite some detail, outlining the context for what this treaty process means. It starts with the following:

The State of Victoria acknowledges Victorian traditional owners as the first peoples of what is now known as Victoria.

...

Victorian traditional owners maintain that their sovereignty has never been ceded, and Aboriginal Victorians have long called for treaty. These calls have long gone unanswered. The time has now come to take the next step towards reconciliation and to advance Aboriginal self-determination. Aboriginal Victorians and the State are ready to talk treaty.

It ends most appropriately with this:

The injustices of the past cannot be undone. The State is pursuing treaty because it is the right thing to do. Victoria needs a treaty or treaties that are reciprocal, and that through truth and justice provide far reaching benefits for Aboriginal Victorians. For traditional owners, Aboriginal children, elders, and stolen people; for a society that all Victorians can all be proud of; treaty will be for all Aboriginal Victorians. In the spirit of reconciliation, treaty will be for all Victorians.

With this Act Aboriginal Victorians and the State join hands to take the first step on the pathway towards treaty.

There it is. This is the first step towards treaty, and I do not think we should ever underestimate the significance of this step. With this legislation we are setting the framework necessary to support future treaty negotiations between Aboriginal Victorians and the state of Victoria.

More than 7000 Aboriginal members have contributed to and been engaged in work to further this important treaty process in Victoria. Quite literally it has taken years to get to this point. It has been challenging. We have heard that it has been difficult. Of course this is not the treaty, this is just the beginning of that process — the road map, if you like. No doubt there will be challenges ahead, but I am hopeful and I am confident that a path forward will be forged. Here we are and what an extraordinary achievement, what a great forward step this bill is. I do not think we should

detract from the enormous amount of work that has been done to get us to this point. Now is the time to build on that important work. The momentum is now and we should embrace this opportunity.

Let us also focus on what unites this process, and that is the guiding principles and, most importantly, it would be self-determination by Aboriginal Victorians. At the same time it is important to recognise that underpinning all of this is cultural empowerment. But again that is something that is likely to have different meanings and different emphasis for different Aboriginal Victorians, and that too is something to be acknowledged, emphasised and incorporated into the overall process.

Obviously we know that the purpose of treaty can mean many things and can include many things, but above all I think that the most important guiding principle here is about self-determination, because we all know that sovereignty matters. This is missing here in Victoria. In fact it is missing in Australia. We have lacked the laws and we have lacked the institutions that are necessary for Aboriginal Australians and Aboriginal Victorians to make the decisions that impact them and that recognise a measure of Indigenous sovereignty. When we achieve it, because I have no doubt that we will achieve a negotiated treaty with Aboriginal Victorians, it will obviously mark an incredibly significant and important break from a system that has for too long disregarded the views of Aboriginal people.

Right now we have also reached a very critical point and one I think we need to pursue. We cannot lose the momentum. As I said, we need to really embrace this opportunity now, and it is this legislation. Whilst it is not a treaty, it is the process for advancing the treaty. To that end it nevertheless marks a very significant and quite extraordinary step in Victoria's history and one I think we should all be very proud of. The time for mere symbolism is over. We now know that, after so many years of reports that we are failing to live up to the Closing the Gap measures that we all so desperately want to see, practical change that lays down better structures and relationships for the future is absolutely essential. This bill before us brings the state of Victoria another step closer to having that official treaty with Aboriginal Victorians. Because pursuing a treaty with Aboriginal Victorians is absolutely the right thing to do, I commend the bill to the house.

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (18:37) — I begin by acknowledging the original owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to their ancestors past, present and future.

It is with great pride that I rise to speak on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. I also want to acknowledge the work that Jill Gallagher, the commissioner for advancing treaty, has done so far and will do and the challenges she will face in the coming months. I have every confidence that she is the right person to do the job. I want to also acknowledge the honourable ancestors and how, despite the conflict and adversity and hardship they faced, they have survived and maintained and evolved a strong cultural identity and connection to country.

In the electorate of Geelong the Wadawurrung people have had a strong and proud history, but we know from documented evidence of the Wadawurrung people that massacres and European diseases between 1836 and 1854 saw a population of around 3000 reduced to just 10. This awareness of history is important because it helps to explain how this history affects Aboriginal people today. Having been married to a Gunditjmara man and having three Aboriginal children, I have an understanding of the culture. I am not saying I am an expert on that, but what I am saying is that I have experienced indirectly their experiences of being Aboriginal people in this country.

