

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

**Wednesday, 5 September 2018
(Extract from book 12)**

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

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

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

Speaker

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

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER (to 25 February 2017)

Deputy Speaker

Ms J. MAREE EDWARDS (from 7 March 2017)

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

Acting Speakers

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

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. M. J. GUY

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

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals

Ms S. RYAN

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

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

¹ Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ ALP until 7 March 2017

⁵ Nats until 28 August 2017

⁶ Elected 14 March 2015

⁷ Died 23 August 2017

⁸ Elected 31 October 2015

⁹ Resigned 2 February 2015

¹⁰ Elected 18 November 2017

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

Legislative Assembly committees

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

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

Legislative Assembly select committees

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

Joint committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Wednesday, 5 September 2018

The SPEAKER (Hon. Colin Brooks) took the chair at 9.32 a.m. and read the prayer.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr MERLINO giving notice of motion:

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! We need to be able to hear notices that are given.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr MERLINO continued giving notice of motion.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (09:33) — Order! The member for Warrandyte will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour. I need to be able to hear the notice that is being given.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte has been asked to leave the chamber.

Honourable member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

Mr MERLINO continued giving notice of motion.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The level of noise in the chamber is excessive. Members will be removed from the chamber without warning.

Ms Ryall interjected.

The SPEAKER (09:34) — Order! The member for Ringwood will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Ringwood withdrew from chamber.

Mr MERLINO continued giving notice of motion.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — I desire to move, by leave:

That so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Deputy Premier's motion being debated forthwith.

Leave refused.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (09:35) — Order! The member for Kew will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour. Are there further notices? There are none.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Kew has been asked to leave the chamber.

Honourable member for Kew withdrew from chamber.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (09:35) — The member for Gembrook will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Mr Battin interjected.

Honourable member for Gembrook withdrew from chamber.

Ms Allan — On a point of order, Speaker, the member for Gembrook as he left the chamber — we have all had a big week. We have all had a big parliamentary term —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (09:36) — Order! The member for Malvern will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Malvern withdrew from chamber.

Ms Allan — For the member for Gembrook to abuse the Chair in that way when he left the chamber — I am not even going to repeat what he said.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Allan — The gross, disrespectful, unparliamentary language that he used as he left the chamber — he should be called back to apologise to the chamber or be kicked out. That was disgraceful, and none of you should stand there and defend him.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr Hodgett — On the point of order, Speaker, the Leader of the House is misleading the house. The member for Gembrook did not enter any abuse at you at all. I suggest her point of order should be ruled out of order because she is clearly trying to mislead the house. If she is going to raise a point of order, she should do it accurately.

The SPEAKER — On the point of order, the member for Gembrook did use unparliamentary language — very unparliamentary language. I do not know who that was directed at —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (09:37) — Order! The member for Burwood will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour, as will the member for Hastings.

Mr Burgess interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hastings has been asked to leave the chamber. I will deal with the issue of the member for Gembrook when he returns to the chamber in just under 1 hour.

Honourable members for Burwood and Hastings withdrew from chamber.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Toorak Road, Camberwell

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house:

The lack of appropriate road safety measures along Toorak Road, Camberwell, between the intersections of Wattle Valley Road and Through Road, including inadequate pedestrian safety measures at the crossing lights.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria calls on the Andrews Labor government to implement appropriate road safety measures along Toorak Road, Camberwell, with consideration for:

1. a 40 km per hour speed limit (school zone) similar to the precedent set in other locations in the same vicinity;
2. installation of safety fencing at all crossing points;
3. relocation of crossing at corner of Oberwyl Road and Toorak Road (crossing is too close to corner);

4. traffic management at the Highfield Road/Toorak Road intersection, specifically keeping the intersection clear for pedestrians.

By Mr WATT (Burwood) (809 signatures).

Drug driving

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

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

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

By Mr BURGESS (Hastings) (209 signatures).

Swan Hill hospital

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the people of the Swan Hill region and Northern Victoria draws to the attention of the house the deplorable state of the Swan Hill Hospital.

The hospital is no longer fit for purpose. It presents the most pressing case for a new hospital in all of Victoria.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria commit to fund and rebuild the Swan Hill Hospital by the end of 2022.

By Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (2385 signatures).

Capel Caravan Park

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

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

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

subsidy over the longer term to otherwise homeless residents.

By Mr DIXON (Nepean) (28 signatures).

Ballarat GovHub

Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Victoria

The petition of residents of Victoria points out to the house the urgent need to reconsider the taking of Crown land and demolition of the much-needed Lower Hall, which is part of the heritage Ballarat Civic Hall.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

redesign the proposed GovHub to include the existing entire Lower Hall; or

build the proposed GovHub on another site in Ballarat.

By Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) (285 signatures).

Mickleham Road duplication

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of Greenvale draws to the attention of the house issues relating to the need to duplicate Mickleham Road from Somerton Road to Craigieburn Road. The current road does not meet the needs of the volume of traffic utilising it and is a safety concern.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria begin the process of putting into place the planning for and construction of the road.

By Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (171 signatures).

Donnybrook Road bus service

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents of Mickleham and surrounding areas draws the attention of the house to the absence of public transport connections for thousands of residents living in rapidly growing communities along Donnybrook Road.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria funds and commences a bus service from estates along Donnybrook Road to Craigieburn railway station and Craigieburn Central shopping centre.

By Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (111 signatures).

Tabled.

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

INDEPENDENT BROAD-BASED ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION COMMITTEE

The Work of the IBAC Committee of the 58th Parliament: A Reflection

Mr WELLS (Rowville) presented report, together with appendices.

Tabled.

Ordered that report, together with appendices, be published.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Acting Clerk:

Auditor-General:

Crime Data — Ordered to be published

Follow Up of Oversight and Accountability of Committees of Management — Ordered to be published

Police Management of Property and Exhibits — Ordered to be published.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

KR Castlemaine

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) (09:41) — It was a pleasure to have the Minister for Industry and Employment visit KR Castlemaine last week to announce a grant from the Andrews Labor government to create 50 jobs and to transition up to 250 employees from casual work to permanent jobs. KR Castlemaine is undertaking a \$4 million building-capacity project to boost its workforce and export capability, which will also provide increased job security for the Castlemaine workforce. The Andrews Labor government continues to support our manufacturers through Jobs Victoria and has helped KR Castlemaine establish a tailored support program to introduce potential employees to the work they will be doing and upskill their workforce.

Castlemaine Secondary College

Ms EDWARDS — I was also excited to join with the principal and students at Castlemaine Secondary College last week to announce that award-winning Y2 Architecture have been appointed for the \$11.75 million final stage of the new Castlemaine Secondary College. This is the next step towards delivering the modern, safe and stimulating facilities

that staff and students at Castlemaine Secondary College and the wider Castlemaine community deserve.

White Night Bendigo

Ms EDWARDS — Finally, I want to say what a great night we had in Bendigo on Saturday night for our first White Night event. Sixty thousand people turned out for what was a fabulous and exciting way to highlight Bendigo as the major regional centre for cultural excellence. It featured more than 50 projections, installations, performances, exhibitions and music in the streets, laneways, parks and landmark buildings of the CBD. Thanks to the Andrews Labor government, White Night in Bendigo was an outstanding success. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Caulfield electorate volunteer awards

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (09:42) — For six years now we have been running the Caulfield electorate volunteer awards, and this year we did this in conjunction with Bendigo Bank, Caulfield Park branch, with its chair, Kate Ashmor, who I am pleased to say has just been preselected as a candidate for Macnamara. We wish her all the best.

The winners of this year's awards include Benjy Orwin, a nine-year-old running Socks 4 Support, collecting socks for charity; Benton Segal from Yeshivah and Beth Rivkah colleges, running the parent security group; Irene Lazar, an 89-year-old volunteer helping each week to prepare food for the bridge club; Chumi Franck from Beth Rivkah Ladies College, a volunteer who runs the local uniform shop at Beth Rivkah; Joe Saltzman from Magen David Adom, an 85-year-old who comes in two to three times a week to volunteer for the community; Darren Stait from the Caulfield Bears football club, who has been president for seven years and has been a great ambassador for the club; Louise Nelson from the Caulfield Bears Junior Football Club, who set up three women's teams at the club and has really seen increasing numbers at the club locally; Meredith Ross from Friends of Labassa, who joined in 2010 and looks after all the cooking and programs for that group; Michael Cramphorn for Friends of Caulfield Park, who was the founding member and is secretary of the group, and he does a great job; Peter Oram from Friends of Labassa; Shelley Dukes from the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, who has volunteered for the golden age club for eight years; Shelley Kline from Haddasah Australia; Stan Todes from the Armadale Bowls Club; and Janine Mayhew from Glen Eira Historical Society. They are all great ambassadors, great volunteers in our community, and we thank them for all the great work that they do.

Mirka Mora

Mr FOLEY (Albert Park) (09:44) — I rise to remember the contribution that Mirka Mora delivered to our Victorian community. You cannot walk around Melbourne or indeed parts of my own community in St Kilda without seeing little pieces of Mirka Mora everywhere; from the welcome mural at Flinders Street station to Tolarno or indeed the St Kilda pier, she left an indelible imprint on both our city and my own community. She painted everything, from Melbourne's iconic art trams to dolls to murals and anything that did not move. She was really influential in so many aspects of Victoria's and Melbourne's cultural communities from the time she arrived as a postwar Holocaust refugee survivor.

Mirka was part of an influential group of artists including Sir Sidney Nolan and Albert Tucker, who spent much time working at the Heide artists colony. She was also influential in establishing Melbourne's food and cultural endeavours through works with her partner, Georges, in many restaurant activities. She was a teacher to many artists and had a prolific output. She was always creating and never ceased finding inspiration. Well into her late 80s she was still painting every day. She will be much missed. She broke the mould of what it is to be creative in this state. Best wishes to her family and her many friends. Vale, Mirka Mora.

Stevenson Street, Murchison

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (09:45) — After four years the Andrews government has failed all calls from Murchison residents to address the issues around heavy vehicle traffic on Stevenson Street in Murchison. I have been regularly contacted by residents there who are particularly concerned about the safety of pedestrians and local traffic. They recognise that the Murchison bridge is a critical freight link, but they have been calling for the government to look at a solution for some years, with absolutely no action whatsoever. They have been told by VicRoads that a curfew or a speed limit reduction is a possibility, but the government has failed to act on that at all. We now have traffic count figures increasing, with a total of 458 heavy vehicles through the main street of a small community each day.

Murchison residents would like to see heavy vehicles redirected behind the town and off the main street, and I would urge the government to seriously consider what options are available.

Northern Victoria rail services

Ms RYAN — The north-east and Seymour train lines in my electorate continue to be plagued with delays, cancellations and breakdowns. Michael Gionfriddo from Kilmore often catches the train to Seymour and occasionally south into Melbourne. Michael is very concerned about the infrequency of the service heading north, the state of the old carriages, unreliable heating and cooling and the rough ride passengers experience with the old diesel engines. We have made a commitment, and the government needs to match it.

Victorian Training Awards

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (09:47) — Today I would like to celebrate the skills and sporting achievements of young people in the Yan Yean electorate. Firstly, I want to congratulate Sophie Babycz from Wallan, who won the Victorian School-based Apprentice of the Year Award in the Victorian Training Awards. Sophie is studying certificate III in business as a school-based apprenticeship with Wallan Neighbourhood House.

Whittlesea Tech School

Ms GREEN — I would also like to congratulate Connor from Whittlesea Secondary College and other ambassadors, who I had the pleasure of meeting at the opening of Whittlesea Tech School only this week.

Yan Yean electorate junior football clubs

Ms GREEN — In terms of football results in the junior leagues, Diamond Creek Football Club were in six grand finals and won three — under-16 boys blue, under-14 girls blue and under-12 blue. Laurimar Football Club contested four grand finals and brought home the prize in under-14 blue. The Whittlesea Junior Football Club contested two grand finals, and their under-11 blue team won. The Wallan Junior Football Club contested two grand finals, and the Wallan white team were successful in the under-11 red competition. Hurstbridge had a big win in the under-12 silver competition. Commiserations go to Mernda — a job well done. They contested four grand finals. Better luck next year. Yarrambat Junior Football Club contested one grand final and sadly were unsuccessful. I wish all junior football clubs the best for the coming year and thank their volunteers for their work over this year.

Vermont Secondary College

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (09:48) — I was very pleased to attend the recent Vermont Secondary College annual production, *The Addams Family*. As

always it was a fantastic performance by the students, with some outstanding singing and acting on display. My congratulations go to all the cast, musicians and crew involved as well as to all the staff, parents and other volunteers who worked so hard to make the production possible.

Vermont Village

Mr ANGUS — I was very pleased to visit Vermont retirement village recently to meet with residents and present to them about the Parliament, speak about my role and various local issues, answer questions and afterwards share some afternoon tea together. My thanks to village manager Erin and her team for organising this event and the residents for attending.

Livingstone Primary School

Mr ANGUS — Last week I had the great pleasure of attending the Livingstone Primary School annual year 6 gala performance, this year being *Mary Poppins Jr*. It was a tremendous performance by the students, with excellent acting, singing and dancing on display. My congratulations go to all the students involved as well as to the staff, parents and other volunteers who worked hard to put this performance on.

Heatherdale Community Action Group

Mr ANGUS — I congratulate the volunteer committee members of the Heatherdale Community Action Group for organising the safety and security forum held at the Heatherdale bowls club last week. There were three speakers, who covered senior rights and elder abuse, home security and deterrence, and cyber and physical security, which was followed by time for questions. It was a very informative event, which I was pleased to attend, and I congratulate all those involved in organising it.

Youth violence

Mr ANGUS — Over the weekend Victorians once again saw an example of out-of-control behaviour by large groups of riotous youths. The government's weak stance on law and order has resulted in the emboldening of lawless young people to a point where they now just run completely amok in public streets at will. It is time the government finally did something to address this lawlessness.

Orchard Grove Primary School

Mr ANGUS — Last weekend I was pleased to attend the Orchard Grove Primary School (OGPS) Parents Association's biennial trivia night fundraiser. It

was a very entertaining and fun-filled night, full of interesting costumes, trivia, music and activities. Well done to the OGPS parents association for organising this terrific event.

Creative Geelong

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (09:50) — I was very pleased to launch the Digital Innovation Festival in Geelong on Friday. This is an Andrews government initiative with events right across Victoria. Creative Geelong has developed a program of 12 events that started on 31 August and goes through to 6 September. There are events on cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, drones, 3D printing, podcasting, video-making and 3D animation software.

A key focus for Creative Geelong is making sure that locals can come to the Creative Geelong Makers Hub and learn about cutting-edge technology in an accessible and inclusive way. I also officially opened the makers hub multimedia studio at Creative Geelong. The new multimedia studio includes a sound recording room and a dedicated room for video recording and photography, including access to a range of equipment. The sound recording studio has been built in the old walk-in refrigerator and provides a unique space for locals to access and record voice or music.

Avalon Airport

Ms COUZENS — I was also delighted to visit Avalon Airport with the member for Lara and Minister for Industry and Employment, and Avalon Airport CEO Justin Giddings to check out the progress of the new international terminal. Geelong is very excited about the new opportunities this offers. Avalon Airport and AirAsia X announced on Sunday, 4 February, that they had entered into a 10-year service agreement to commence double daily international flight services between Avalon Airport and Kuala Lumpur. These flight services will be the first international flights to depart from Avalon Airport and will commence on 5 December 2018.

Pick My Project

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) (09:51) — How excited we were when the news broke that Pick My Project voting was now open. This rorting Labor government's shameless data harvesting of people's contact details and their interests aside, I felt compelled to check it out. Now, 'compelled' is not the right word — it was more bludgeoned into submission by the social media assault. Anyhow I persisted and lo and behold there on the shiny website were a few of the projects that a

Liberal-Nationals government has already promised to fund. But wait, they were at Corryong and apparently outside my voting area. It seems they are in the electorate I represent but not in my pick your rorting government project zone. I doubt anyone from the rorting side of the house has even been to Corryong. I am that sure no-one has been to see the potential of the rail trail at Bullioh that also features on the list. I could vote for that. Or the Pebble Beach walking track at Mount Beauty — that again is outside my voting zone but very much in the electorate.

Pick My Project is another rort which is underfunded, poorly thought-out and shows no genuine knowledge of the issues in the bush. I feel sorry for people who have again been misled by a Labor government full of promises but with other motives.

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) (09:53) — It is one of my favourite events of the year, and last Thursday Jas and I joined the very dedicated and very hardworking member for Macedon at the Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School deb ball. The night was a wonderful celebration of young women and men reaching a significant milestone in their lives and sharing special memories with parents, family and friends. We particularly loved the dancing, the smiles shared and the energy in the room. Huge congratulations to all the debutantes and their families and of course to the hardworking staff and friends of the school who made it all happen. It was made even more special by the fact that on our way out a teacher said to both of us, 'Make sure you win in November, because your government has done so much for our school'. This government supports specialist education because we believe in fairness and we believe in every child's right to a high-quality education.

Suburban Rail Loop

Mr J. BULL — The Suburban Rail Loop is a game changer which will connect every major train line from the Frankston line all the way to the Werribee line through Melbourne Airport in my electorate, with 12 new underground stations. The Suburban Rail Loop will of course get more Victorians to where they need to go quicker and easier, with more people on public transport and less traffic on our roads — 200 000 vehicle trips off our major roads, 20 000 jobs during construction and 2000 apprenticeships. We believe in getting things done and in delivering for all Victorians.