From what I have heard from those opposite I do not think they get it, and I found some of the condescending comments made during their contributions in this place today quite offensive. But I am proud to be a part of the Andrews government, a government that has listened and heard the First Nations people and a government that is committed to addressing unfinished business and to progressing reconciliation with Victoria's first people.

I thank the minister for her work and dedication, and her team for this bill that we have before us today. Last week I participated in many reconciliation week events throughout my electorate, a great sharing of this beautiful culture — stories, music, dance and learning about country. It concerns me at times that we should be mindful that our focus should also be on this wonderful culture, and that it is not all about the bad things that we experience.

The topic during reconciliation week last week was predominantly around treaty and the process to treaty. It was interesting that at many of the events I attended, particularly from students I heard, 'Why don't we have a treaty?'. They could not understand why Australia does not have a treaty. And, 'Why has it taken this long to get to this point?' and, 'Why are we only talking about a treaty in Victoria and not an Australian treaty?'. The Turnbull government's position on treaty or on the

Uluru statement was that Australians are not ready for that. So Indigenous Australians continue to have no voice in this country. I think it is interesting that — particularly during last week, given that it was reconciliation week — there were lots of conversations around Aboriginal communities and treaty. People were clearly saying, ‘Why is there no treaty?’. So to me that indicates that Australians are ready for treaty — they certainly are in Victoria. I cannot see any reason why we would not continue down that path, particularly at a federal level, but obviously the Turnbull government do not support that position.

Once there was the Australian and Torres Strait Islander Commission, ATSIC, which was a representative body. Aboriginal people were elected to that body, and it was a process for them to give their voice to government. There were a number of Aboriginal programs and organisations that also fell under the umbrella of ATSIC. The agency was dismantled in 2004 in the aftermath of corruption allegations and litigation. ATSIC was established by the Hawke Labor government through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989, which took effect on 5 March 1990. While ATSIC’s existence was always subject to the oversight of governments, ATSIC was a group of elected individuals whose main goal was the oversight that happened to Aboriginal Australians. I can recall the discussions among Aboriginal people and family members who looked forward to casting their ATSIC vote. There was a strong view that ATSIC should have been reformed rather than dismantled. As a result the First Nations people have had no voice at the national Parliament since then.

For the First Nations people of Victoria the treaty journey has begun. The proposal of this bill is to provide a mechanism for the state to recognise the Aboriginal Representative Body as its sole counterpart and representative of Aboriginal Victorians in establishing the elements necessary to support treaty negotiations. This bill will enshrine the following guiding principles for the treaty process: self-determination and empowerment, fairness and equity, partnership and good faith, mutual benefit and sustainability, and transparency and accountability.

The bill requires that the Aboriginal Representative Body and the state work together to establish by agreement the following elements necessary to support future treaty negotiations: an independent treaty authority to facilitate negotiations, a treaty negotiation framework that sets out the process for negotiations, and a self-determination fund to empower Aboriginal Victorians to participate in the treaty process on an

equal footing with the state and to build capacity, wealth and prosperity. The bill requires the Aboriginal Representative Body and the state to enter into an agreement that sets out a process for resolving any disputes that may arise between the Aboriginal Representative Body and the state in the course of performing their functions set out in the bill. The bill requires the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Representative Body to report annually to Parliament on progress towards treaty.

I think the interest in our communities in Victoria is really strong. They want to see this bill passed. They want to see a process developed to move towards treaty; there is no doubt about that. Those opposite referring it to the federal government is just not good enough anymore. In Victoria we have a progressive government. We have a government that has listened and cared about what happens. We have a government that is committed to the treaty process. Let’s continue down that path. There are some concerns among Aboriginal people, but all the Aboriginal people I have spoken to in my community are saying, ‘Just get on with it. We are concerned that this is going to be hijacked’. So there are concerns that it will not happen. Aboriginal people have been promised the world over the years and nothing ever eventuates. The Turnbull decision to walk away indicates to Aboriginal people in our community that the federal government do not care about what is happening.