Diabetes Victoria

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (09:54) — I congratulate Diabetes Victoria on their forum this morning to educate MPs about the rate at which diabetes is growing in Victoria. Five per cent of Victorians have diabetes and have to manage their daily blood sugar. Many more have type 2 diabetes, which is no doubt a red flag telling you it is time to make some changes to the way you live your life. Daily exercise is not just for those who are trying to lose a few kilos; it is for everyone. I encourage all within the Ovens Valley electorate to keep a close eye out for the messages that their bodies are sending to them.

Ovens Valley electorate agricultural water supply

Mr McCURDY — I want to restate comments that I made earlier publicly regarding seasonal conditions for our farming communities, and note I say ‘communities’, which is not just the farmers but the entire regional communities that rely on each other to survive. Farmers are doing it tough throughout Australia, and areas around Victoria are part of this group. I am delighted that our pressure on the commonwealth government to sell 20 gigalitres of environmental water was taken seriously as this is a significant step in bringing the price of water down to an affordable level.

The Victorian government can also play a role if they choose to. Instead trying to out-green the Greens because of the upcoming state election, I encourage the Victorian Minister for Water to act now. Waiting another couple of months or for a time that is politically advantageous will not help our farming communities. I urge the minister to make some commonsense decisions that will help our regional communities at a time they need it most. It does not need to be at the expense of the environment. Coexistence is the way forward, and we can all be beneficiaries.

Albert Lowerson, VC

Mr McCURDY — Last Saturday we celebrated the day 100 years ago to the day that Albert Lowerson courageously earned his Victoria Cross on the battlefields of France. The people of Myrtleford are as proud today as they were 100 years ago, and so they should be. We promised to never forget their heroics, and 100 years on we are still remembering those men and women who fought and died and those who fought and survived to give us the life we have today.

Jim Hyde

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (09:56) — I rise to pay tribute to Jim Hyde, LGBTI and HIV elder and activist, academic, public health policy guru and, more recently, constituent, Macedon campaign volunteer and friend. Jim led a full and purposeful life, and his legacy includes an almost 30-year involvement with Thorne Harbour Health, formerly the Victorian AIDS Council, where he worked for a time as general manager, where he volunteered as a board member and of which he was made a life member. Jim will long be remembered for his crucial role in Australia’s response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Jim also held senior roles in health policy, including as Victoria’s director of public health and as professor of public health policy at Deakin University. Jim’s professional work was always informed by his lived experience and his commitment to grassroots activism. On behalf of Jim’s many friends and comrades in my electorate, I send my condolences to Jim’s partner, Glenn, and to his children, Sophie and Alice, and their families.

Joy Durston

Ms THOMAS — Congratulations to Joy Durston, secretary of the Glenlyon Progress Association, on receiving a Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning committee of management volunteer award for all her work on the Glenlyon hall. Joy has led monthly community dinners and a range of events for the Glenlyon community at the beautiful and recently renovated hall, and her work was officially acknowledged with a community morning tea.

David Wellings

Ms THOMAS — Congratulations to David Wellings for 10 years of volunteer service with the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES). David was instrumental in establishing the Hepburn SES unit and has been unit controller over the past decade. While he will continue as a volunteer, David is stepping down from his leadership role. Hepburn SES truly reflects the community it serves, is well respected and responds to more than 300 calls every year. Thank you, David, for your leadership.

Community mental health services

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (09:57) — I rise to show my support for community mental health and for the Fund the Gap — Mental Health Matters! campaign being run the Australian Services Union. Community mental health services are so important to the Prahran electorate. We are a community for everyone that looks

after people most in need. We have got two really important providers of mental health services in Prahran: Star Health, formerly Inner South Community Health, and UnitingCare, formerly Prahran Mission. We saw the results of what cuts to community mental health services can do with the recommissioning of mental health funding under the previous Liberal government, which resulted in funding cuts and the closure of the Prahran Mission drop-in centre on Chapel Street, something that is still raised with me by former clients of the centre.

Community mental health services play a critical role in providing services to people experiencing mental illness in our community. They are an effective early intervention to ensure people do not end up in crisis at hospital, in the justice system or homeless. Many people in the Prahran electorate who need these services will not be eligible for national disability insurance scheme funding, meaning they will fall through the cracks if the state government rips \$75 million away from community mental health. Prahran is a community that cares about people in need, and I urge the state government to fund the gap in community mental health services and work with our fantastic community mental health workers and services to ensure they can continue to meet the needs of people experiencing mental illness in our community.

School sports facilities

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) (09:59) — The Labor government recently announced a policy that is a game changer for cost of living and also for the environment: solar panels on 650 000 homes. It is about as big as it gets. This was a front-page story on a Sunday, but what did we get from the Liberals? They got a front-page story on a Monday about a compulsory — sorry, mandatory — interschool sports program. But do not think for a second that they were talking to parents and children; this was a pitch to their core conservative base. That is why they used keywords in the announcement like ‘discipline’. They have very little commitment to education. They have said it themselves, particularly when it comes to school buildings. The shadow Minister for Education has said investing in school buildings is not important.

As a contrast I was recently at Carnegie Primary School where work is almost complete on a brand-new gym. I was recently at Glen Huntly Primary School where we have committed to restore that oval and at Huntingdale Primary School where we have also committed to restore the oval, and of course on Saturday I was at Glen Eira College where we have just built a new amazing gym where people play sport. Kids will play

sport on those ovals and in those gyms. If those opposite will not invest in school sporting facilities, it is pretty hard to make interschool sports mandatory.

Murrumbeena Football Club

Mr DIMOPOULOS — I would like to congratulate the Murrumbeena Football Club division 1 women’s team on their success last weekend — 15-point winners over Endeavour Hills in the grand final. That makes them premiers two years in a row, and I look forward to their success in 2019.

Deer control

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) (10:00) — The Bunyip State Park is currently home to a huge number of sambar deer that is increasing every year along with small numbers of other deer species. The deer are causing havoc with farm pasture, fencing on private land and waterways in the park.

The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change must step up and introduce an eradication plan for the Bunyip State Park. The real problem with deer numbers is deer now have a number of sanctuaries in national parks where traditional hunting is not allowed, which allows deer numbers to increase across the state by up to 100 000 per year — in other words, they are out of control.

The snow forces deer to escape the cold by moving to lower altitude havens which often border farmland in my electorate. The responsible way for the minister to manage this growing problem would be to engage with the Australian Deer Association (ADA), Victorian Hound Hunters and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia to develop a plan that supports responsible hunting in areas of state forest, state park and national park. Such a plan could deliver a coordinated approach to this growing problem and greatly assist those landowners that abut the Bunyip State Park.

In February this year a cull took place at Howitt Plains in the Alpine National Park north of Licola. According to Parks Victoria the program was conducted in partnership with the ADA and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, utilising both volunteers and skilled contractors. The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change must provide a similar arrangement in the Bunyip State Park and not continue to ignore the problems being faced by private landowners adjacent to the park.

Ivanhoe electorate schools

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (10:01) — It is the Education State in the Ivanhoe electorate. At Viewbank College, an \$11.5 million new theatre and classroom redevelopment is complete at my old school. Banyule Primary School's \$3.47 million redevelopment is underway, on top of the \$1 million for early works and planning allocated last year. At Ivanhoe Primary School, a \$2 million four prep classrooms project has now been completed for next year, and a \$4.5 million further redevelopment at Ivanhoe Primary School is underway. At Olympic Village Primary School there is \$6 million for the new school in West Heidelberg, with a sod-turn over the next few weeks. We will open that school next year.

Banyule-Nillumbik Tech School — the Premier opened that \$10 million project at Greensborough just last month. At Ivanhoe East Primary School with Mother of God Primary School, the partnership for a five-year lease to annex the school between Ivanhoe Catholic parish and the East Ivanhoe community is almost complete, and that is a win-win for the community. At St Martin of Tours, a \$3 million classroom redevelopment in partnership with Catholic Education and the state government will also open early next year and is almost complete, and at Rosanna Golf Links Primary School — my daughter's school — I am looking forward to attending the opening of that redevelopment there with Professor Graeme Clark, the pioneer of the cochlear implant. Rosanna Golf Links is of course a regional deaf school as well, and I am looking forward to attending that opening.

Then at Macleod College there is a \$4.9 million classroom science block redevelopment that will get underway under a re-elected Andrews Labor government. At Fairy Hills preschool, East Ivanhoe, there is several hundred thousand dollars of redevelopment. There is so much going on in education in the Ivanhoe electorate.

Suzanne Reinhardt

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) (10:03) — Today I pay tribute to Suzanne Reinhardt, the current assistant principal at Sandringham College. Suzanne was appointed to Sandringham College's Beaumaris campus as a leading teacher, head of curriculum, in 2007. She also taught the advanced mathematics class. In 2010 she joined the principal team as the senior campus principal and then returned to Beaumaris campus as principal in 2012.

At this time the Beaumaris campus was facing issues around enrolment and a community campaign for the new school, with an upgrade to facilities underway. Despite some challenges at this time, Suzanne was involved in the initial planning with the architects and the Melbourne Cricket Club. Suzanne greatly enjoyed her teaching and leadership time at the Beaumaris campus with the staff, students and families with whom she worked. She recalls when the school had a community feel to it, and — as is the delight of many teachers — always finds it pleasing to run into past students and parents at the local shops and catch up with what they are doing now.

Interestingly, Suzanne is related to Hudson Fysh, founder of Qantas. In turn, the grandfather of Hudson Fysh was Henry Reed, an early Tasmanian settler, a great Australian, a significant donor to the Salvation Army, and the man who financed the early settlement of Melbourne in 1835.

Suburban Rail Loop

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (10:04) — It was absolutely amazing to hear that a Labor government has committed to start the largest transformation of public transport in Australian history, the Suburban Rail Loop. The underground suburban loop will connect 10 rail lines over 90 kilometres from Cheltenham to Werribee with 12 underground stations. It will also take 200 000 cars off major roads and create 20 000 local jobs.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr EDBROOKE — I can hear the applause from across the chamber; they love it. But for Frankston, my community, the project will transform public transport in our community. We will be able to change lines at Cheltenham instead of going all the way into Southern Cross to go back to communities in the east. With congestion the way it is, and growing, we cannot afford not to do it.

Pines Community Men's Shed

Mr EDBROOKE — Congratulations to the magnificent crew at the Pines Men's Shed, which is being funded. Last week the Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos, visited Frankston North to announce the 99th men's shed program funded since November 2014, with \$30 000 going to the Pines Men's Shed for improvements, which is fantastic. I am very proud of our men's sheds as they provide a great opportunity for men to engage with each other, work on local projects and give back to the local community. The Pines Men's Shed is one of 29 men's sheds

selected in this \$903 000 funding round, which will see nine new sheds built and 20 refurbished.

Pines Football Netball Club

Mr EDBROOKE — Congratulations to the Pines Football Netball Club. They are in the big dance. I cannot wait to see the boys run onto SkyBus Stadium for the Mornington Peninsula Nepean Football League grand final.

Melton Business Excellence Awards

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) (10:06) — I want to congratulate the winners of the City of Melton Business Excellence Awards, especially Hope Street Youth and Family Services, which won the community contribution award, ably led by the amazing Donna Bennett, CEO. The team is: Melissa De Santis, Tegan Tregea, Norman Vella, Sebastian Jenner, Jamie Massouris, Mim Calipari, Shakeel Ahmad, Di Johnson and Michelle De Santana. Hope Street has three initiatives for young people aged from 16 to 25 years to provide safe places for homeless youth. Permanent 24/7 accommodation is being built for eight youths and one family to provide safe and warm places, a place to sleep and a plan, with support counselling and one-on-one case management.

I also congratulate the corporate supporters, including Bunnings — especially Val Turner, who works for Bunnings — and Woodlea. The winner of the business award was Fixwell Smash Repairs and its owner, Victor Mercieca. I have dealt with Victor before; he is a terrific person. Other winners were Abey Australia, Westcare Medical Centre, Montes Kitchen Cabinets, Lady and the Hair, Beauty on Avebury, Compass Expeditions, Same Day Printing, Melton Pool and Spas, Firesand Solutions and Pacing Dynamics.

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

John Cummins Victorian Union Awards

Ms GARRETT (Brunswick) (10:07) — I was really pleased on Friday night to attend the John Cummins Victorian Union Awards at the Victorian Trades Hall Council as part of the John Cummins memorial dinner. I would like to pay tribute to some of those award winners, particularly Luba Grigorovitch and her team at the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, who won the award for the advancement of women's rights. Best workplace campaign was won by the National Union of Workers for their 1 Big Shed campaign. The OH&S rep of the year was Brendan Dixon from the CFMEU.

Importantly, the delegate of the year was a group of delegates who have spent hundreds of days on the picket line at Esso Longford. We heard a heartfelt description about the experience of being on that picket line and how important the support that they have received has been.

The photo of the year was won by Joe from the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance — the great photo of the massive rally. The unionist of the year, who won the John Cummins Award, is a person everyone on this side of the house knows: Will Stracke from the Victorian Trades Hall Council. She spoke beautifully about her campaign work, particularly around same-sex marriage. What an important role the union movement played.

The John Cummins Memorial Fund has raised in excess of \$1 million, particularly for brain cancer research — we know that John tragically died too young from that disease — and also hundreds of thousands of dollars for scholarships for kids.

Torquay Bowls Club

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) (10:09) — I was pleased last Friday evening to be at the official opening of the bowls season at the Torquay Bowls Club. I was there with the chair, Mac Smith, and Cr Martin Duke from Surf Coast Shire Council. It is a fantastic facility, the Torquay Bowls Club. It has really been transformed into a community hub thanks to a \$1.5 million commitment from the previous Victorian Liberal government, and it has really become a great asset for the Torquay community. It is no wonder that the Torquay Bowls Club last year won Bowls Club of the Year.

Modewarre Football and Netball Club

Mr KATOS — I wish the Modewarre Football Club and Netball Club all the best this coming Saturday. They have made the grand final in the senior men's football, the reserves men's football and also the A Grade netball — they have all made their grand finals. It is a testament to the great work and leadership of Mick Fitzgerald and Paul Grossman at the club. I was very pleased to provide \$650 000 during the last Victorian Liberal government term to upgrade those club rooms, and we have made a further commitment of \$650 000 for further upgrades to the Mount Moriac Recreation Reserve. I wish all of those players at Modewarre all the best this coming Saturday.

Supervised injecting facilities

Mr KATOS — I just wish to reiterate the Victorian opposition's opposition to drug injecting rooms in Geelong, despite the support from the member for Geelong and the openness to it from the mayor of Geelong.

Murrayville–Ouyen rail line

Mr CRISP (Mildura) (10:11) — I want to note that work has resumed on the Murrayville to Ouyen line in the botched Murray Basin rail project. The delay in getting this line back into service has cost that community dearly, with thousands of tonnes of grain locked up in storage in a market that needs it to be transported and sold, if not fed to starving stock in drought-affected areas.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS

Electoral Matters Committee: civics and electoral participation in Victorian state parliamentary elections

Ms ASHER (Brighton) (10:11) — I wish to initially make a few comments about the Electoral Matters Committee inquiry into civics and electoral participation in Victorian state parliamentary elections. We have, as a result of this inquiry, made a number of recommendations, mainly for the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) but also some for the Parliament of Victoria and for the government to act on.

In particular the committee urges the VEC to look at the Canadian Student Vote system to see if the VEC's Passport to Democracy program could be expanded to include a student vote. We have also provided some recommendations to the VEC regarding staff recruitment. Worldwide, electoral authorities are having difficulty recruiting staff to actually run elections, for a range of reasons. The member for Nepean in the last sitting week went into some considerable detail on this, and I support the comments he made.

Could I take this opportunity to thank the deputy chair of this committee, the member for Yuroke, the member for Nepean and Fiona Patten in the other place, who did most of the work on this report. I also thank for their work Melina Bath and Adem Somyurek in the other place and the member for Pascoe Vale, who, prior to having a child and going on maternity leave, was a very, very active and engaged member of this committee. I also, as chair, record my thanks to the staff: Mark Roberts, Nathaniel Reader, Bernadette Pendergast and Maria Marasco. It has been an absolute

pleasure and an honour to chair that committee in this term of Parliament.

Electoral Matters Committee: conduct of 2014 Victorian state election

Ms ASHER — Can I also refer to the first report of the Electoral Matters Committee, *Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2014 Victorian State Election*. Specifically I want to refer to the minority report, which appears on page 179. In that minority report, which was signed by me, the member for Nepean and the member for Morwell, we recommended that section 152 of the Electoral Act 2002 be amended to protect campaign workers from threats of violence and intimidation. Specifically we recommended, in recommendation 1 on page 180, that section 152 of the Electoral Act be amended to include protection of anyone outside a voting centre from violence or intimidation.

I was absolutely delighted that these amendments were passed by the Victorian Legislative Council and are now in law. I do note, as an aside, that the Australia Sex Party member voted against this amendment at the Electoral Matters Committee meeting but the Reason Party member voted for it in the Legislative Council, and I am very pleased that reason has prevailed in this instance.

I want to also refer to the act and to advise the public and the Parliament of a new section that I am so pleased to see in the Electoral Act. It is section 152(4) and (5), which state:

- (4) A person must not, subject any person who within 100 metres of the entrance of a building used as a voting centre is handing out how-to-vote cards or supporting a candidate at an election, to violence or intimidation.
- (5) A person who contravenes subsection (4) is guilty of an indictable offence.

Penalty: Level 6 imprisonment (5 years maximum) or level 6 fine (600 penalty units).

What does that all mean? Well, it means now for the first time the Electoral Act 2002 will protect party workers and volunteers and people supporting members of Parliament outside polling booths, because we on this side of the house have made constant reference to the fact that we were intimidated outside booths by people who purported to be members of unions or were members of unions. There was a lot of standing over of our female members of Parliament in the southern suburbs, and there was a lot of standing over of party workers who were just there to protect them.

The Electoral Act previously only protected voters from violence and intimidation; now the act will protect members of the public who are exercising their political right to support candidates for election from threats of violence and intimidation. This should be called the Peter Marshall amendment, I feel. I would signal that clearly if the same sort of behaviour occurs outside polling booths and early voting centres as occurred last time, I am sure that election managers will be called, and this new section, supported in the upper house, will be flashed around and shown to them. So I am very pleased that not only the recommendations relating to that report have been passed but also the minority report has been enacted.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: budget estimates 2015–16

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (10:16) — I am delighted to make a contribution on the committee reports. I want to refer, I suppose, to the series of reports that have been tabled over the course of the 58th Parliament by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC). I note that our executive officer — our very fine executive officer — Dr Caroline Williams, is at the table currently. It has been a real honour and privilege to be the chair of PAEC over the course of this Parliament, and I am really pleased with some of the work that we have achieved together as a committee.

If I think back to our first set of estimates hearings, for the 2015–16 budget, it was under the old practice of question, supplementary question — of government, opposition, government, opposition — and then you dealt in the crossbench. What it led to was sometimes a jerky and halting line of questioning. In opposition the Labor Party made a commitment that it would introduce Senate-style questioning, which would allocate blocks of time to members in relation to the estimates process. That was really helpful, because it allowed for more of a conversation and more of an iterative discussion between members and public servants as well as ministers.

I do want to thank the member for Mornington, the deputy chair, who worked with me to come up with a set of arrangements that enabled it to occur. I am very pleased to place on the public record that the member for Mornington improved and enhanced my initial ideas through his diligence, his focus and his discipline.

We have ended up with a set of circumstances now where the line of questioning is far less adversarial and far more informative. It leads to, I think, more interesting conversations, because it allows members to

follow up with a particular line of inquiry, and it allows for more of that discussion about a particular line item or a particular program within the budget papers.

PAEC is just such a fantastic committee to serve on. It is arduous and at times difficult and exhausting, but I have learned that anything in life that is worth anything you have to fight for, and if it means something to you, you have got to work for it. Nothing comes easily in life — that has been my experience, and if you really value something, you have got to go after it, you have got to chase it and you have got to really put in an effort. If you do that, then the reward is quite meaningful, quite significant and quite tangible.

I have been incredibly well served by the secretariat. I have been really pleased with the conduct of my fellow members on the committee: the member for Eltham, the member for Oakleigh, the member for Kew and the member for Gippsland South, as well as in the Council Ms Shing, Ms Patten, Ms Pennicuik and, earlier on in the piece, Dr Carling-Jenkins. It has been a really wonderful experience, and I would say to any incoming member of the 59th Parliament that if there is an opportunity to serve on this committee, then they should grab it with both hands. It is such a great privilege to be able to receive the questionnaires from the departments, to be able to read the transcripts and to go through the budget papers.

We have also tried to find ways over the course of this term to educate other members about not only reading budget papers but some of the emerging trends that are occurring in this space. I was really pleased that Saul Eslake was able to provide a presentation here at Parliament for all members on the issue of productivity on a per capita basis in the state of Victoria and what we can do to lift and improve that. I am pleased to say this since he gave that dissertation the improvements have occurred.

I am not sure if I will get an opportunity to speak again in the 58th Parliament on committee reports, but I do want to place on record my great thanks for being given this wonderful opportunity. We have had our challenges. There have been some issues that we have had to deal with along the way, which members are well versed in, but it has been such a wonderful experience. It is great to be in a position where you can do not only the estimates, where you are looking at prospective expenditure, but also the outcomes hearing, where you look at past expenditure over the previous 12 months and also engage directly with public servants. I am really pleased that I have been afforded this opportunity. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on

the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, and I do want to thank my members for their contribution.

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee: career advice activities in Victorian schools

Mr CRISP (Mildura) (10:21) — I rise to speak on committee reports, and the report I am speaking on today is *Inquiry into Career Advice Activities in Victorian Schools*, tabled in the last sitting week. Since this is the first time I am speaking on this report, I would like to thank my fellow committee members: Mr Nazih Elasmr, a member for Northern Metropolitan Region in the Council; the member for Ringwood; Jeff Bourman, a member for Eastern Victoria Region in the Council; the member for Evelyn; the member for Brunswick; and Cesar Melhem, a member for Western Metropolitan Region in the Council. Our staff are also very important, as we all know. You do not get a report without your staff. Led by Kerry, Marianna and Janelle certainly did make getting the information, evidence and recommendations together quite easy.

The terms of reference for this inquiry were to look at the careers advice being offered to students in schools and to gain some evidence about the quality of that advice, what young people thought of that advice, what parents thought of that advice and what industry thought of that advice. School is certainly a time when big decisions are being made.

It was also my privilege in that decision-making process to be able to have a regional hearing in Mildura. I want to thank a number of people from Mildura who did come along to that day and give us valuable evidence. A lot of it was organised by Mr Ron Broadhead, who is from the Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN). Mildura's LLEN is a very, very good one, and they are very switched on in terms of the opportunities within our community, how we make the most of those and how to transmit those opportunities into schools.

We also had some excellent evidence from Peter Devilee, who is managing director of an air conditioning and refrigeration business in Mildura; from Peter Ebner, who is from Lower Murray Water, the irrigation supplier in the region; and from Rob Wheatley from Olam, who operate the largest nut farm in Australia. Various secondary schools came along, and it was great to hear from Chaffey Secondary College, Red Cliffs Secondary School, Merbein P-10 College, Irymple Secondary College, Mildura Senior College, St Joseph's College and Trinity Lutheran

College as well as Sunraysia TAFE, which has a very important role to play in the provision of training for many of these opportunities. Some of the themes that emerged were that our younger people are seeking guidance earlier in their schooling and also that they want that guidance to be tailored more to them; they want it to be more one-on-one. The career practitioners naturally want more time and resources, and we made some recommendations around that.

I think one observation that I can make that is very strong in this space is that our career practitioners have generally been through secondary school, they have been to university to become teachers and then they have returned to the education system, so they do need a lot of help in broadening their vision about the local economy. I think this report addresses some of those issues, and we will talk more about those the next week we are here.

This report along with the Victorian skills commissioner's report need to be considered together. The Victorian skills commissioner has had a look at the Mallee to see what job opportunities there are between 2017 and 2020 and has come up with some very interesting figures. We will need between 2900 and 4400 more people to drive the Mildura economy by 2020, and schools are the main source from where those people will come to meet that workforce demand, because they are there, they are local and they are tuned in.

I think students need good advice more than ever in the Mildura electorate, and our local economy needs students to get the best advice. This report lays out a template for the way that advice needs to be delivered to meet both the young people's needs as they go forward and our local economy's needs as it goes forward.

Electoral Matters Committee: civics and electoral participation in Victorian state parliamentary elections

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (10:26) — I am very pleased to speak today on the report of the Electoral Matters Committee on their inquiry into civics and electoral participation in Victorian state parliamentary elections. As this is the final report of that committee for this term, being the deputy chair, I do want to acknowledge how well the committee has worked together. I thank the committee chair, the member for Brighton, as well as the members for Pascoe Vale and Nepean and the members of the committee from the other place. Also assisting the committee have been the executive officer, Mark Roberts, and his team — Nathaniel, Maria and Bernadette; I thank them as well.

I would also like to thank all those who made submissions, attended hearings or met with us during this inquiry; their insights were of great assistance.

This inquiry allowed the committee to look deeper into a number of issues that were identified in previous inquiries, in particular the committee's inquiry into the 2014 state election. These issues are covered in the terms of reference for this inquiry, and they included programs to ensure Victorians are adequately informed and able to effectively participate in elections; strategies to reduce informal voting; strategies to increase participation amongst groups that experience barriers to electoral participation, such as young Victorians and multicultural Victorians; as well as looking into matters regarding Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) staffing in the context of a changing society.

In undertaking the inquiry the committee looked at what programs and strategies are currently in place for the teaching of civics, both in the education system and through the VEC, predominantly through their Passport to Democracy program. We then made recommendations to complement and build upon these teachings. One of the most significant programs that the committee investigated is included in recommendation 2:

The committee recommends the Victorian Electoral Commission learn more about CIVIX's parallel election program Student Vote, with a view to integrating, over time, the practice and principles of a parallel election into Passport to Democracy.

This program is run by the organisation called CIVIX, which originated in Canada. Whilst we initially learned about this program in a submission from Elections Canada, it was also raised with us by a number of inquiry participants, as some saw it as the ideal strategy to increase political engagement and understanding and to decrease vote informality in young people. Essentially this program involves a parallel election across Canada during their federal elections, where students vote in their schools for the candidates and on issues in the federal election.

During the 2015 Canadian federal election, 922 000 students cast votes in the student vote ballots. They came from 6662 schools representing all 338 ridings. Candidates attend the schools in the ridings they are in, and the schools are provided with extensive support and the program is widely supported by schools, teachers, institutions and government agencies. Importantly, it is also widely supported, as we learned, by the teachers association, because the teachers actually had buy-in from the very beginning

as to how to structure this program, so they are hugely supportive of it.

The independent assessment of the student vote that takes place after the federal elections also showed that the program was widely supported by students and their parents, who reported having a greater understanding of electoral issues, because what was happening in the school was then brought home and discussed generally around the kitchen table. So there was a much broader flow-on benefit from this. The committee concluded that this would be really beneficial to Victorian students if it were adopted, but we also acknowledged that there would be significant resources required to do it, which is why we recommended that it be integrated over time.

We also had a look at what could be done in the short term. Given that student representatives on school councils are now voted for within the school, we thought there was a good opportunity to replicate an election process as much as possible, and recommendation 3 goes to that. It recommends that the VEC, working with the Department of Education and Training, as much as possible, replicates the general election process when the student council elections are taking place. This goes to removing that uncertainty when young people first go to vote and they do not know the processes that are involved; that was something that was raised as being a great concern to young people. If we can have them participating in a vote in an election before they actually present as an 18-year-old, or thereafter, for their first vote that would be beneficial. I highly commend the report.

Family and Community Development Committee: perinatal services

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (10:31) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to talk on the *Inquiry into Perinatal Services: Final Report*, produced by the Family and Community Development Committee in June this year. I would like to begin by thanking the committee staff, and two in particular who went over and above in their research for this. I congratulate them on the arrival of one baby and the impending arrival of another in January. They certainly did their research and put in some extra yards there.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank some of the locals from the Warrnambool area who came along at my request to give information to the inquiry because I knew they would be very valuable. I would like to thank Dr Liz Uren, Ms Rachael Lee, Julianne Clift, Ms Janene Facey, Mr Nicholas Place, Barbara Glare and the mums who supported her that day and gave some insights as well, Maryanne Purcell and a

colleague from my nursing days who put in a written submission, Cass Austin. They all contributed significantly to some 80-plus findings and recommendations that are in the report.

I think the report really does highlight some of the ways we have progressed in our perinatal services. I would like to say that the findings show that we actually do a pretty good job. We started this journey probably in the 1920s when we realised that we did need to put more of a medical model around birthing. We did that and we have done very well. There is always room for improvement, and I will talk about that in a moment, but there is also a time to recognise what we do well. Whilst we might have put a great medical model in place, what we forgot was to recognise that — particularly in the last, say, 40 years — the dynamics of families are changing. Once where we had extended families of aunts, uncles, cousins and grandmothers, we do not seem to have that in the busy lives of families anymore.

What we found with the report and highlighted in our recommendations is that we really need to put social and emotional wellbeing around families very, very early in the piece if we want to address some of the societal issues that are causing us challenges such as crime, drug addiction and mental health issues. I am not saying they are all the results of not supporting families but I am saying with the support of families very, very early, we can support and offer what the extended family once did.

I would like to discuss one of the recommendations initially, which is recommendation 4.3:

The Victorian government support rural and regional maternity services through increased funding and staffing, to allow women in rural and regional areas the choice of giving birth in their own community, taking into account the safety of mothers and babies, and the Capability Framework for Victorian maternity and newborn services in that region.

I highlight Portland hospital in this instance, where there really does need to be some investment. I think this government is ignoring the fact that we need to have services right out into the regions. We do not want to be a state where we just have the City of Melbourne. We want to be a state that has a state of cities, and Portland is certainly one of those cities. It currently births 80 babies and will probably go up to 120 this year. If you look at the way it is funded and the way it works, they will get an income of \$600 000 for those babies, but to put on a 24-hour service for an obstetrician and an anaesthetist, which you need 24 hours a day pending potential challenges, and midwives would cost about \$2 million. We have got to

understand that there are challenges for regional centres that we need to take into account so we can grow the regions, provide the services and keep those safety features that we want to continue as our priority.

I would also like to mention that the Warrnambool Base Hospital would have a big commitment from a Liberal-Nationals government, and no-one is committing like we are. We recognise the importance of regional hospitals and that is why we have prioritised a commitment to Warrnambool Base Hospital's upgrade.

I would now like to discuss the recommendation that:

The Victorian government evaluate the demand for Early Parenting Centres ...

with the view of expanding services so mothers, babies and families can be supported.

Barb Glare is a woman in our community who has developed a centre, and we saw lots of examples of where women can go and be supported with early lactation support and general support that those extended families I think used to provide. We need to look for people in our communities who can provide this organic growth in services, rather than try to implement something that will not work, and support them. I recommend that we do look to put more support around families, and that is exactly what the report highlights. It gives me great pleasure to have been a part of this committee. I believe we will make a difference when implementing some of these recommendations, and we will give families the support they need.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: budget estimates 2017–18

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (10:36) — I refer to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee inquiry into the budget estimates, and particularly to the contribution by the Minister for Industry and Employment, who referred to how working in collaboration presents an opportunity to drive strategic results. I want to continue my contributions on how we can best achieve results in the public interest, not just with the Victorian government but also the Australian government.

It has been a privilege as Victoria's first Parliamentary Secretary for Medical Research to work with so many people committed to improving and saving lives in a cause where Victoria is a world leader. We have succeeded at an international level with the moonshot quest to cure cancer, a rare unity ticket between US President Barack Obama and his successor, Donald Trump.

At the national level, the Medical Research Future Fund provides an initiative where unity tickets in the national interest and beyond partisanship are critical. I renewed my calls for such bipartisanship with the federal Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, at the opening of the neuroscience lab at the Alfred Medical Research and Education Precinct, a partnership with Monash University. It is rare in the world, and the only one of its kind in Australia. What it provides are patient trials, better translation of results and breakthroughs on how we address brain diseases from Alzheimer's, epilepsy and multiple sclerosis to complaints such as better patient treatment for concussions and headaches. This goes to what we can do at an international level, how we aggregate our assets and create better opportunities to get this argument beyond just debates between the states and actually look at our biggest opportunity, which is to translate our elegant science, leverage our intellectual property, manufacture the results here and export globally, especially where we have free trade agreements with China, Japan and South Korea. This is the opportunity.

One of the issues that has been raised, and I have raised it in the past, is to make sure that we do not get into arguments between the states, that we do not have the triumph of politics over rational decision-making as we saw with the proton beam decision going to Adelaide, when it would have been far better placed in the Royal Children's Hospital right here in Melbourne — that would have provided a national centre and an international opportunity. I do want to refer to some leaders in the medical research sector who have raised these issues and concerns as well. I want to cite Professor Robert Ramsay from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in a speech he gave where he raised a concern that the Medical Research Future Fund is being captured:

... by lobby. The health minister has final say and many in the community think this is a bad thing.

I am quoting him:

Let me stress this is not about who is in government but more about how decisions are made and who gets to lobby.

I agree with this proposition, and I want to put it beyond partisanship. It is not a political matter, but we need to have decisions made on the merit and performance of the science. I make the point that regularly Victorian institutes get more than 40 per cent of the funding from the independent experts — the National Health and Medical Research Council — so the lion's share goes to the lion. I want to see Victoria continue to lead like a lion, and that is the issue that I raised directly with Minister Hunt at that opening.

The reason is we are also looking through the Science, Medical Research and Technology Panel, the SMaRT panel, which has undertaken the Victorian medical research grand challenges, at the big-picture issues in health and how we address them. How do we eradicate incurable cancer, halve cancer mortality through immunotherapy, create novel systems to measure the brain and radically reduce the burden of disease, halve the number of years older Australians are burdened by disability, provide the right care at the right time through digital health, reduce obesity and diabetes, eliminate preventable cardiovascular death, find new ways to detect, prevent and respond to antimicrobial resistance and use stem cell treatments to halve the burden of disease in five major conditions — Parkinson's, dementia, macular degeneration, kidney disease and cardiovascular disease? We have had 110 experts participating, conducted more than 1000 hours of face-to-face workshops and consulted more than 400 extra stakeholders.

I want to thank the Minister for Health, the Premier of course, the former health minister and everybody from the department who has been involved. We are looking for unity tickets with the Australian government to maximise better health and to save lives.

**TRANSPORT LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT (BETTER ROADS
VICTORIA AND OTHER AMENDMENTS)
BILL 2018**

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 8 August; motion of
Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road
Safety).**

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (10:42) — It is a pleasure to rise to lead the debate from this side of the house on the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. Whilst I will come to the main purposes and provisions of the bill, the state of roads across the state is topical at the moment. Particularly in the west and south-west of the state roads are in grave disrepair and in need of much funding. I note that on our speaking list on this side of the house there are plenty of members who wish to make contributions on this bill that will no doubt focus on the section around road funding and the proposals outlined in this bill.