So it is really important that this bill is passed in this place and it is passed in the other place to ensure that we maintain the confidence of Aboriginal communities across Victoria. They are relying on this government to make this first step. It is only the process. It is not the actual treaty — it is the process. And that is what people need to see pass through this place and pass through quickly. We need to ensure that Aboriginal communities in Victoria have the confidence that we will pass this bill and that it will move towards the process that we have committed to and not go off on other tangents that are not going to complete this treaty process. It is so important.

I plead with the opposition to reconsider their position. I think it is really important that we have this bill passed and that it is passed as quickly as possible. I know in my electorate my community is relying on this bill being passed. They are concerned that there will be interference or side-tracking and that this bill will not pass. I commend the bill to the house, and I hope it has a speedy passage.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) (18:47) — We have a chance to make a difference here in this chamber

in this Parliament right at this moment. We have got nothing to lose but so much to gain. I made some remarks in my inaugural speech that I would like to make again here. I said:

I take this moment to recognise the ground upon which we stand, that of the Kulin nation, and I pay my respects to their elders past and present. It is important to pay this recognition, but words are really not enough. Australia's prosperity has come at a great cost. Our collective past failures as a nation mean that Indigenous Australians have been denied the equality and social justice that we take for granted. The very first inhabitants of this land are the most disadvantaged in our society. That is really a shame on us. In a modern Australia with a strong economy this is entirely unacceptable. As former Prime Minister Paul Keating said in his landmark Redfern speech:

This is a fundamental test of our social goals and our national will: our ability to say to ourselves and the rest of the world that Australia is a first rate social democracy, that we are what we should be — truly the land of the fair go and the better chance.

Here in this very Parliament we can set directions to close the gap.

What is that gap? It is pretty profound. While some of the gaps in some areas have narrowed, they are far too wide in most areas. Perinatal mortality is 1.4 times higher for babies born to Aboriginal mothers compared to those born to non-Aboriginal mothers. Aboriginal children are 8.3 times more likely to be the subject of child protection substantiation than non-Aboriginal children in Victoria. The unemployment rate is almost three times higher for Aboriginal Victorians than for the general Victorian population — 16 per cent compared to 6 per cent. Aboriginal Victorians are over-represented in family violence incident reports by more than four times for affected family members and five times for alleged offenders. Aboriginal youth are significantly over-represented in the justice system at 13 times the rate for non-Aboriginal Victorian youth.

But as the member for Geelong said, there is far more to Australia's first peoples than that deficit model. They are the longest continuing civilisation known to man. Their cultures are so steeped in history, tradition, spirituality, family and kinship that they have much to teach us. They have a civilisation that has demonstrated extraordinary courage, innovation and adaptability, which has survived and prospered for over 50 000 years through adversities both man-made and natural. Imagine if Victoria's 50 000 first peoples could take their rightful place and be supported to take their rightful place in Victorian civil society and throughout every area of Victorian life. What a profoundly changed society this would be. We would reap such, such rich rewards.

Some people might say: what has this got to do with a treaty? Well, everything. While I am extraordinarily proud, as other speakers on the government side have said, that it is an Andrews Labor government that has worked with Victoria's first peoples to bring a treaty bill to this Parliament, self-determination and the concept of treaty is not new. It is accepted worldwide by the highest authorities. Article 3 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 4 goes on to say:

Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

There is an absolute link between self-determination and the life chances of Victoria's first peoples — in fact Australia's first peoples. I refer to a very, very powerful document that others have also referred to, the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. I want to quote a very, very important part of that statement:

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for 60 millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last 200 years?

...

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

They are extraordinarily powerful words, and they absolutely make the link between self-determination and life chances for Australia's first people.

This bill is a first but very powerful step towards achieving that exact aspiration. As other speakers on the government side have said, this bill outlines a clear process with extraordinary community support around Victoria. It provides a mechanism for the state to recognise the Aboriginal Representative Body as the sole counterpart and representative of Aboriginal Victorians in establishing the key elements necessary to support treaty negotiations. It enshrines guiding principles, including self-determination and empowerment, fairness and equality, partnership and good faith, mutual benefit and sustainability, transparency and accountability.

The bill requires that the Aboriginal Representative Body and the state work together as equal partners to establish by agreement the following elements necessary to support future treaty negotiations: an independent treaty authority to facilitate negotiations, a treaty negotiation framework that sets out the process for negotiations and a self-determination fund to empower Aboriginal Victorians to participate in the treaty process on an equal footing with the state. This is really important stuff — important architectonic processes that have broad community support, both in the first people community and in the broader Victorian community.

I want to commend the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for her extraordinary work. Not only is her work extraordinary; her sentiment and her genuine commitment to this policy and this cause is profoundly evident when you hear her speak about it.

I want to echo the words of my colleagues on this side. There is no 'perfect' — there is no perfection in this policy path. Perfection exists just as a figment of the imagination of people who profess to want this but seek perfection before they have it. We need to take a first step. The only thing that exists is goodwill, good faith and the first powerful step. Perfection does not exist.

I call on the Greens in the Victorian upper house to take note of a gentleman called Richard Frankland, who yesterday morning was on ABC radio with Jon Faine. He said:

... we're doing something that I didn't think was going to be possible in my lifetime ... My message to every politician who has a voice in this matter is: do the right bloody thing.

That is Richard Frankland, who is calling on all of us to do the right bloody thing. This is the right thing — it

is not perfect but it is a process that has enormous community support and it is a process that allows clan-based and a whole range of other treaty-based processes within the framework. The minister has dealt with the crossbenchers in good faith and with goodwill, and I ask them to support this very powerful bill, because we certainly will not get support from the opposition; the Aboriginal community generally has never received its support from them in any profound way.

In the famous words of people who have uttered this previously: if not us, who, and if not now, when? I commend the bill to the house.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (18:57) — It is a pleasure to rise and speak on the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018. I commence by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet here at the Victorian Parliament today. I honour their elders past, present and future, and pay my respects to them, the longest continuing and living civilisation — of more than 2000 generations, a significant lineage in our country. This is a nation in which 5 million of its people were born overseas, but that is a small snapshot in that broader story and broader tale that is the Australia that we know and love today.

This is a very important milestone for Victoria, and at this moment all parliamentarians should be reflecting on the significance of this time — a Victorian Parliament putting forward a process towards a treaty that should have happened years ago and that really recognises our Indigenous Victorians. It is a process that without doubt should occur at the federal level, but if we were to wait around for the federal government to do something in this space, the process might outlast any one of the members of Parliament here for decades to come.

There are members in this place who were born before the exclusion of Indigenous Australians from the simple right to vote in this country that they have called their own for 60 000 years. I have reflected on the contributions of Senator Pat Dodson, someone who is considered the father of reconciliation, a title that he wears, in his own words, 'humbly' and with a bit of embarrassment. In his first speech in Parliament, he commented that the two references the Australian constitution makes to Indigenous Australians both aim to exclude them from the very laws and processes of our nation. It was not until the 1967 referendum that some efforts were made to remedy those challenges of the past.

A treaty will only go some way towards redressing those past indiscretions. We must acknowledge that we have a long way to go in every aspect of the *Closing the Gap* report: in education, health, early childhood education —

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Companion animals on V/Line services

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (19:00) — (14 477) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is that she reverse her decision and immediately undertake a review into allowing muzzled and leashed dogs onto V/Line trains in the same way that they are allowed on metropolitan trains. I have had significant correspondence with the minister's office on behalf of one of my constituents, Mr Whitehead. Mr Whitehead is elderly and he has a dog that he would like to take as a companion on V/Line trains, but he has been told that he is unable to do so because the rules for V/Line trains do not allow you to just muzzle a dog; you have to put it in a container. His dog does not fit in a container, so he is unable to take his dog on a V/Line train.

As I said, I have had significant correspondence with the minister, dating back to May 2016, but we have been unable to get any movement at all from the minister on this issue. She has been entirely intransigent and has refused to consider whether dogs should be allowed, or could be allowed, on V/Line trains. Having had her refuse to show any interest in reviewing this matter, I subsequently took it to the shadow Minister for Public Transport, and the shadow Minister for Public Transport has today written to Mr Whitehead and made the commitment that if the Liberal-National parties are elected to government in November, he will immediately undertake a review of regulations relating to companion animals on Victorian trains with a view to making them fairer, more consistent and indeed compassionate.