But being the lead speaker I will talk a bit more broadly about the bill — the purpose and the main provisions — and then it is my intention to focus on Better Roads Victoria and the guaranteed funding

section that the minister outlined in his second-reading speech. When bills are introduced into this place we seek feedback from stakeholders. We pride ourselves on not having all the ideas and information; we go out and actually consult and liaise in the limited time we have got available. We got a bill briefing from the minister's office, which we were thankful for. I wish to use this opportunity to put some of the concerns that were raised with us on the record — although some have been clarified by the minister's office — for the minister to consider taking into account and perhaps look at making adjustments. Then I will state our position on the bill.

The purpose of the bill is to insert provisions into the Road Safety Act 1986 surrounding the administration of alcohol interlock devices. Specifically these provisions seek to transfer greater responsibility for the administration of alcohol interlock devices to VicRoads, thereby taking pressure off court resources. That is a good concept in principle, and we sought some advice around that. The bill also proposes minor amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Application Act 2013, the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act 2017, the Transport Integration Act 2010 and the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 to reduce red tape and streamline transport authority activities. The bill also amends the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act 1979 in relation to the Better Roads Victoria trust account, and I will spend some time in my contribution discussing that.

In relation to the main provisions, most of what is set out in the bill is fairly straightforward, but I will touch on them to put it on the record. The amendments to the Road Safety Act 1986 transfer, as I said, the administration of alcohol interlock devices from the courts to VicRoads and adjust the triggers for the mandatory imposition of interlock conditions with respect to various offences.

In the provisions relating to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Application Act 2013 there are adjustments to the rules relating to fatigue management surrounding rail replacement buses. In relation to the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act 2017 the bill amends when the regulator may take disciplinary action against a permission holder — fairly straightforward.

In relation to the Transport Integration Act 2010 there is the streamlining of land transactions between transport agencies. My colleague in the other place David Davis raised some questions at the bill briefing around that. It is of concern to him, but he got

responses on how that might operate and what that might mean, which made sense.

Amendments to the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 provide for the expansion of assistance to rail staff involved in fatal incidents. Whilst I do not want to dwell on that, I am certainly aware of the incidents that do occur on our rail system — quite serious incidents that are often not reported. It is good to see that expanded assistance to rail staff involved in fatal accidents. For example, I think the example given at the bill briefing was that where there is an incident the driver is covered, but if there is someone else in the cabin with the driver they are not. This has now been expanded to include such a person, and again that makes sense. There are also changes to the rules governing the interaction between overdimensional vehicles and rail infrastructure.

Of course the one that we are focused mainly on is the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act 1979 — the facilitation of revenue from driving infringements into the Better Roads Victoria Trust Fund for the purposes of road maintenance and road safety initiatives. I will come back and speak a little bit more about that.

We did, as is custom, seek a bill briefing from the minister's office. We were very pleased to receive quite a thorough bill briefing. Perhaps I should put on record at this time that one of the minister's staff is a fellow Richmond supporter, and of course the bill briefing got off to a magnificent start as we talked about the fortunes of the mighty Tigers and where they might head over the course of the next week. So I do acknowledge that Rebecca and I did have a good chat about that, but we will see what happens tomorrow night in relation to footy and we will focus on matters for the Parliament today.

The bill briefing did confirm a lot, which I have said, and again I will perhaps just skim through it to put some of that on record. It redirects revenue from traffic infringements into the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account to fund road maintenance and upgrades in Melbourne's outer suburban interface communities throughout regional Victoria. Again, I will come back and talk about that. Part of my electorate of Croydon covers the Shire of Yarra Ranges, albeit the urban end of the shire. But having served as a councillor and mayor on the Shire of Yarra Ranges, still living out in that area and having part of my electorate covering Yarra Ranges, I am fully aware of the needs for road maintenance and upgrades in that municipality, let alone the rest of them in and around the state. I note the member for South-West Coast is in the house. I have

visited her a number of times in her electorate. You can witness firsthand the problems with road maintenance down there. There is neglect over time, and whatever the reasons are there is a dire need for an injection of funds and for those roads to be maintained.

The bill takes significant pressure off the court system, as I said, by transferring all the administration of interlock devices to VicRoads. It ensures a mandatory interlock application in the case of drink-driving offences that result in licence cancellation and disqualification. It removes the application of interlocks for offences that are not driving related. It extends exemptions from fatigue management rules for drivers of rail replacement buses to persons acting as record keepers for those drivers. It removes the requirement of over-dimensional vehicles with a width of between 3 and 5 metres to obtain annual permits for moving vehicles across railway and tram tracks. It streamlines land transactions between transport agencies, for example, VicTrack to VicRoads. Again, at the bill briefing an example was given around some of the level crossing removals and how it streamlines that process. The requirement for the Treasurer to approve all VicTrack land acquisitions will be removed. I am not so sure what the Treasurer or shadow Treasurer's view on that is, but they will have an opportunity to make a contribution in relation to that. In terms of streamlining and the example given at the bill briefing, I could see the logic and why it made sense that this was being proposed in the bill.

The bill extends compensation entitlements for train drivers involved in fatal accidents to supervising drivers if they are also present in the driver cabin at the time of the incident. I have mentioned that and I will not touch on that anymore. It is a very serious matter, and we certainly welcome that. It provides that Commercial Passenger Vehicles Victoria may take disciplinary action against a person in whose name a motor vehicle is registered, a registered booking service provider or an accredited driver if it is satisfied that the person has contravened or is contravening the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act 2017 or the regulations made under it.

As I said at the outset, the coalition goes through a consultation process with any bill that comes into the house. We seek input and advice from industry. We were pleased to go out and seek the comments and views of the RACV, the Victorian Transport Association, the Victorian Taxi and Hire-Car Families, the Taxi Action Group Victoria, the Victorian Hire Car Association, Uber and the Victorian Taxi Association — all those that might be involved with any aspect of this bill. There were a couple of key

concerns or issues that were brought back to us. As I said, we put them back to the minister's office, and we were pleased to get a response earlier this week in relation to those. But again, to put on record some of these concerns for the consideration of the minister, with Better Roads Victoria there is the lack of consideration regarding the collection of less revenue from speeding fines, traffic camera offences et cetera due to the advent of automated vehicles, and I will come back and talk on that in a little more detail.

We have had a response on this since, but the admission of Mitchell shire from the schedule 1 table on page 7 of the bill is that the urban growth boundary extends into the Shire of Mitchell and developers are planning and building new subdivisions. It is clearly an outer suburban council in terms of its infrastructure needs but with rural standard infrastructure. With the alcohol interlock administration, the removal of personal interaction with drink-driving offences to provide assistance regarding support and behavioural change mechanisms can be facilitated via a court process. That was raised as an issue.

Finally, with the alcohol interlocks, there is the administration reduction in deterrence for reoffenders, given the removal of the psychological impact of going through the court system and facing a magistrate. I appreciate the balance here. I accept that going into a court environment can be a very daunting process, but the point made to us is that it actually helps the psychological impact by having people go through that process. If you just go through more of an administrative process, how does that have an effect? That is balanced of course by 5000 cases, if my memory serves me correctly. Yes, 5000 matters each year go through the Magistrates Court, so I can understand the concept of trying to remove that from the court system and making it more of an administrative arrangement, but nevertheless that was raised as a concern to us.

The two matters I really just want to focus on here, as outlined in the minister's second-reading speech, is the guaranteed funding for roads and the administration of alcohol interlocks. The minister in the second-reading speech said:

The bill makes changes to the administration of alcohol interlock conditions to simplify the process and move the majority of alcohol interlock offences into the VicRoads alcohol interlock program. This is designed to take pressure off court resources and allow them to focus on other key areas, such as family violence and community safety.

At the bill briefing we asked how this decision-making process works, shifting responsibility from the courts to

VicRoads. We were advised that there is already a dedicated unit in VicRoads. I think, if I am quoting correctly, it has been there since 2014. We asked whether VicRoads is resourced to do this sort of work. There was definitely a request to free up court time and administrative processes. As I previously stated and as is in the minister's second-reading speech, it is expected that this will remove over 5000 matters each year from the Magistrates Court. I note the shadow Attorney-General has come into the chamber. I sought his advice on this matter, and he has been very helpful in us forming a view in relation to this, so I thank the member for Hawthorn.

In relation to rural and regional communities and outer suburban interface communities, I was a member in my first term here — I was elected in 2006 — of the Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee, which dealt with a lot of interface council community issues, with roads and road funding being one of the major ones. I really enjoyed that experience on the committee in my first term, being in opposition. A former member for Bass, Ken Smith, was on the committee. The member for Melton and the member for Yan Yean and a couple of other members were also on the committee. It was chaired by the late George Seitz, who made a terrific contribution in chairing the committee and was a great asset.

If I can just digress briefly, the committee structure in this place allows members from both sides of the house to work together towards good outcomes, and I really enjoyed my time on that committee. We sadly miss George, who retired and has since passed away. I have a deep respect for George's contribution. The committee moved around the state and visited many various councils, and roads and road funding constantly came up as issues, so the experience there was invaluable.

As I said before, I see Yarra Ranges roads in my own patch, let alone getting out to different parts of the state. I have ridden in a couple of trucks recently. The member for Gippsland South arranged for me to go down a highway in a truck to experience how trucks ride along some of our roads, including important freight routes and important tourist routes. When I was out with the member for South-West Coast we rode in a vehicle from a pulp mill down to the port of Portland and experienced the conditions of the roads from the perspective of those drivers and the speeds and safety issues that they face on a daily basis when travelling along those major freight routes around the state.

We know from the second-reading speech that the intent is to allocate more money. The Better Roads

Victoria fund has revenue streams that go into it, but there is no guarantee of the revenue that goes in. The sources are not mandated or legislatively backed, so we understand the purpose here is to put in a framework to guarantee funding. The bill guarantees the allocation of a minimum of 33 per cent of Better Roads Victoria funding to rural and regional communities, and it guarantees the allocation of a minimum of 33 per cent of Better Roads Victoria funding to outer suburban and interface communities. The balance of the fund will be at the Treasurer's discretion at the time. We understand that concept, and we understand the intent to mandate and put in funds.

As I said, if you move around the state and drive on its various roads, you can see their condition. The two things that constantly get raised with me as shadow spokesperson on roads and infrastructure are the actual maintenance of our road network, particularly country roads and the ongoing requirements for funding, and the issue of contract management. I have numerous examples of people saying that a road is fixed or patched or some works have been done to the foundations, and then within weeks or certainly within a couple of months the road has deteriorated and a contractor is back trying to fix the same section of road. That is of enormous concern in terms of the efficient use of taxpayers money. Local communities are saying to us, 'Why can't these contracts be administered properly and the roadworks done once?'. It is not only the level of funding put into roads but it is also the administration of the contracts so we get good outcomes and the best value for money.

Speaker, I thought that everyone was coming in to listen to my contribution on the bill, but I see that you are getting a bit anxious in the chair as we approach 11.00 a.m. We have a number of questions that we wish to scrutinise the government on, so I will continue my contribution after question time.

The SPEAKER — Before I call for questions, the member for Gembrook made some unparliamentary remarks. I ask the member for Gembrook to withdraw and apologise.

Mr Battin — I withdraw and apologise.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

The SPEAKER — Before calling for any questions I wish to remind members that if they are asked to leave the chamber under standing order 124, they should do

so without making comments or remarks as they walk out of the chamber and without gesturing.

I also warn members that this morning we have had a fairly rowdy start to the parliamentary sitting day. I am hoping that question time will be conducted in a more temperate way. But I do warn members up-front that rather than waiting for some minutes in question time to do it, if they shout across the chamber, they will be removed from the chamber without warning.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, before I ask questions, yesterday I asked the Premier about Dylan John Closter and his day-release program, particularly in relation to swimming and whether or not the majority of his sentence was being served outside of prison — the majority of days were more out than in. The Premier took the question on notice and said that an answer would be forthcoming to the house, and I seek an update as to where that is.

The SPEAKER — It is not a point of order. It is a matter that I am happy to follow up for the Leader of the Opposition outside the chamber.

Community safety

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:02) — My question is to the Premier. Police Association Victoria secretary Wayne Gatt stated on Monday it is clear that Victoria is facing a public order crime crisis:

I can't stand here and say in light of this incident, the incident at Taylors Hill and St Kilda that we don't have a problem ...

Only a fool would say we don't have a problem.

Premier, does Victoria have a public order crime crisis?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:03) — As much as I have the greatest of respect for Wayne Gatt, I would make the point, though, that as highly as I regard Mr Gatt and every single member of Victoria Police, we are not funding 3000 extra police for the fun of it. We are providing additional resources and recruits and equipment and facilities and a new statute book because, yes, we need to do something other than ignore the crime trajectory like you did for four long years. We do not recruit police for the fun of it; we do it because they are needed.

One of the reasons that we know and understand that is that we have a close working relationship with the police association — one that is not about undermining police command, but listening to them.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier will resume his seat. Before calling the Leader of the Opposition on a point of order, I have warned members that they will be removed from the chamber without warning. People are shouting across the chamber, and that indicates to me that they do not wish to be in the chamber for question time.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, it was a very straightforward question to the Premier, and it was: Premier, does Victoria have a public order crime crisis? I ask you to bring the Premier back to answering a very straightforward question.

The SPEAKER — I do not uphold the point of order. The Premier is being responsive to the question.

Mr ANDREWS — As I was saying, the government has invested more money than any government in the history of this state to recruit more police than at any time in the history of this state. The alternative would be this: you could see crime go up every month you are in office for four long, miserable years and your answer would be to cut the police budget. That is an approach we reject. We would never employ that sort of tactic. We will continue to work with police command and the police association to fight crime and keep the community safe.

Mr Pesutto — On a point of order, Speaker, on a point of relevance, the Premier is defying your ruling or defying the question and not addressing the relevant matters of the question. Mr Gatt himself said on Monday afternoon that his members, his own members, said to him that police were not in sufficient numbers at the latest riot in Collingwood on Saturday night.

The SPEAKER — What is the basis of your point of order?

Mr Pesutto — The opposition leader asked a very clear question about whether we have a crime crisis. Can you direct the Premier to answer the question in relation to Mr Gatt's remarks that there were not sufficient police resources in Collingwood on Saturday?

The SPEAKER — Order! I cannot direct the Premier as to exactly how to answer the question, only that he is responsive to the question that is asked.

Mr ANDREWS — Thank you very much, Speaker. As I was saying, I think the point of order earlier was actually ruled out, but be that as it may, there are serious issues that need to be dealt with, and that is why we are not cutting funding to police; we are in fact boosting resources, equipment, technology, facilities

and powers, something those opposite never did when they had the chance. All they did when they had the chance, the opportunity and the obligation was cut the Victoria Police budget. They never cut the crime rate, but they sure as heck cut the police budget. That is what they did, and that is what they would do again.

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, the Leader of the Opposition asked a very clear question about what police association secretary Wayne Gatt said — that only a fool would say we do not have a problem in Victoria. The question to the Premier very clearly was: do we actually have a public order crime crisis in Victoria? I ask you to bring him back to actually answering that question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. I renew my ruling on the member for Hawthorn's point of order. The Premier has concluded his answer.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:07) — As Wayne Gatt said, only a fool would say we do not have a problem. Mr Gatt went on to say officers responding to the Collingwood riot were put in danger due to significant understaffing:

It's not the fault of the police on the ground.

When they are responding to a job and are grossly outnumbered, there is little they can do.

Premier, is police association secretary Wayne Gatt right, or are you expecting Victorians to believe that the association is simply making it up?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:07) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — I am not sure anyone is saying —

Mr Paynter interjected.

The SPEAKER (11:07) — The member for Bass will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Bass withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS — I am not sure anyone is saying, certainly on this side of the house, anything other than we will continue to support Victoria Police with the resources they need to deal with the serious challenge they face — a serious challenge that was ignored by

those opposite, a serious challenge that was made worse by those opposite. If they were not cutting police budgets, they were out there cutting TAFE —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is both misleading the house and debating the issue. I ask you to bring him back to answering the question about Mr Gatt's remarks about police understaffing and what he is going to do about it.

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

Mr ANDREWS — As I was saying earlier, perhaps we should arrange, if he is feeling brave, a briefing for the Leader of the Opposition. You can go out to the academy and you can see the fact that the academy is absolutely full of new recruits and will remain that way so long as Labor has the great privilege of governing this state.

Ministers statements: education funding

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) (11:09) — I rise to update the house on how the Andrews government is delivering on its election commitments and keeping its promises to the Victorian people.

Mr R. Smith interjected.

The SPEAKER (11:09) — Order! The member for Warrandyte will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

Mr MERLINO — On Monday I had the pleasure of joining the members for Mill Park, Yan Yean and Thomastown in opening the Whittlesea Tech School, the seventh of our 10 tech schools to open, as promised — three to go.

Last week I joined the member for Mordialloc to turn the sod at Cornish College's \$4 million new senior study centre, part of the Andrews government's commitment to capital works at non-government schools after they were given absolutely nothing by those opposite in the previous government. Recently, Speaker, I joined with you at Greensborough College to open the new \$10 million classrooms and sporting facilities upgrade, one of many school capital promises made and kept by the Andrews Labor government. We promised to end the war waged by the previous government on our teachers and we did, delivering an agreement which respects and rewards their crucial work and without industrial action.