There is no reason for the minister to not review this, other than sheer intransigence and refusing to accept a new idea from anybody else, so I ask her to join in this and get this review going. There is no reason to wait. We are just seeking the same sorts of regulations that are on metropolitan trains — no different. There seems to be no reason that country passengers should be discriminated against in this way.

Fairy Hills Kindergarten

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (19:03) — (14 478) My adjournment matter is for the member for Northern Metropolitan Region in the other place, the Minister for Early Childhood Education. It relates to the Fairy Hills preschool in Ivanhoe. The action I seek is for a meeting between the minister's department, the director and committee of management at the Fairy Hills preschool and Banyule City Council to resolve some resourcing issues relating to the temporary relocation of the preschool during terms 3 and 4 while the redevelopment works are undertaken at the Ivanhoe Fairy Hills preschool location.

Thanks to a \$350 000 grant from the Andrews Labor government, and certainly with the support of the responsible minister, Minister Mikakos, Fairy Hills preschool will be redeveloped so it will have access for all abilities, and that is really important, given there are children with special needs enrolled next year and the kindergarten needs to be upgraded. Thanks also to Banyule City Council for contributing over \$120 000 in its draft budget, and perhaps a little more if it is required, to this project. That is more than \$450 000 to redevelop Fairy Hills preschool in Ivanhoe so it has access for all abilities and is able to cater for all children in the community, particularly for some with special needs enrolled next year.

More remarkable than that is the capacity for the former Mother of God Catholic primary school in East Ivanhoe, which closed at the end of last year, to be available in terms 3 and 4 for Fairy Hills preschool to relocate. But in doing that, where there will be fantastic community resolve and cooperation in those next couple of terms, there are some regulatory and financial requirements, and perhaps some regulatory waivers, that might be needed to support this short-term relocation while the capital works program is undertaken at Fairy Hills preschool. It is a great project. It is a great outcome to utilise, through the Ivanhoe parish, the former Mother of God Primary School to relocate Fairy Hills preschool while this significant redevelopment work is done.

We do not want to see Fairy Hills preschool out of pocket. There are a couple of issues we need to resolve. I look forward to the minister continuing her very strong support and advocacy on behalf of our community at Fairy Hills and to resolving a couple of outstanding matters. I commend these actions to her, and I look forward to being part of enrolments at the Fairy Hills redeveloped preschool next year and also to the future work we will do at the Mother of God school site. The community use that it will have over these

coming terms will benefit the Ivanhoe East and Ivanhoe communities and is to be commended, as are all who are involved. I thank the minister for her funding so far, and I look forward to her positive work in resolving a couple of outstanding matters.

Murray-Darling Basin plan

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (19:06) — (14 479) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Water. This Friday basin ministers will meet in Canberra to discuss further efficiency measures in the southern basin. The action that I am seeking is for the minister to outline the position that she will be taking to Canberra and to explain what work Victoria has done to define the socio-economic test spelled out in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and also what alternative arrangements she has proposed.

Some in northern Victoria are calling for Victoria to push for amendments to the plan to clarify the meaning of the socio-economic test. But section 7.17 of the basin plan states that the 450 gegalitres of upwater can be reduced if efficiency measures meet equivalent environmental outcomes and have neutral or improved socio-economic outcomes. The plan spells out the neutral or improved socio-economic outcomes as evidenced by the participation of consumptive water users in on or off-farm modernisation projects that return water to the environment. This is causing a great deal of consternation in northern Victoria because the test seems to be defined by the willingness of individuals to participate in programs which return water to the commonwealth.

There is, however, another option. Section 7.17(2)(b)(ii) of the plan states that alternative arrangements can be:

... proposed by a basin state, assessed by that state as achieving water recovery with neutral or improved socio-economic outcomes.

This evening I would like the minister to tell irrigators what work she has done to put forward alternative plans, and I would like her to explain why, with just four days to go until this crucial meeting takes place, she is yet to outline a way forward.