We promised to acquit the Gonski agreement after those opposite left a black hole and each and every budget we have done that, and just last week we saw the benefits from all of this investment with Victoria's best ever NAPLAN results. We promised to make Victoria the Education State, and that is what we are doing. This is a government that keeps its promises, that keeps faith with the people of Victoria, because in politics your word is your bond. And unlike the Leader of the Opposition who speaks with a forked tongue — 80 000 pages, which one backs up your story? Not one of them.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is now departing from making a ministers statement and is proceeding to debate issues. I ask you to bring him back to compliance with sessional orders.

The SPEAKER — I uphold the point of order. The Deputy Premier to make a ministers statement.

Mr MERLINO — The Andrews government is true to its word and will keep delivering for Victorian schools, for Victorian students, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who cannot lie straight in bed.

Community safety

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:11) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, two years ago you boasted to Victorians you would smash these gangs and those who perpetrate these crimes — 'They will feel the full force of the law'. Between the Moomba, Werribee, Taylors Hill and Collingwood riots there have been over 700 violent youth gang rioters involved. Premier, of these four riots and 700 people involved, how many arrests have been made?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:12) — I think the Leader of the Opposition is getting dangerously close to being critical of Victoria Police. If you are not cutting their budgets —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, I think you are. I think you are being shamefully critical of Victoria Police in the formulation of your pathetic question.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:12) — Order! The member for South-West Coast will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for South-West Coast withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS — The Leader of the Opposition has asked a number of questions in relation to arrests made at various incidents. I would always defer to Victoria Police to provide him with detailed information crime by crime. The most recent incident is of course still an open investigation.

I can in broader terms confirm for the Leader of the Opposition that Operation Wayward and Operation Regnant have delivered some 700 arrests in the last 14 months — not bad for a set of circumstances where apparently there are no new police. Not bad for a set of circumstances where this one here would have the front to criticise Victoria Police. Of all the people —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, on the question of relevance, this was a question about the number of arrests arising from the recent riots referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. The Premier has referred to a completely separate set of figures, and I ask you to bring him back to answering the specific question asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier could not have been more relevant to the question that was asked. The opposition asked for numbers of arrests; the Premier gave them a number of arrests. He was entirely relevant to the question that was asked, and the point of order should be ruled out of order.

Mr Walsh — On the point of order, Speaker, the Leader of the House has got confused. The Premier was actually referring to the red shirts arrests, not to the recent riots. I would ask you to bring him back to answering the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of The Nationals knows that is not a point of order. I am not in a position to adjudicate which arrests were in relation to which crimes. The Premier was being responsive and has concluded his answer.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:15) — As Wayne Gatt said, 'Only a fool would say we don't have a problem'. Wayne Gatt further stated about the non-existent arrest numbers — his words after the Collingwood riots — that this highlights to offenders that they can behave violently without risk of consequences. As Wayne Gatt says, 'If police —

Mr Merlino interjected.

Mr GUY — Are you okay, James? Are you okay, mate? Would you like a Berocca, James?

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask those at the table to assist in the running of the house. The Deputy Premier to come to order.

Mr GUY — Police Association Victoria secretary, Wayne Gatt, has stated about the, his words, almost non-existent arrest numbers:

If people are allowed to get away with actions as a result of wild brawls, they are going to come back a third, fourth and fifth time.

Premier, with rioting now commonplace in Melbourne, how can our police command respect on the streets when you repeatedly refuse to give them the powers they need or a stronger justice system to back them up?

The SPEAKER — Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition to make sure his questions are brief enough to fit into the time allotted.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:16) — Can you go off script again? You are so good at it. The kind of half-funny joke that used up all the time, what a day you are having, hey. Go off script again, go on. You are so good off script, aren't you?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:16) — Order! The member for Ripon, the member for Kew and the member for Essendon can all leave the chamber for the period of an hour.

Honourable members for Ripon, Kew and Essendon withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS — Thank you so much, Speaker. I am not sure there was actually a question there, but in the bit at the beginning —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — Really? A bit at the beginning I think referred to a quote from Mr Gatt, and —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — No, I do not think that is right at all. What I would say to the Leader of the Opposition is this, very simply: only a fool would cut police resources, and that, my friend, is what you are.

Ministers statements: Victorian Electoral Commission

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) (11:17) — I rise in my capacity representing the Special Minister of State in this house to provide an update on the election

preparations of the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) in the context of the passage of the Electoral Legislation Amendment Act 2018. The VEC has a range of regular pre-election activities underway — leasing the 88 election offices and booking and inspecting all of the early voting and election day voting centres.

But in this particular context they will also be providing briefings to political parties and Independents about the changes consequent to the passage of the bill. They do not just go to the ban now in place on anonymous donations and donations greater than \$1000; they also go to restrictions on bunting and the prohibition on political parties being involved in postal votes. So there is a lot for candidates and parties to go through and only 80 days to do it. Eighty days should be plenty for the VEC.

Phileas Fogg was able to get around the world in 80 days, but I suppose the question is: can the member for Malvern get around the party room in 80 days? That should be a matter of deep reflection for those opposite. Can the Leader of the Opposition stay in the balloon —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Attorney-General!

Mr PAKULA — Oh, here he is. He fancies himself as Colin Barnett, this one.

The SPEAKER — The Attorney-General will resume his seat. The manager of opposition business on a point of order.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Attorney-General has departed well from sessional orders, as he well knows. Instead of providing this house and the community with information about what should be an impartial process being conducted by the VEC, he is degenerating into political attacks. I ask you to bring him back to compliance with sessional orders.

The SPEAKER — The Attorney-General started so well but veered away from making a statement. He is to come back to making a statement.

Mr PAKULA — I will return to providing an update about the VEC's activities between now and the election, but I know —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Without interjections.

Mr PAKULA — The member for Hawthorn will not thank me for doing so before I got a chance to

pump up his tyres. There is plenty for the VEC to do. They will be engaging with candidates and political parties. There is also plenty for you to think about in the next 80 days and plenty of time for the plotters to strike.

Community safety

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:20) — My question is to the Premier. Collingwood resident Paul Crockford said about Saturday night's Collingwood riot:

I thought it was going to be a bloodbath. It was just horrible.

Visiting a friend, Elizabeth Kelly said she 'can't unsee' the night. She said:

It was the worst thing I've ever seen ...

This violence on Melbourne's streets is unprecedented and all too common. Premier, why are you so soft on crime? Why do you refuse to back up our police and keep our streets safe by introducing mandatory minimum sentencing for repeat violent offenders, particularly those who cause rioting and serious physical injury on our streets?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:21) — I do thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, and it gives me an opportunity to indicate that the government rejects the 'coulda, maybe, woulda, shoulda, might be' mandatory sentencing policies put forward by the member for Hawthorn and confirmed by the member for Hawthorn. Beyond that, there is Mr Maybe Mandatory over there — mandatory disloyalty, not so much mandatory sentencing, I do not think.

Where we have made profound reforms, particularly in relation to violent crime, we have done it properly. For instance, having inherited a situation where serious sex offenders could get a non-custodial sentence — a slap-on-the-wrist community correction order, just one example among many — we have rectified that approach, which is not just soft on crime, it is soft-headed, and we reject that approach. It is for those opposite, who talk a good game on custodial sentences, to explain to everybody: is it mandatory or is it maybe mandatory? Is it mandatory or are there are a whole series of get-outs?

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier to resume his seat. On a point of order, I call the manager of opposition business.

Mr Guy interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is over halfway through his allotted time for an answer. He has come nowhere near answering the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. If he wants to set aside time for a general debate on sentencing matters, we would be happy to accommodate him, but I ask you to bring him back to answering the specific question asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER — Order! There were a number of fairly broad questions contained in the question. The Premier had been responsive but did just stray into attacking the opposition. The Premier to come back to answering the question.

Mr ANDREWS — Certainly, Speaker, I thank you for your guidance. We will continue to make sure that we have strong laws in place — in fact the most significant resources that have ever been provided —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — And a kind of maybe mandatory approach would work, apparently — almost mandatory, or maybe it is not, or then again maybe it is. That is the definition, I think, of confusion. We are very clear: we do not cut police resources. We do not undermine the chief commissioner. We in fact give to the chief commissioner the powers, the resources, the equipment, the facilities and the technology that he seeks and the statute book that he needs. That is what we have done, and we reject other approaches as typified by those opposite, where it is a combination — a galloping combination — of cuts, cuts and confusion.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) (11:24) — Premier, can you confirm that a number of people who were involved in the Collingwood riot have been previously charged with serious violence-related offences and, due to your failure to introduce mandatory minimum sentencing, are still out roaming our streets?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (11:24) — No, I cannot confirm that.

Ministers statements: Suburban Rail Loop

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (11:24) — As we have seen over the past week, there are so many reasons Victorians are incredibly supportive of our plan to build the Suburban Rail Loop. It is not only because people know this will give them more options for where they want to go. They also know

that this will set up so many Victorians with not just jobs but careers thanks to the 20 000 jobs that this project is going to create. Also, and I think this goes to the heart of why this project has really captured the attention of so many Victorians, they know that under an Andrews Labor government this project will be delivered.

They know it will happen, and they know this because they know that this is a government that delivers on its election commitments. Others promised rail lines to Doncaster, to Rowville and to Avalon but the minute they grabbed those chairs around the cabinet table the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Malvern absolutely walked away from those commitments at the first opportunity.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Leader of the House is departing from compliance with sessional orders and is proceeding to debate matters. I ask you to bring her back to making a ministers statement.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister to come back to making a statement.

Ms ALLAN — It is such a shame. The member for Box Hill should be loving this project given we were at Box Hill last week delivering a rail line to Box Hill. I know the member for Rowville would love this project, and all these parts of the state that are getting the rail lines that you lot failed to deliver.

And when it comes to another lot of commitments, we are committing to duplicating the rail line to Cranbourne. We understand that you have got to duplicate the line before you extend the rail line. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who is out there lying to the Cranbourne community —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, as I am sure you are about to say, the Leader of the House has transgressed standing order 118 and is debating the issue. I ask you to bring her back to compliance with standing orders.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Box Hill is correct. The use of the word by the member is an imputation and cannot —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Rowville! The Leader of the House —

Ms ALLAN — He keeps trying to work out whether he likes it or not.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House knows that the word she has used is unparliamentary.

Ms ALLAN — Certainly, Speaker, they know that this is all a set up for the opposition to break their commitment to the Cranbourne community should they have a chance.

Shepparton solar farm applications

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (11:27) — My question is for the Minister for Planning, Minister, could you tell this house when you will be making a decision on the four solar farm applications referred to you by the Greater Shepparton City Council in February 2018. It has been nearly seven months since you called in these projects and more than three months since the end of the Planning Panels Victoria hearings that took place in Shepparton. I understand the panel's recommendations were submitted to your office some time ago and that a final decision is now in your hands.

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) (11:28) — I thank the member for Shepparton for her continued interest in renewable energy and indeed the ambitious targets that our government has for renewable energy: 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025.

I do acknowledge of course that these renewable energy targets will involve a mix of solar and wind energy, and I just want to advise the house of how we are travelling in that respect. In relation to wind, Ararat, Cape Nelson, Yaloak South, Kiata, Coonoor Bridge and Maroona represent \$656 million worth of wind energy already built — 2300 construction jobs and permanent jobs in regional Victoria. Can I also indicate to the member that under construction are Murra Warra, Mount Gellibrand, Crowland, Salt Creek, Timboon West and Bulgana — that is just to name a few. That is \$3.2 billion worth of wind energy under construction today. This is part of our mix to ensure that we do reach our targets of 25 per cent of energy by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025.

Turning to solar, as the member of Shepparton knows, I have in fact called in four planning permit applications at the request of the City of Greater Shepparton. They have been to an independent panel, as the member has indicated, and panel hearings were held in Shepparton in May. The report was provided to me in July, and obviously I will consider in detail the various provisions that are related to the planning panel's report, because there is a degree of complexity, particularly relating to the potential use of productive —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WYNNE — Listen to the answer, you whacker. I had the report —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Planning knows he has used an unparliamentary term. I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr WYNNE — Certainly, I will withdraw. Shadow minister for energy, to answer your retort, the report was in July. I will be considering the report in detail because there are a range of other emerging issues which will need to be addressed, particularly in relation to the use of agricultural land and irrigation land. I will give those matters proper consideration.

Supplementary question

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (11:31) — Minister, you have indicated that your department is in the process of drafting guidelines for the establishment of solar farms. Can you please advise what progress is being made and when these draft guidelines might be made public? While there is wide support in the Shepparton district for renewable energy projects, there can be no doubt that this region comprises high-value agricultural land that has had substantial recent investment in irrigation modernisation, so there are competing interests and my community is looking for guidelines to go forward.

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) (11:32) — I thank the member for Shepparton for her supplementary question. Indeed as part of the panel's deliberations we are in fact developing new guidelines to support the future development of solar farms. They are obviously being prepared with input from specialist areas — obviously energy; the Minister for Agriculture; the Minister for Water obviously needs to be involved in these discussions as well — and when those guidelines are in fact completed, as you would expect, we will ensure that there is further consultation, particularly with the local councils through the Municipal Association of Victoria but also the Victorian Farmers Federation as well, who have a very acute interest in this.

I am also aware that the member for Mildura, in fact this morning, had a very interesting conversation with me, particularly around a couple of solar farm applications that he has got in his area, so these guidelines will certainly assist the Mildura council as well in their further deliberations on those permit applications.

Ministers statements: government achievements

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) (11:33) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to update the house on the many focused investments being made by the Andrews Labor government as we deliver infrastructure, as we grow the economy and importantly as we create jobs. We grow, we invest; they cut, they slash. Yesterday we heard that the newly elected South Australian Liberal government has — wait for it — cut services and will be closing TAFEs. That sounds familiar.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PALLAS — Of course it does, because it is in their DNA. It is what they do, and it is what they will do again if they get the opportunity.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Treasurer may be embarrassed about talking about Victoria's performance and want to talk about South Australia instead, but he does need to relate his remarks to his portfolio. He should not be debating issues, and I ask you to bring him back to compliance with sessional orders.

The SPEAKER — I ask the Treasurer to come back to making a statement.

Mr PALLAS — So, Speaker, we do know that when it comes to budgeting every dollar matters. And when it comes to budgeting, \$3.5 million can buy quite a lot. In fact it is one-fourteenth of the South Australian budget surplus. The updated bike path in Upfield is getting a \$3.5 million upgrade to fix the existing path and remove bottlenecks. Meanwhile, speaking of bikes, the opposition leader spent \$3.5 million taking Victorian taxpayers for a ride.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer has been warned to make a ministers statement.

Mr PALLAS — I was saying that \$3.5 million goes a long way; \$3.5 million is the amount that the police minister recently unveiled for a patrol vessel to keep Victorians safe on the water so there will be no aquatic getaways. Right across the state we are investing in schools. This year's budget includes \$3.5 million to upgrade the Sunbury Primary School. Maybe the opposition should think about going back to school and learning a bit about honesty.

Regional rail services

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (11:35) — My question is to —

Ms Green interjected.

Ms KEALY — What was that, sorry?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Through the Chair, without interjections.

Ms KEALY — I ask the member for Yan Yean to withdraw.

Ms Green — I withdraw.

Ms KEALY — My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. Pettina Folkes of Stawell signed up for the V/Line text message updates for delays on the rail line she uses, the Ballarat line, just seven months ago. In that time she has received 273 messages notifying her of train delays — up to 15 messages in a single day — including messages about track faults, signal faults, congestion and numerous other failings and breakdowns. You have botched all punctuality targets, and reliability on this line is now near the worst on record. How many more hundreds of text messages do Pettina and other long-suffering passengers on the Ballarat line have to receive before you finally get the trains to run on time?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (11:37) — It was a little difficult to hear all of the member for Lowan's question, but I think I did hear her refer to a constituent from Stawell — I think that was what I heard her say. You could assume that someone from Stawell might drive to Ararat to catch the train on the Ballarat line from Ararat. Now, of course the reason why they can do that is because Labor opened the train line to Ararat.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the minister has said that she did not hear the question and so she is not sure what she is answering. I wonder, then, if you would give leave to the member for Lowan to then re-ask the whole question.

The SPEAKER — Does the minister require to hear the question again?

Ms ALLAN — No.

The SPEAKER — The minister to answer the question then.

Ms ALLAN — Of course you can have perfect punctuality on train lines that are closed. You can have perfect punctuality on train lines that you never build.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Many members in the house have nearly made it all the way through question time without being removed, but the noise in the chamber is excessive and people will be removed from the chamber if they keep shouting. The member for Lowan on a point of order.

Ms Kealy — On a point of order, Speaker, I would hate to embarrass the minister for transport and perhaps —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Kealy — I would hate for her to act a fool in this Parliament today, but my question —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:39) — Order! The member for Frankston can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Frankston withdrew from chamber.

Ms Kealy — My question was quite clearly around the Ballarat line, which was never closed. She is actually referring to the Maryborough line, I believe. I am more than happy to refer and re-read the question, because I do not believe she has any understanding of either the question or about her portfolio.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:40) — Order! The member for Buninyong can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Buninyong withdrew from chamber.

The SPEAKER — I do not uphold the point of order. It is a point that the member may wish to take up in a supplementary question, but the minister is answering the question that was asked.

Ms ALLAN — Of course there is a lot of work going on on the Ballarat line at the moment thanks to the Ballarat line upgrade. In the context of delivering trains and being able to deliver trains more reliably and more frequently, which was what the member's question was about, which I was just —

Ms Kealy — On a point of order, Speaker, I ask you to ask the minister to answer the question. The question was: how long will passengers like Pettina wait and how many more text messages are they going to have to receive before they finally get a train that runs on

time on the Ballarat line? I ask the minister actually to address this.

Ms ALLAN — On the point of order, Speaker, I was being directly relevant —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:41) — The member for Hastings can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Hastings withdrew from chamber.

Ms ALLAN — I was being directly relevant to the question that was asked. The member asked about issues on the Ballarat line. One of the ways to address issues on the Ballarat line is of course to invest in the big infrastructure upgrade that is needed to improve reliability. I appreciate the member is very keen to perform in question time. Perhaps she can let me finish the answer.

The SPEAKER — Order! I have heard enough on the point of order. I do not uphold the point of order. The minister is being responsive to the question.

Ms ALLAN — It was great to be with the Premier last Thursday and a number of other local members in the Ballarat area inspecting the works that are going on in and around Millbrook for the construction of the 4.5-kilometre passing loop. Why do you need to put passing loops on the Ballarat line? So you can run more reliable and more frequent trains. Of course one of the other aspects —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — One of the other features —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — The member raised a number of issues in her question around reasons for delays. Can I report to the member that in the last couple of months we have had some delays on the Ballarat line. They have been caused by cars left on tracks around the Deer Park area, where a car was irresponsibly left on the tracks and caused a train to crash into it and causing serious issues on our network. We have also had a number of self-harm and attempted self-harm incidents along the Ballarat line, and this is a very, very sad and tragic consequence that staff have to deal with. These are some of the reasons why trains can be delayed. There are many reasons why trains can be delayed.

Alongside those reasons there is disruption that is caused by construction. The best way to address the long-term needs of the Ballarat line community, and also those lines that come off the Ballarat line — the reopened Maryborough line, the reopened Ararat line — is with the infrastructure works that the Andrews Labor government is investing in. It is damn harder to build a rail line than to close one.

Supplementary question

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (11:43) — Thank you very much, Speaker —

Ms Green interjected.

Ms KEALY — Again, Speaker, I ask the member for Yan Yean to withdraw because she keeps on interjecting and making ridiculous comments across the chamber.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Yan Yean.

Ms Green — I withdraw.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Attorney-General will come to order.

Ms KEALY — Minister, country Victorians are tired of your spin and excuses. They see the promises you make to Melbourne and the lies you give to the country. Not everyone has a chairman's lounge at Bendigo station to wait for their delayed train. Minister, you have made billions of dollars of rail promises to Melbourne for delivery in 40 years time. How about you first simply get our country trains to run on time now?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (11:45) — The other six members from The Nationals party room have just gone up in my estimation, because none of them were silly enough to ask this question. The member for Lowan was the only one that they could put in the dock to ask this question. The work we have done over the past nearly four years in regional Victoria has come off the back of an effort that when we came to government the very first briefing from V/Line that I had as the Minister for Public Transport was how they had to implement the \$120 million in cuts that the former Liberal-Nationals government had to implement — \$120 million in cuts. So the only lies that are being peddled to country Victorians come from the National Party when they cuddle up to the Liberal

Party, because we all know in government that means cuts and closures for country public transport.

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, you have —

Ms Green interjected.

The SPEAKER (11:46) — Order! The member for Yan Yean can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Yan Yean withdrew from chamber.

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, you caution a number of members about inappropriate language in this chamber and I would ask you to actually caution the member for Yan Yean, who has just left the chamber, on her constant use of the word FIGJAM during the previous question.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Walsh — So you think it's funny, do you? Do you really think it's funny? You are the idiot.

The SPEAKER — Order! Members on my right will come to order. The Leader of The Nationals, through the chair.

Mr Walsh — I ask you to counsel the member for Yan Yean for her use of the term FIGJAM in this place when referring to the member for Lowan. I think it is totally inappropriate and I ask you to do something about it.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, what is totally inappropriate is the faux outrage from the Leader of the National Party. He has undermined his own point of order by insulting the Premier across the chamber. We saw yesterday with the disgraceful comments from the member for Hawthorn against the Deputy Premier the double standard performance you lot bring into this place every single day and it should be ruled out of order.

Mr Clark — On the point of order, Speaker, immediately before question time you called upon the member for Gembrook to withdraw and apologise for inappropriate remarks that he had made earlier, which he did, as was appropriate. The point being made by the Leader of The Nationals is that the remarks made by the member for Yan Yean are in similar terms and he is inviting you to ask her, when she returns from her absence from the chamber, to withdraw and apologise

to the house in a similar form. That would be an appropriate course for you to follow.

The SPEAKER — Order! There were two points of order I think, from memory, raised about comments made by the member for Yan Yean and she withdrew on both occasions. I did not hear her comments on either occasion on any other remark. Can I just say to members on both sides of the house that the debate in this place about us calling each other names I do not think shows any of us in a good light. I think we have more important things to deal with.

Ms Kealy — On the point of order, Speaker, you referred in that decision and that ruling that there were two occasions when I asked the member for Yan Yean to withdraw and she did so. She also made the comment that the Leader of The Nationals referred to in his last point of order on the way out of the chamber. She did not withdraw that. It is completely inappropriate that every other Labor member of Parliament was laughing because it is okay to make fun of a woman when it is not someone of their own tribe. I ask you to counsel the member for Yan Yean and I ask for an apology within this chamber for fairness and equity because gender equality is not negotiable — we have heard that from the Premier himself. I wish to have the same respect as any other woman and any other person in this place.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, I refer you to page 135 of *Rulings from the Chair*, principles of points of order:

- (5) Members must not use points of order to make imputations or reflect on a member.

Now this is a common strategy that is deployed by the member for Lowan, to come to the table —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! A member on a point of order should be able to be heard in silence.

Ms Allan — To come to the table and use a point of order to attack either an individual member of the government or cast a slur against the government as a whole on the basis of using gender equity as an argument. I personally —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Allan — I find it personally offensive that the member for Lowan would use gender equity as an argument on these points, but I also find it offensive that she is not using the appropriate forms of points of order during the course of debate. I would ask that you

rule the point of order from the member for Lowan out of order, and I suggest, maybe, that the member for Lowan should also have the benefit of discussing with you how points of order should be taken that conform with the rulings from the chair and with standing orders. They are not about her trying to undertake a baseless attack on the government on the basis of gender. As we have seen in the past couple of weeks it is not the Labor Party that has a problem with women. We have seen that spotlight shone on the Liberal Party well and truly.

Mr Clark — On the point of order, Speaker, the points made by the Leader of the House seem to be a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black. The core of the point made by the member for Lowan was that the offensive remarks made by the member for Yan Yean were as she was withdrawing from the chamber, not the ones that she had previously withdrawn for, and that puts her case on a par with the member for Gembrook. I renew the point as with the member for Gembrook: when the member for Yan Yean returns she should be asked to withdraw and apologise to the house.

The SPEAKER — Order! I did not hear the remarks that have been raised by the Leader of The Nationals and the member for Lowan, but that does not preclude me from asking the member to withdraw. She is not in the chamber, but when she comes back to the chamber I will ask her to do so.

Ministers statements: road upgrades

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (11:53) — There is much excitement in the suburbs — I rise to update the house on the work the Andrews government is doing to upgrade arterial roads across this whole suburban network. The \$4 billion worth of upgrades is the biggest ever investment in the arterial road network, and we know it will slash travel times and improve the capacity to get people to and from work. The 22 key suburban upgrades are a massive undertaking which will provide the infrastructure that the community needs.

I know across the state at kitchen tables in the west people are getting very excited about the work that we are doing: \$1.8 billion worth of duplications have already started in the west with Dohertys Road and an additional lane in either direction, and a second bridge over the Princes Freeway. In the north I know there is much excitement, whether it is about Yan Yean Road and the relocation of the old historic church — which is a great little video — the upgrade of the Tullamarine, the upgrade of Plenty Road or the fact that another billion dollars worth of roadworks are

out there in the market at the moment. I know there is real excitement in the community. It is palpable and you can feel it. It is a bit of ‘Ken Bruce has gone mad’ type of excitement. There is unbridled joy because things are being done. There is no fake news over here; they are just real, tangible projects that are rarely done and rarely delivered.

It is so good you could taste the cement. It is marvellous. But we know in the east that they are terribly excited about what we are doing with the north-east link. We know, whether it is Rosanna Road, Lower Plenty Road, Fitzsimons Lane, they are all excited.

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is required to tell the truth. In the east they are not excited. They are very upset about the fact that Warrigal Road has been blocked for nine months, because this minister will not do anything to fix Warrigal Road and get the traffic moving so more of us can actually get around.

The SPEAKER — There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (11:55) — Order! The member for Burwood can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour. I have asked the member for Burwood to leave —

Mr Watt interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Burwood can come back into the chamber. I have gone to the trouble of warning members of this house today that when they are to leave the chamber they are to do so in silence and without gesturing. The member for Burwood has defied that ruling. I ask the member for Burwood to apologise without qualification.

Mr Watt — I apologise.

Honourable member for Burwood withdrew from chamber.

Mr DONNELLAN — I can tell you that there was excitement in the east, and we saw from that how excited they are in the east with the work that we are doing on our duplications. But I think there is only one table around which people are a little bit sad, and that is the table in Ventnor, because they are sad about the principles, the honesty of their local members, the former members for Bass and Pakenham, and obviously the current member for Bulleen.

Ms McLeish — On a point of order, Speaker, three months ago I directed a question to the Minister for Education which to date has been ignored. I do not think that the community at Toolangi Primary School should be ignored by this minister — just because they are a small rural school does not mean he should ignore them. They do need a flagpole and they need to know how they can get one so they can fly the Australian flag. I ask for the third time that you ask the minister to respond to my request.

The SPEAKER — Was it a constituency question or a question on notice?

Ms McLeish — A constituency question.

Ms Thorpe — On a point of order, Speaker, on 21 June I asked the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to act to protect my people's sacred gums via an adjournment matter. This is question 14 623, and it is overdue. On 26 July I asked a series of questions on notice to the Minister for Corrections. These are questions 14 685 to 14 695, and these are also now overdue.

The SPEAKER — I thank the member for Northcote for that point of order. We will follow those matters up.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Bayswater electorate

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) (11:58) — (14 921) My constituency question is to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. Minister, when will you decide on the intended future use of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) property located at 46 Ozone Road, Bayswater. My constituents have had to endure a relentless onslaught of antisocial behaviour and illegal activity by previous residents at this property, and the police attend the property on a very regular basis. Those young miscreants have now been moved on and the property is currently vacant, giving local residents some well-deserved respite after years of torment. However, my constituents tell me that maintenance works at the property have commenced, including fencing, which has caused serious concern that the property is intended to house potential troublemakers again in the near future. DHHS have previously stated they would consult with the neighbours before any further use is planned, but this has not happened. The hardworking, taxpaying residents of Ozone Road would like to know when they can expect answers about this property and their neighbourhood.

Yuroke electorate

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) (11:59) — (14 922) My constituency question is to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. What information can the minister provide on how the Andrews Labor government has supported multicultural groups in my electorate over the past four years? As the minister knows, the Yuroke electorate is a very diverse community — indeed 51 per cent of Yuroke residents speak a language other than English at home, almost double the Victorian-wide average of 28 per cent. There has been a significant number of grants awarded to many outstanding local multicultural organisations this term, and any information the minister can provide on the total of this investment would be greatly appreciated.

Gippsland South electorate

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (11:59) — (14 923) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport, and the question I ask is for the minister to rule out any plans to terminate Gippsland trains at Clayton or Pakenham under the proposed new Suburban Rail Loop that she was just talking about in question time. It has been trumpeted that this rail loop ring around Melbourne will include regional super-hubs, including one at Clayton for Gippsland trains. Gippslanders are very anxious that this does not mean that Gippsland trains will be terminated at Clayton. We know that the bureaucracy has tried in the past to terminate Gippsland trains at Pakenham, and Gippslanders are also angry that the government is pushing ahead this \$50 billion-plus project without spending a cent to address congestion. I mention a tweet of just a few hours ago:

Southern Cross–Bairnsdale is delayed by approximately 17 minutes due to the late arrival of a previous service and congestion on tracks shared with Metro Trains at Berwick.

The government need to fix that issue and rule out terminating Gippsland lines at Clayton.

Carrum electorate

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (12:00) — (14 924) My constituency question is for the Minister for Training and Skills in the other place. Minister, what TAFE courses are free, and how can people in my electorate find out more about our Free TAFE initiative? Earlier this year we announced the Andrews government's \$172 million Free TAFE initiative as part of a \$644 million package to strengthen TAFE and apprenticeships, and provide 30 000 additional government-subsidised training places to deliver skilled

workers for Victoria's growth industries and infrastructure projects, and to meet social needs. It is a real contrast to four years ago when the previous Liberal government tried everything to destroy TAFE and ruin the opportunities for so many young people in my electorate. We are not only saving TAFE but making it more accessible to everyday Victorians. In my electorate of Carrum we have already seen a great response to this initiative from young people as well as workers wanting to upskill or change direction. Minister, how can my constituents find out more information about the courses offered under the Free TAFE initiative?

Ringwood electorate

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) (12:01) — (14 925) My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport. Why is there no seating and shelter at bay 4 at Mitcham train station and bus interchange for the 738 bus? This bus goes to Knox, and many disabled and elderly people choose to travel to Knox from Mitcham station. They are forced to go to other shelters and other areas to get out of the rain or even to have a seat, which means they have got to rush and they find it very difficult to get to the bus that they need to take. I ask on behalf of my constituents what the reason is or why in fact there is no shelter or bus seat there.

Macedon electorate

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) (12:02) — (14 926) My question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. In this year's budget the Andrews Labor government committed \$70 000 to construct a new school crossing on Chauncey Street in Lancefield for the students of St Mary's Primary School. Minister, can you advise when works will commence on this important project? St Mary's Primary School principal Julie McDougall, the school council and the local community ran a terrific campaign to help bring this idea to life. The safety of local children travelling to and from school is paramount, and I look forward to your response.

Northcote electorate

Ms THORPE (Northcote) (12:03) — (14 927) My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport. Will the minister commit to a proper needs assessment of the bus services required for people travelling from the inner north across the Chandler Highway bridge to the eastern suburbs and to quickly fulfil any recommendations of that assessment? With the Chandler Highway bridge upgrade due for completion in the coming months, it is timely that public transport options are provided along this route.

Many residents in my electorate of Northcote feel that areas of east Thornbury and Fairfield are not well serviced by public transport. Buses do not connect with trains and are very irregular. Many people across my electorate have children going to high school in Kew and Hawthorn, with few public transport options to get them there. We need tailored and express services to help people get out of cars and quickly get to where they need to go.

Sunbury electorate

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) (12:03) — (14 928) My question is for the Minister for Sport. Minister, what is the latest information on applications from the Rupertswood Cricket Club and Sunbury School of Calisthenics to the Andrews Labor government's 2018–19 sporting club grants program? Such grants provide clubs with up to \$1000 for new uniforms and equipment, up to \$2000 for training, coaches, officials and volunteers and up to \$5000 to improve operational effectiveness. The sporting club grants program is part of the Labor government's commitment to make sport more accessible and inclusive, increase local participation, stimulate local economies, build sustainable sport and recreation and promote volunteer opportunities. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Rupertswood Cricket Club and Sunbury School of Calisthenics, along with all of my fantastic local sporting clubs. Sport is a great way of participating in your local community. I ask the minister for an update on those applications.

Eildon electorate

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (12:04) — (14 929) My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and is raised on behalf of constituents who drive along the Melba Highway on a regular basis. Between Yarra Glen and Lilydale, motorists drive over two old and unique bridges that cross Stringybark Creek at Yering. Minister, can you verify that these bridges are of a sufficient width to allow traffic to pass safely? Common opinion is that they are not and that they would not meet minimum standards. Many constituents have contacted me because they are concerned that these bridges are too narrow and not in line with usual expectations for modern and safe roads. The Melba Highway is a significant north–south route carrying many large and heavy vehicles, such as B-doubles, semitrailers, coaches, commercial vans, cars towing horse floats and caravans, as well as passenger vehicles. My constituents want an assurance from the government that VicRoads is monitoring the conditions on these bridges in line with the increased volume and the increasing size of vehicles.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) (12:05) — (14 930) My constituency question is for the Minister for Education, and the question I ask is: what funding is available to upgrade Glenroy College? This is a fabulous school in the north of my electorate, and it is certainly representative of the diverse community I am very pleased to call home. It is a very multicultural school; it is a school where students come from a wide range of backgrounds. It is a school, though, that is very much in need of some infrastructure upgrades. It has not had much work done to it, over and above standard maintenance work, for a very long time. There is a strong need to upgrade the library, the computer resource centre, the administration facilities and even the toilets. There is certainly a lot that can be done at the school, so I am very interested to know what funding sources might be available. It is a great school. It has got great students and great teachers. It just needs a little bit of help with its infrastructure.

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BETTER ROADS VICTORIA AND OTHER AMENDMENTS) BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:07) — Before we interrupted government business for the mandatory question time, I was making my contribution on the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. I had taken the best part of my contribution to just outline the purposes of the bill, the main provisions and the key details of the proposal. I was talking about some concerns that were raised in our consultation. Just before I paused my contribution, I was acknowledging rural and regional communities and the intention of the bill to guarantee that 33 per cent of the Better Roads Victoria funding is specifically provided to rural and regional communities and that the bill guarantees the allocation of a minimum of 33 per cent of Better Roads Victoria funding to outer suburban and interface communities.

Some stakeholders have written to me and provided some feedback, and I want to use the balance of my contribution just to put on record some of their concerns. As I said, we had a bill briefing. We got some feedback from key stakeholders and industry groups, so we sought some clarification from the minister's office around those issues. I do acknowledge that we did get a

response back from the minister's office on Monday morning, but I wish to put on record some of the matters raised with us for the minister to consider in detail and respond to the feedback and concerns listed. We did seek to clarify a few things to help us with our assessment. There are only a couple of dot points here that I will mention.