The stakes are very high for our region. In 2009, 1475 gegalitres of high-reliability water shares were held in the Goulburn-Murray irrigation district. This number is now believed to be less than 900 gegalitres. The socio-economic analysis undertaken by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority has laid bare the job losses and the lost economic activity in our region. As more water leaves the district, costs increase for those

who remain, and with \$2 billion invested in the modernisation of these irrigation districts through the Connections Project there is a risk that further water recovery will result in the collapse of Goulburn-Murray Water.

Goulburn-Murray Water's huge footprint and modernised infrastructure, combined with a shrinking customer base and delivery volume, is a disaster waiting to happen. It is not good enough for the minister to simply tell irrigators what they want to hear; she needs to actually have a plan of action, and I would like her to outline what that plan actually is.

Southern Autistic School

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (19:09) — (14 480) My adjournment matter tonight is for the attention of the Minister for Education, and it concerns Southern Autistic School in East Bentleigh. The action I seek is that the minister provide funding out of the School Pride and Sport Fund to install some much-needed shade.

Southern Autistic School has been growing very fast over the last few years. It now has well over 200 students. It was only ever built for a number a bit less than half of that; therefore space has been at a premium. That has meant that a number of portables have been moved onsite over the last couple of years, including for the 2018 school year. This has left some outdoor space between the portables, which the principal has identified could be usable space if there was appropriate shade. Hence my request tonight.

In terms of the broader issue of growth — and I have referred to the growth of Southern Autistic School — I was pleased that in the recent budget the Andrews Labor government is planning funding so that we can appoint an architect to redesign Southern Autistic School. At the same time we are planning a new special school over in Endeavour Hills to take a whole-of-south-eastern-Melbourne approach to not only ensuring that we have got enough places for kids on the spectrum but also that we have proper facilities for the kids.

The Andrews Labor government has delivered an unprecedented more than \$147 million to rebuild, expand and upgrade 43 special schools. This compares to only 14 schools under the previous government. In my electorate Bayside Special Developmental School is being rebuilt, and Berendale School, also in my electorate, is being upgraded. We have similar ambitions for Southern Autistic School, but right now there is an immediate need for some shade, and I would

urge the minister to provide the funding so that we can make that happen.

Maroona–Portland rail upgrade

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (19:11) — (14 481) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is the upgrade of the freight line between Maroona and Portland to bring it in line with the rest of the Murray Basin rail network. Minister, as you would be aware the Murray Basin plan upgrades the freight network through northern Victoria to standard gauge, which will provide direct links to freight markets, including the port of Portland. This is a fantastic and much-needed project. Unfortunately the last leg into the port of Portland has been left off the upgrade list, despite being identified in the Murray Basin plan business case as needing to be upgraded.

The Premier also flew into Portland to spruik the benefits of the Murray Basin plan that would be brought to the port of Portland. But there has been silence ever since. The line from Portland to Maroona is currently rated to 19 tonne axle load (TAL) — this is the safe level that a freight wagon can be loaded to for an 80-kilometre-per-hour transit across the line. The Murray Basin project will upgrade most of the network to a minimum 21 TAL. This obviously leaves the port of Portland at a competitive disadvantage compared to ports in Melbourne and Geelong. Rail users will naturally utilise the 21 TAL to increase wagon loading and take advantage of the lower cost structure and higher transport efficiency. The port of Portland provides great efficiencies for grain producers with its deepwater port meaning ships can be filled to greater capacities, eliminating the need for stops at other ports to top off the load. If rail wagons heading to the port of Portland could be loaded to the same axle capacity as those heading to the port of Geelong, there would be a reduction in supply chain and transport costs, and benefits to all exporters across western Victoria.

The Glenelg shire estimates the project would remove 68 000 truck trips each year. It also estimates a train transporting 2000 tonnes of grain 100 kilometres to port replaces 3.5 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, 12.5 trucks and 1375 litres of fuel. However, in my mind the reason to fund this \$28 million project is simple: it makes sense. Why would you isolate one port from the rest of the network? Why would you create a competitive disadvantage for regional Victoria? Why would you only do three-quarters of any job? Upgrading the rail line to the port of Portland to 23 TAL is the most sensible and cost-effective solution to remedy the competitive disadvantage the port of Portland is in. Minister, for the benefit of all Victorian

producers and particularly those in western Victoria, upgrade the Portland–Maroona line to 23 TAL.