Regarding Better Roads Victoria, the question was asked: has the government accounted for the likelihood of less revenue from speeding fines, traffic camera offences et cetera coming in as more automated vehicles come online? I will come back and talk briefly about that. I note that there will be the compulsory payment of an amount equivalent to the revenue from all of those traffic cameras and on-the-spot speeding fines into the Better Roads Victoria trust account. It was pointed out to us that Mitchell shire has been, inadvertently perhaps, left out of column 1 of the schedule 1 table on page 7 of the bill. The urban growth boundary extends into the Shire of Mitchell, and developers are planning and building new subdivisions, so it is clearly an outer suburban council in terms of its infrastructure needs but with rural standard infrastructure. That was raised.

We had a couple of concerns with regard to shifting full administration of interlocks to VicRoads, specifically that there is a view held by some that transferring responsibility to VicRoads removes the opportunity to interact with an offender on an individual basis, discuss and identify issues of concern and map out a pathway for change, including further treatment, counselling, behavioural change interventions et cetera that can provide the court with the opportunity to make an informed decision on the likelihood of a reoffence by a drink-driver. All of this obviously falls outside of VicRoads's jurisdiction or job scope as we would traditionally view it.

There is the general reduction in deterrence for reoffenders given the removal of the psychological impact associated with going through the court system and facing a magistrate. I took the time to outline that in the earlier part of my contribution prior to question time. There is also the perception that VicRoads would be more focused on basic aspects associated with the interlock administration and revenue raising rather than genuine drink-driving deterrence. Those matters were raised, and I do take the opportunity to put them on record.

I did receive a number of comments that I will just put on record again so the minister can consider those in detail. A gentleman wrote to me having just become aware of further legislation currently before the

Parliament in regards to interlock removal assessments. He maintains that:

VicRoads propose to further soften and weaken current procedures under DHHS, of mandatory assessment and court order for interlock removals.

Under these proposed changes, most future offenders will not be identified and the extent of their substance misuse or abuse will not be assessed. The purpose of the current individual assessment process is to provide the magistrate with a clear understanding of the client's likelihood of reoffending.

The gentleman went on to say:

More importantly, it offers a front-line opportunity to interact with an offender on an individual basis and discuss and identify issues of concern and map out a pathway for change including further treatment, counselling, behavioural change interventions, liver function tests, urine tests that can provide the court with the opportunity to make an informed decision on the likelihood of a re-offence.

Laws governing such concerns such as licence eligibility reports, interlock removal assessment reports and court order granting interlock removal will be repealed.

The gentleman went on to comment that:

A shift from a Magistrate Court process to a VicRoads-administered process removes an essential psychological impact on the participant for behaviour change. Appearing before a court is a psychologically stressful for drink and drug drivers, increases the psychological impact of the offence and in my view is an essential component in reducing recidivism.

A VicRoads-administered process is seen as more about revenue raising.

A VicRoads-administered interlock program purely based on compliance lacks intervention.

He maintains that:

VicRoads, unlike DHHS, are not concerned about drugs and alcohol abuse in society. They have often stated that they are not concerned about people taking drugs and binge drinking but more about separation from driving.

They have stated that this is a role for DHHS and not VicRoads.

In a current environment of a massive increase of drug use such as 'ice', it would be regarded as a missed early intervention opportunity not to assess people for suitability for treatment.

In light of these outcomes, there are concerns coming, especially from families affected by substance abuse, whether VicRoads should be the responsible authority in these matters.

I will not go through all the detail of this gentleman's email, but I will just say that he was extremely concerned. He concludes:

The population is continuing to expand and the issue of drink and drug driving is not going to go away. It's a serious matter affecting the safety of all of us as drivers. In my view it's too important to be left solely to the whims of a large powerful bureaucracy such as VicRoads, but should continue to be subject to the checks and balances provided by the legal system.

They were the concerns raised by that gentleman. I have put them on record. Again, as I said, the minister can consider those in detail and provide clarification or review and adopt, where necessary, anything in relation to this bill.

Finally, there is some feedback about the guarantee of long-term road infrastructure funding. The concern was that in the long term with increasing levels of vehicle automation the state could expect to receive less revenue from speeding fines and traffic camera offences as the driving task becomes increasingly automated. Vehicles will be programmed not to speed, and as they increase in number vehicles around them will have no choice but to follow the same speed if there is no opportunity to pass. A sunset clause or a sunset date was suggested for the proportions of 33 per cent outer suburban and 33 per cent country, and a legislative requirement to conduct some sort of independent review to identify the likely level of required funding for the next period would be a useful safeguard. This may also be useful if the fine revenue does decrease; 33 per cent of a smaller pool of revenue may not address needs in part of the network.

It is for these reasons that I wish to move a reasoned amendment to the second-reading question, and I will have that circulated. I move:

That all the words after 'That' be omitted with the view of inserting in their place the words 'this bill be withdrawn and redrafted to provide for an increase in the guaranteed level of funding for rural, regional, outer suburban and interface communities from Better Roads Victoria funding and to ensure that such funding is not reduced over time by a reduction in the total funding pool.

It is our view that those percentages of 33 per cent for regional and rural communities and 33 per cent for outer suburban and interface communities should be perhaps more at the level of 40 per cent each. The bill should guarantee the allocation of a minimum of 40 per cent of Better Roads Victoria funding to rural and regional communities, and the bill should guarantee the allocation of a minimum of 40 per cent of Better Roads Victoria funding to outer suburban and interface communities.

I highlighted earlier my concerns about the state of our regional and rural Victorian roads. For that reason I move this reasoned amendment and ask that the bill be

withdrawn and redrafted and for there to be a sunset date so that some sort of independent review can be undertaken. I move that reasoned amendment and would urge the minister to consider it and adopt it.

We want further funding for our rural and regional community roads. We want further funding for our outer suburban and interface communities. I mentioned before that I served on that committee. I live on the outskirts of Melbourne and have part of the Yarra Ranges in my electorate, which I have mentioned previously, albeit the urban end. But I am acutely familiar, having travelled many roads up into Warburton and the Upper Yarra and beyond, with the state of a lot of our roads.

I have been, as I said, to the west, and to the south-west of the state with the member for South-West Coast. I have had the opportunity to meet with drivers, freight route drivers and people travelling to the port of Portland, and to experience the condition of the roads down there. I have raised that concern in relation to contract management that often these roads are fixed and then within a short period of time, whether it be weeks or indeed a couple of months, there seems to be a contractor back undertaking exactly the same repair and maintenance works. There does not seem to be enough funding for our rural and regional roads.

As I said, on this side of the house we have a large number of members wishing to speak on this bill, and I am sure they will highlight some of their own examples of the poor condition of the roads in their electorates or regions. Of course people constantly raise this matter with us.

For those reasons I urge the government to support the reasoned amendment to the second reading, look to increase those percentages to guarantee a minimum of 40 per cent for rural and regional communities and a minimum of 40 per cent for outer suburban interface communities, look at the very real issue raised by industry and stakeholders about the need for a sunset date for the proportions and look at legislative requirements to conduct some sort of independent review to identify the likely level of required funding for the next period. That would be a worthwhile safeguard. We do not know what is going to happen with automotive vehicles. We do not know what the level of camera fines and on-the-spot fines will be, and of course the need for continued asset monitoring and maintenance of our rural and regional roads, our outer suburban council roads and indeed our metropolitan roads is going to be an ongoing issue for the state government of the day.

I urge the government to give serious consideration to the reasoned amendment and certainly to the other issues that I have put on the record from stakeholder and industry feedback in relation to the bill. I ask the minister to consider those matters in detail and to clarify and respond, or even to adopt it as part of the bill. We support getting good legislation through this house and good outcomes, and it is for that reason that I have moved this reasoned amendment. I think it will mean a better bill and it will be better for our roads across Victoria. I urge the minister and the government to give serious consideration to the reasoned amendment.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) (12:19) — It is my pleasure to rise in support of the Transport Legislation (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. Before I get to the substance of the bill, especially in light of the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, it is worthwhile going through some of the background to this legislation. It was briefly touched on, but I think it goes to the achievements of this government in the roads space and perhaps counters to some extent any concerns or allegations about any kind of underfunding in roads, because I think quite to the contrary we have shown an enormous commitment to the upgrade and renewal of roads. In fact that commitment goes beyond what we originally committed to, and I want to talk to that.

Labor's 2014 transport plan was called Project 10 000, as many will be aware. It committed \$1 billion over eight years to repair and upgrade roads across Melbourne's outer suburbs, and another \$1 billion to repair and upgrade roads and level crossings in country Victoria.

As I said, this government has exceeded its commitment to allocate that \$2 billion over eight years to outer suburban and regional roads in only four years. We have now allocated \$3.035 billion, I am reliably informed: \$1.917 billion for outer suburban and interface communities, and another \$1.118 billion for rural and regional communities. It is a significant investment and something that I know all of us on this side are very proud of, so I cannot help but feel that it is somewhat hollow for the other side to be beating a drum about a level of investment that they certainly would never have met and that we have a proven track record on. Long may that continue, and long will it.

I should also add that this locked-in investment that I have just referred to is actually on top of the Labor government's massive program of major road projects, including the West Gate tunnel, north-east link and the \$4 billion suburban roads upgrade, as well as upgrades

to the Tullamarine Freeway, the Monash Freeway and the M80 ring-road.

As somebody who also represents an outer suburban electorate I can say very proudly that there are a number of road projects that have been committed to or are currently underway — indeed some even completed — that have meant an enormous amount to the communities travelling in from the south-east. They include, of course, the Monash widening, the first stage of which was finished early and under budget, which allowed us to fast track work for stage 2. I have lost count of the number of constituents who have raised with me how great that has been for their commute times and how it has been absolutely vital in keeping traffic moving down the Monash, particularly in those busy peak times.

We have also committed out in the south-east to the Remington Drive bridge and the connection to Pound Road West. This is a project that has been called for by industry in particular for decades, because it will essentially free up traffic flow in an industrial precinct which is growing, which has an enormous amount of heavy traffic travelling through it and which has an enormous number of workers travelling through it. That new connection, which will be delivered within five years — it has already been funded in the last budget — will go a long way to improving the productivity of those businesses in Dandenong South but also improving the commute times for workers, particularly those that are travelling into Dandenong from the surrounding areas, in particular from Casey and Cardinia.

I know that it is also a project of extreme importance to my neighbours in Cranbourne who travel in quite significant numbers down that way and into the industrial precinct each and every day. These sorts of road projects make a meaningful difference to the lives of so many Victorians. We know we spend most of our lives at work, but significantly we also spend a lot of time travelling to and from work. So if we can reduce that time, we are making a meaningful and positive difference to the lives of Victorians, and that is what this road projects are all about.

I also want to refer to a couple of other projects that are not in the electorate of Dandenong but which are certainly important for our region. I will mention just a couple, and there are many I could refer to. Lathams Road in Carrum Downs is an extremely important project for my colleague the member for Carrum — and I believe she has spoken about that in this place before — and the Narre Warren-Cranbourne Road in Cranbourne as well. Of course that is in addition to all

the level crossing removals, which have also had a meaningful and enormous impact on traffic through the region. I wanted to highlight that background as a way of demonstrating that this government's record on delivering road commitments is second to none. It will continue, and any posturing by those on the other side is just that — it is political posturing. It does not have any basis in fact.

I now turn to the substance of the bill that is before us. The bill has three overall objectives. The first is to implement the government's commitment as part of Project 10 000 to develop legislation for the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account; secondly, to reduce the burden on the courts and free up court resources by transferring responsibility for managing alcohol interlocks from the courts to VicRoads; and thirdly, to improve efficiency, effectiveness and operation of transport legislation by making miscellaneous and minor and technical amendments along the way.

I want to speak in the first instance about the alcohol interlocks amendments. I know that I am not going to have an opportunity to speak to all parts of this bill, and I may only get a chance to speak on this one, so I want to prioritise it. We are reducing the burden on courts by transferring responsibility for managing alcohol interlocks from the courts to VicRoads for the majority of drink-driving cases. This will free up court resources to respond more effectively and efficiently to other matters. Those of us who have a legal background will know how important it is that we are using our court resources in the most efficient way possible.

Recommendation 62 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence recommended that the Victorian government enact legislation and take other steps as necessary to support the capacity of the Magistrates Court to grant family violence intervention orders speedily and with due regard to the interests of justice and the safety of affected family members. The current workload of processing about 5000 applications per year for the removal of alcohol interlock conditions from the drivers licences and learner permits of drink-driving offenders is a huge impost and therefore acts against us being able to act effectively on those very, very important recommendations coming out of the family violence royal commission.

I think it makes sense that we would seek to minimise the impact of somewhat administrative Magistrates Court responsibilities so that greater attention can be given to some of those more pressing issues that arise, particularly in family violence cases that lead sometimes to disastrous outcomes for so many Victorians. If an offender meets the criteria, the

condition will be removed from the offender's drivers licence or permit, and if the mandatory criteria are not met, the alcohol interlock condition must be extended for a further five months, and that five months starts from the month that follows the last violation. More serious offences involving drink-driving, such as drink-driving that has led to charges of manslaughter, culpable driving, police pursuits and endangering emergency service workers or custodial officers, will still be required to be managed by the courts, which makes sense. Those more serious matters quite rightly should sit within our court structure.

For drink-driving offences that were committed before alcohol interlock conditions became mandatory, offenders will be required to apply to VicRoads and have their licence reinstated instead of going to court, so you can see the very clear delineation in that comparison between those that would be most appropriate to appear before a court and those that would be most appropriately dealt with by VicRoads. VicRoads has an established team experienced in working with drink-drivers and assisting offenders to meet the requirements associated with their conviction, and that of course has been influential in this bill's proposal that VicRoads should expand its operations to manage those drink-drivers currently processed through the Magistrates Court.

I am very conscious of my time, so before trying to embark on a quick summary of any other parts of the bill, I will say that this bill is yet another piece of legislation that demonstrates this government's commitment to roads and road safety, to infrastructure investment and to better outcomes for all Victorians.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (12:30) — I am very happy to speak on the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. Roads is by far the biggest issue in my electorate. Lowan is the largest electorate in the state, representing about one-sixth of the state of Victoria. We have extensive road networks. We have an extremely poor public transport system. We do not have any rail services in our part of the state. We have some connections with coaches, but not enough to help our people to get from A to B just using the public transport system. We heavily rely on our local roads, our state roads and our federal roads. We need our roads to get to work safely. We need to be able to get our children to football and netball training and to school. We need to be able to use our roads to move around the fantastic amount of freight that we produce in our region. There is our grains production, and we have a lot of stock movements for our sheep and our cattle.

We rely heavily on having a very good quality road network. Therefore I was of course quite excited to see that we had legislation coming through the Parliament, the title of which would indicate that finally we might get a better deal for roads in country Victoria and particularly in the electorate of Lowan. There are elements of this bill which I will refer to early on, and then I would like to get down to the details around the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account and also of course the reasoned amendment that my colleague the member for Croydon has put forward today.

There are a number of administrative changes that this legislation will put into place, particularly provisions around giving greater responsibility for the administration of alcohol interlock devices to VicRoads, taking pressure off court resources. This sounds like a very good idea to me; however, we do need to make sure VicRoads is properly equipped and able to deliver on that work. My office receives complaints about the ability of VicRoads to deal with the demands already upon them, so we need to ensure that appropriate support is there so that there is not diminished service, particularly when we are talking about alcohol interlock devices. It is important that people who have been ordered to use these devices are able to get these devices checked quickly and put on quickly, and of course they need to be evaluated, removed and assessed at that point in time as well, so we do need to make sure that VicRoads can manage that.

The bill proposes minor amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Application Act 2013, the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act 2017, the Transport Integration Act 2010 and the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 to reduce red tape and streamline transport authority activities. The bill also amends the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act 1979 in relation to the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account.

I would like now to go into further detail around the roads issues in my part of the state. As I referred to earlier in my contribution, roads are the only way many of my constituents can get from A to B. It is the way that they get to medical appointments, do their shopping, get to work and attend their sporting events. Whatever it may be, we rely on our roads. Unfortunately over the past four years our roads have gone into an almost dangerous state. A comment that is put to me quite frequently is that we need cars to be roadworthy, but why are our roads not car worthy? This is something I know the Victorian Farmers Federation have pushed very, very hard through their president, David Jochinke, who is a constituent of mine in the Lowan electorate. He knows all too well how

dangerous it is to have crumbling roads — roads that are riddled with potholes and have crumbling edges.

When we see some safety improvements to our roads, they are not focused on improving our road surfaces but instead are put forward as safety initiatives which are actually making our roads more dangerous. I refer specifically to the recent flood of installations of rumble strips on roads in areas of my electorate which simply are not wide enough to be able to cope with the increased transport width that is required when you put a rumble strip up the centre of the road. The edges are crumbling, and it is just plain dangerous.

On the Borung Highway between Dimboola and Warracknabeal we have had many, many complaints from constituents who are deeply concerned that for trucks that are travelling up the road they have the awful choice of either having to straddle the rumble strip while driving up the centre of the highway, putting their tyre into either the potholes or the crumbling edges on the sides of the road, risking putting their load off balance and having a horrific accident themselves, or of course driving along the rumble strips, which can actually lift the rumble strips. We have had reports of rumble strips lifting from the centre of the road and flying up, and people have witnessed that. Fortunately they have not hit a motorcyclist or another vehicle and created vehicle damage, but I imagine that would be a horrific outcome if they did.