Woodend RSL

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (19:13) — (14 482) The matter I wish to raise this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Veterans. The action I seek is for the minister to join me and members of the Woodend RSL and to outline how the Andrews government is honouring veterans through our Restoring Community War Memorials and Avenues of Honour Grant program and in particular the historic Woodend Clock Tower memorial.

Minister, as you know, every year thousands of people make their way to the memorial cross atop Mount Macedon for the Anzac Day dawn service, a moving ceremony which it has been my honour to participate in every year that I have been the member for Macedon. We are very proud of the way our community works hard to honour veterans through this and other Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies.

Your visit would also provide an opportunity to outline the terrific work our government is doing to create employment opportunities in our major projects and in the public service for recently returned veterans and to provide practical support to those women and men who we know can all too often struggle to readjust to civilian life.

Latrobe Valley Enterprises

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) (19:15) — (14 483) My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is for the minister to compel VicRoads to pay Latrobe Valley Enterprises the outstanding moneys that are owed to them by OSSA Services Pty Ltd. The reason I say that is OSSA Services Pty Ltd were contracted by VicRoads to maintain many of its properties across Victoria and within the Gippsland region. As I understand it, OSSA Services were previously contracted by the government to maintain these properties but they subsequently subcontracted them out to a number of local contractors, and in this case, in the Gippsland region, it was to Latrobe Valley Enterprises. In September last year, as I understand, OSSA Services went into liquidation, and that has resulted in a number of contractors having outstanding debts.

In terms of Latrobe Valley Enterprises, they are an unbelievable organisation within the Latrobe Valley. They are a not-for-profit company. They provide employment to local people who have a disability. They

provide a number of services like maintenance from a grounds perspective, making signs and recycling at local services. They have been around the Latrobe Valley for a long time. That organisation simply cannot afford to have an amount of more than \$10 000 owing to them and to have to write it off. I reinforce the point: they are a not-for-profit organisation that supports many people with a disability in the Latrobe Valley region.

In my view this is grossly unfair to Latrobe Valley Enterprises, or any subcontractor for that matter. Again, my understanding is that OSSA Services was the principal contractor engaged by VicRoads to maintain its properties and it is not at all the fault of Latrobe Valley Enterprises or any other subcontractor with a substantial amount of money owing to them. Yes, the money is owed by OSSA Services, but we should not forget the fact that VicRoads have an obligation to subcontractors as well to ensure that they are not left in the lurch. In this case I come to the minister in good faith and hope we can find an amicable solution for Latrobe Valley Enterprises and any other subcontractors that fall into the same situation as Latrobe Valley Enterprises. The main thing for me is to make sure that that amount of money is paid to Latrobe Valley Enterprises rather than them having to write off that debt through absolutely no fault of their own.

Skype Primary School

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (19:18) — (14 484) My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Education. The action I seek is for the minister to join me on a visit to Skype Primary School to meet with the principal, school council president Aaron Gionis and the rest of the school community. The recent commitment in the 2018–19 state budget to build new pedestrian-operated traffic lights on Ballarto Road at Skype primary was extremely well received by the school community.

Skype primary is a wonderful local school with fantastic staff and a great school community. For the past 18 months I have been working with the school council and in particular the school council president, Aaron, who has been doing an incredible job and whose love and support for the school is immense. We have been working on plans and ideas for the future of Skype primary and identifying what capital improvements might be undertaken to make this great local school even better.

Skype primary is one of 14 schools across my electorate, and over the past three and a half years I have been working hard to upgrade these schools, to the tune of \$36.6 million since coming to office in

2014. Can I say this has to be contrasted with the absolutely woeful level of funding for our local schools — a mere \$4.2 million — provided by a former member for Carrum over her four years from 2010 to 2014. This government's investment in schools and education is now over \$8 billion. We are indeed transforming Victoria into the Education State. Together with Aaron Gionis, the school council and the school community I look forward to joining the minister in visiting Skype primary.

Murray Valley Highway, Yarroweyah

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (19:19) — (14 485) I raise an adjournment item for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety as well — he is very popular tonight — and the action that I seek is that the minister either visit personally or send a representative to the Ovens Valley to discuss turning lanes in the small community of Yarroweyah. Kevin Taylor and others who live in Yarroweyah recently met with me in town to discuss Amos and Gooley streets, which are adjacent to the Murray Valley Highway west of Cobram. The Murray Valley Highway runs through this town and requires a speed limit drop to 80 kilometres an hour, which is still quite fast when we have got local traffic turning on and off this major truck thoroughfare. Local residents believe that turning lanes would be a natural fit. There is certainly ample room there to have them, and it would be a major benefit to the town.

Safety is a high priority, and the number of vehicles per day on the Murray Valley Highway has increased nearly twofold over the last 10 years. We would be interested to discuss various options and ways in which we can pursue a safer outcome for the community. The local V/Line bus that stops in town would also be a beneficiary of any improvements, and therefore I request a visit from VicRoads to discuss the proposals with local input. The wire rope barriers that are being rolled out in country Victoria by the hundreds of kilometres will not resolve this safety issue, and I believe that it is essential that safety measures are included in Yarroweyah. We need to ensure that Victoria's budget for safety upgrades is spread throughout regional Victoria and throughout country communities like Yarroweyah as well.

Cheltenham and Mentone level crossing removals

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (19:20) — (14 486) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is for the minister to update my community on when the removal of the Cheltenham and Mentone level

crossings will commence. The removal of these level crossings was committed to by the then Andrews opposition back in 2014.

It was some 120 years ago that a very sad, tragic incident happened at the Cheltenham level crossing — a young boy was struck at Cheltenham railway station as a special race train was taking punters and friends to Mentone races. That young boy was Harrie Long Mewett, and his legacy lives on now when we think about the removal of this level crossing and we think of the people who have been lost at these dangerous and congested level crossings across metropolitan Melbourne.

Some 14 000 vehicles pass through the Charman Road level crossing and some 16 000 pass through Balcombe Road. They are substantial feeder roads for our community for employment and for getting people home safer and sooner. To have these crossings go will absolutely transform Cheltenham and Mentone for the better. Half of all the crossings between Frankston and Caulfield are going, which is a truly extraordinary thing when you think of the level crossings that have already been completed up the line in Bentleigh. These removals will transform communities for the better and they will ensure the safety of road users, pedestrians and train commuters for generations to come. As for those tragic stories that we hear about through history and the near misses — I know my colleague the member for Ivanhoe acknowledged just today in this house a tragic incident in his electorate — we need to do all we can to improve safety.

These crossing removals will be critical, and the construction will create a lot of disruption in our local communities, which is something that we have to manage. There were lessons learned on the Dandenong-Cranbourne line and lessons learned up the Frankston line with the Bentleigh level crossings — we will support the traders, we will support commuters and give them enough notice and enough support when they are trying to go about their business. Substantial projects come with those challenges, and my community will be ready. We will ask for their understanding when this big construction burden gets underway. But progress comes with challenges, and this challenge will be substantial and we will see a lot of construction for months during that period. In conclusion, I ask the Minister for Public Transport to update my community on when the Cheltenham level crossing removal and the Mentone level crossing removal will start construction.

Responses

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (19:24) — The member for Morwell had a specific issue in relation to a contract dispute. I am obviously not across the detail so I have suggested the member for Morwell speak to Kieran in my office so we can actually just work through that; I will get him to give the member a call in the morning. I am obviously not across the details — I probably would not get much else done, to be blunt, if I knew every contract VicRoads signed.

In relation to the member for Ovens Valley and the Murray Valley Highway at Yarroweyah, I will get the VicRoads managers out in that region to have a look at that and see what can be done.

The member for Euroa had an issue for the Minister for Water and the member for South-West Coast had an issue for the Minister for Public Transport, and I will refer those on. The member for Ripon also had an issue for the Minister for Public Transport, so I will refer that on. The member for Mordialloc had an issue for the Minister for Public Transport — it is a very popular day for the Minister for Public Transport; I thought I was popular, but I am nowhere near as popular. The member for Carrum had an issue for the Minister for Education, the member for Macedon had an issue for the Minister for Veterans, the member for Bentleigh had an issue for the Minister for Education and, last of all, the member for Ivanhoe had an issue for the Minister for Early Childhood Education, and I will refer all of those on.

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

House adjourned 7.25 p.m.