Last week I did my mobile office visit to the west of the state and visited the community of Goroke, and at Goroke we heard a number of concerns from residents about rumble strips which had been installed on the road to the east of the Goroke community. I drove over that road and was absolutely appalled and frightened for my own safety. Basically one whole side of the road was all potholes. It had been entirely ripped up. There are these rumble strips up the middle that are supposed to make the road safe, but at the end of the day if your road surface is falling apart you have got drop-offs and a dangerous road surface. If we have got rumble strips, it is not going to make the road safe. We need to get that fixed.

I also had complaints about the Henty Highway between Horsham and Warracknabeal. All of these roads carry a lot of heavily laden trucks and B-doubles. They carry school buses and schoolchildren. They carry people who are just getting about and doing their daily business. They carry people who are going to work. It is just simply not good enough that Labor has allowed our road network to fall apart so devastatingly, putting local lives at risk.

Labor scrapped the country roads and bridges program, which put an enormous amount of support and assistance into local government so that they could maintain their local roads. We, the Liberals and Nationals, have committed that we will bring back the Country Roads and Bridges Fund, and I can tell you that has had overwhelming support from my local councils. They know now that they would have a fund that they could rely on and they could help to get their local roads back up to scratch.

We also saw from Labor as soon as they came into government the scrapping of hundreds of millions of dollars — cuts of hundreds of millions of dollars — out of the road asset management budget. These are the funds that VicRoads uses to keep our roads up to scratch, so it is no surprise that we are seeing roads falling apart, that we are seeing more and more potholes and that we are seeing roads simply not being fixed. Perhaps a reduced speed limit sign is put up every so often to avert responsibility under the Road Management Act 2004. VicRoads is no longer liable for damage on those roads if there is a reduced speed limit sign.

We have seen terrible quality of workmanship whereby checks are not being undertaken on roads when works have been put in place along with extensive patching rather than rebuilding, because VicRoads simply does not have the money that it needs to keep our roads safe. This is something that I have spoken about on so many occasions. I have spoken to people in my electorate, and it is still the number one issue for people within the Western District and Wimmera communities. It is something I have spoken about with the minister. I have raised it in Parliament on so many occasions. The media have run the issue so many times, but unfortunately Labor just will not listen. Even if they put forward legislation such as this to say that they are going to have this new entity, Better Roads Victoria, that is going to make all the difference, we know deep down that that does not have the money associated with it that is going to make a big difference.

There is a good change in here. I will refer to it — and I think most people would have thought that this was happening already — that is, that any road infringements will be redirected into a Better Roads Victoria trust account. A third of that will go to rural and regional roads, a third to interface council areas and then a third for the minister to do as he wishes. The reasoned amendment is something that I strongly support because it is about evaluating how we are going to share those funds around. I strongly believe there should be greater consideration and greater due diligence done in terms of providing more of that

revenue into these rural and regional roads that are absolutely falling apart, impacting on our productivity.

I have got another truck driver, John Wyld of Tarrayoukyan, who reported to me last week that he has had to drive his truck much more slowly than the 100 kilometres an hour on Dunkeld-Cavendish Road because it is simply not safe. We need to fix our country roads and save country lives.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (12:40) — The Andrews Labor government is delivering on its promise to guarantee that all revenue from traffic cameras and on-the-spot speeding fines will be used to fix suburban and country roads. The legislation through the Better Roads Victoria fund is to receive on-the-spot, speeding and traffic camera revenue, putting money from fines back into community and regional roads.

Under the new laws outer suburban and country Victorian roads would each receive a minimum of 33 per cent of the Better Roads Victoria fund, ensuring that those who drive the most will get better and safer roads. The other 34 per cent will still be allocated to vital road projects. So the 33-33-34 split is just the minimum amounts. It simply allows there to be some flexibility. The fixed minimum proportions are to be met over consecutive four-year periods, as I am advised. The structure allows for there to be flexibility in how Better Roads Victoria funds are allocated while also ensuring guaranteed road funds to Victorian communities.

The strategy behind this approach is that it helps with what is described as the ‘lumpy’ nature of capital projects whereby investments may be higher in some years and lower in others. This level of flexibility is needed to respond to emerging needs and future pressures. The state may need to respond quickly — for example, to unforeseen needs such as after a flood in a regional community. Other emerging needs may relate to changing population growth patterns, and that is particularly important in outer suburban areas and is something that I have studied for some time. In the last Parliament I was on the parliamentary committee that looked into these issues, and I have pursued them obviously with the growth through Melbourne’s north and Melbourne’s west. You will see that is part of the reason why I am pursuing a city deal for these two areas. They will both have populations larger than Adelaide. The west is proposed to have that population growth in five years and the north in 13 years, so that is how significant it is and that is why the flexibility is required.

It appears that those opposite have looked at this bill and focused on minimum spend. The government is merely setting that minimum while actually spending far more. That is the critical point of what has happened under this government. The Andrews Labor government has exceeded the commitment to allocate \$2 billion over eight years on outer suburban and regional roads, with a total of more than \$3 billion allocated so far. This includes almost \$2 billion for outer suburban and interface communities and \$1.118 billion for rural and regional communities, so I hope that addresses the issue of the reasoned amendment and the Victorian government’s strategy for how to address these issues. I would like to acknowledge the Minister for Roads and Road Safety for all the hard work that has gone into delivering on these commitments. That is the strategy. That is how we deal with issues as they arise and also how we deal with the strategy to address population growth.

As the member for Broadmeadows I have been delighted with the expansion of the Tullamarine Freeway. The widening there has been incredibly important for those going into Melbourne’s north, for better productivity, for better time to get to the airport and to major businesses and for getting home safely. I just want to put that on the record along with my appreciation to the government and the minister in particular for delivering on those projects.

If we also have a look at some other details of the bill, the bill delivers on the Project 10 000 commitment to provide better roads for more communities. It effectively hypothecates the traffic camera and on-the-spot speeding fine revenue and, as I say, guarantees the minimum proportion. It also addresses some other issues in relation to alcohol interlocks and other amendments here.

The bill will reduce the burden on courts by transferring responsibility for managing alcohol interlocks from the courts to VicRoads for the majority of drink-driving cases. This has a flow-on effect as well. It will help free up court resources to enable courts to respond to other matters. More serious offences involving drink-driving such as manslaughter, culpable driving, police pursuits and endangering emergency services workers or custodial officers will still be required to be managed by the court, so that is the separation of responsibilities there.

For drink-driving offences which were committed before alcohol interlock conditions became mandatory, offenders will be required to apply to VicRoads to have their licence reinstated instead of going to court. Again that is another administrative amendment that I

think should free up the courts. Further amendments to road and road safety legislation are applying mandatory minimum alcohol interlock conditions for serious driving offences where alcohol consumption and use is determined to be a factor, removing any doubt that a person driving a vehicle who is directed to stop must remain stopped until the police officer indicates that they may proceed. That covers off any potential getaways.

The bill revokes the driver education program, which has been replaced with a new mandatory behaviour change program for all drink-driving and drug-driving offenders. This is part of a long history in the state of Victoria of how to address drink-driving. Going all the way back to campaigns probably in the 1970s, the 1034 campaign was run to try and turn around blood alcohol levels. Victoria was the first place in the world to introduce mandatory seat belts. There has been a long, proud history within this state, and it has been bipartisan, of addressing critical issues on safety and particularly road safety. I know for a fact we are internationally acclaimed for our ability to address these social change issues on a number of fronts, and this bill adds to that legacy.

The bill contains amendments that streamline land transactions by enabling VicTrack to transfer interest in land to VicRoads for nominal consideration and by removing the requirement for the Treasurer to approve all VicTrack land transactions. The bill approves an over-dimensional vehicle crossing-tracks scheme and reduces red tape by removing requirements, which is another proposition that will help streamline that system. We have got clarifying propositions for train drivers in situations where a train is involved in a fatal accident and they are the supervising driver in the cabin. The bill also transfers the responsibility for determining conditions of travel on public transport from the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

There are a number of administrative measures that are part of the bill as well. They go again to how the government addresses strategically the big picture issues — how we put down the strategy to get people home safely and to get better roads right through country areas as well as suburban areas, how we build for growth and anticipate growth, how we have flexibility for seasonal issues such as flooding and how we then get the distribution right.

Most importantly, the Andrews Labor government has overdelivered on these issues. This is a constant theme that I have heard from community groups and even business groups. They have been delighted with the

strategic approach that the Andrews Labor government has taken. That is the feedback that I received at a major business lunch with the Committee for Economic Development of Australia recently when the Premier spoke, marking the 100th day till the Victorian election. They are delighted that we are overdelivering, and they are also encouraging us to keep the momentum going. They want to build on momentum. They see what this government is actually doing on these big picture issues. We are driving a AAA-rated economy. Here are the benefits from it and here is the pipeline of investments. Here is how we are expanding the biggest rail and public transport infrastructure deal that Australia has ever seen, and here is how we are taking care of the roads. Here is how we are making sure that there is better safety and putting it all together with our economic vision — the plan, the delivery and then the social consequences — and trying to address these and again be world leaders in this part of evolving this economy and society. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (12:50) — I rise to speak on behalf of the Greens to the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. This bill covers a range of areas, primarily looking at the funding of roads, particularly in rural and suburban interface areas. There are some changes to how interlock devices are administered and a number of other administrative and technical amendments that I will address.

I will focus on the roads funding part of it first. Essentially we have got an existing Better Roads Victoria trust account that is used for road funding. This bill will formalise that payments going into that account will be fines from speed cameras and, I believe, other road offences. This bill will add some additional specifications as to where those funds go. There is a section in there providing that funds must be used for the repair and upgrade of roads in outer suburban interface communities, roads and level crossings in rural and regional Victoria and roads and level crossings in metropolitan areas in Victoria. There is an additional requirement on what percentage of those funds need to be spent on both rural and regional roads and interface and outer suburban roads, which has been given as 33 per cent for each, with the balance, I think, to be at the discretion of the government. The opposition has circulated an amendment saying that that should be boosted to 40 per cent. The member for Broadmeadows has said, 'Hey look, we are overcommitting. This is not just a set figure. We are actually overcommitting to that'. But it does look like they are putting into it because perhaps this government or governments cannot trust themselves to actually spend the money required in those outer suburbs and

rural and regional Victoria, which is a bit of a shame because much of the urban growth and urban sprawl has been in outer suburbs.

It has been an ongoing issue. Governments of both sides are happy to have that urban sprawl and the increased development and population growth in those outer suburbs and interface communities, and we know they are very active in advocating for their needs; certainly I and my Greens colleagues have met with interface communities. But the infrastructure required, like roads, just has not been kept up, and that has been a problem Melbourne and Victoria-wide.

Obviously the Greens have always been very much about investing in public transport over those mega toll road projects and freeways, but we are aware that there does need to be investment in roads and we are aware of the needs of suburban and interface councils. I grew up in Frankston and drove to work in Hawthorn on the South-Eastern Freeway every day. Driving down Cranbourne Road you have got areas not just in Frankston but across Melbourne where you have got once single-lane country roads that are now supporting new housing developments or funnelling traffic onto a freeway. They are the ones that are really just ill-equipped to handle the sudden increase in traffic loads that they are facing. If governments do not feel that they are able to use their usual budget processes to allocate funding to roads on a needs basis, or if they do not trust that the other mob will do the same if they get in, then we are happy to support the provisions in this bill.

The second aspect of this bill is in relation to interlock provisions. It takes interlocks out of the hands of the courts and puts their administration into VicRoads, which I do understand will still have the ability to appeal to the courts. I think there are some serious offenders that will still remain with the courts. I think the idea of freeing up the courts from dealing with these sorts of offences is a good move. Certainly something that the Greens have generally pushed for within the justice system is freeing the courts from some of those offences that really do not need to be dealt with through the courts.

I think the member for Croydon read out either a letter or an email from someone who said perhaps the Department of Health and Human Services should be involved as part of an early intervention process for these sorts of offences, and I take that point. I thought it was a good point. But with this particular change there is a tightening of when an interlock is applied — the regime is being expanded to include offences of dangerous driving, fleeing a police pursuit or theft of a

vehicle when under the influence of alcohol, which I think is fair enough. Under this change a first motor vehicle offence where the offence was committed under the influence of alcohol will now require the driver to be subject to a mandatory alcohol interlock condition for a period of no less than six months.

There are a range of other technical and administrative amendments that we are supportive of, although one that did grab my eye was the requirement that the Treasurer no longer has to sign off on VicTrack selling, developing or disposing of land. The government says that this will avoid unnecessary administration costs for the state and reduce the potential for delays. That power will now remain only with the minister. I know that this government does like to sell things off — they have got a very aggressive privatisation agenda; probably the most aggressive privatisation agenda since Jeff Kennett — but I do think that perhaps the Treasurer should have or might want to have a say and that there should be some extra oversight into selling public land, so I will await some further justification from the government on that particular matter. Maybe we will look to amend that in the other place.

Given that this bill does address various aspects of transport governance, I did want to address a bit more generally transport governance in this state. I have noticed that there have been reforms over the term of this government in terms of transport governance. We have had the creation of Transport for Victoria, but I still think Victoria is probably falling a bit short of best practice in what we have got for transport governance. If you look at the model of Transport for London where there is a single super-agency instead of having separate statutory authorities — as in the Victorian case where you have still got VicRoads and Public Transport Victoria — you have now got the roads, public transport and all of those areas operating as units sitting within the one single organisation. They have also got a far more transparent and open process in terms of what they are doing and how they make decisions, with several boards covering across several issues. I think they have public meetings, or at least the minutes are put online. It is a very much more transparent process and it is still a process that takes a more holistic view of transport in the state. Whilst this reform is being made and Transport for Victoria are obviously doing some planning across all transport in the state, I think we would still be better served with the one single agency to cover planning the operations of transport.

I think we would be right to raise some questions, given the government's Suburban Rail Loop announcement, and I think there were a few people who did raise the fact, and rightly so, that this was done within

Development Victoria and not done through Transport for Victoria or Infrastructure Victoria. I think that is quite interesting. If we have created Infrastructure Victoria and if we have created Transport for Victoria, I think the government needs to explain what they are there for if they are not going to use them.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr HIBBINS — It is funny, you know, the member for Essendon only comes in to heckle when the Greens are speaking. Let the National Party go. Let the Liberal Party go.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr HIBBINS — It is very funny — every single time.

Mr Pearson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ward) — Order!

Mr Pearson — You think you are special. You are just a rat.

Mr HIBBINS — Diddums. So I would say, further on transport governance in this state, what we are lacking in this state is that integrated transport plan. It is good to see a big project like the Suburban Rail Loop with a long-term vision, but that is a single project. What has consistently been raised is the lack of that long-term integrated transport plan, which we last had under the Brumby government — it had a Victorian Transport Plan — and it was actually mandated under the Transport Integration Act 2010 that they brought in. Since that plan expired no government has actually met the requirements of that act by having an integrated transport plan. We have raised it a few times during the estimates process but I do not think there has been a positive response from any of the ministers or those in the department that that is something we are going to have in Victoria. I guess the concerns are particularly —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ward) — The time has come for us to have some lunch. The member for Prahran will have the call when the matter is next before the house.

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.01 p.m.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Government performance

The SPEAKER — I have accepted a statement from the member for Warrandyte proposing the following matter of public importance for discussion:

That this house condemns the Andrews Labor government for boasting about Victoria being in 'the best of times' while presiding over crippling rises in cost of living, including:

- (1) unprecedented rises in electricity costs;
- (2) record costs for natural gas;
- (3) 12 new or increased taxes; and
- (4) signing Victorian motorists up for crippling increases and extended tolls.

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) (14:01) — It is an indictment of this government, I suppose, that so much of this Parliament's time is taken up on things that are really of no interest to the people of Melbourne and things that are not important to the people of Victoria. Those opposite, who think that various censure motions and various requests for documents are the things that keep Victorians awake at night, should really get out from behind their desks, get out from behind the Labor propaganda and actually start knocking on some doors and talking to some people in their electorates.

They will find that among the things that are important to Victorians is the increasing crime wave — the crime tsunami that this state has been a victim of over the last four years, with violent crime getting worse and worse; riots in the streets with hundreds of people involved and no arrests under this soft-on-crime government; and home invasions and carjackings. These are crimes that this state simply did not hear about four years ago. These crimes have got worse and worse and worse in recent times, and this government does not seem to care. That is an issue that people in Victoria are concerned about.

Another issue people are concerned about is the congestion on our roads. Four years ago you could move around this city and the outer suburbs with a relative amount of ease. I say 'relative' in relation to how it is now, where you cannot move, the streets are choked and taking a simple 10-kilometre drive can take you half an hour or more. No longer do we have peak hour finishing at around 9.00 or 9.30; sometimes it stretches to 10.00 or 10.30. On the weekends as well you cannot get from A to B without a significant amount of hassle. The fact that this government spent \$1.3 billion to scrap a road project that would have helped free up that traffic is again an indictment of this

government, and certainly one that they will be held accountable for in November of this year.

Another issue of importance — and this one goes to the matter of public importance — is one of cost of living. The cost of living is a huge issue for people in my electorate and I am sure in electorates right around this great city and indeed to the four corners of this great state. The cost of living is an increasing burden on the people of Victoria, and it is something that the government is seeming to do nothing about. In fact, worse than doing nothing about it, they are actually contributing to the burden that Victorian households are under, and that brings me to the matter of public importance:

That this house condemns the Andrews Labor government for boasting about Victoria being in ‘the best of times’ —

I have to say I was simply shocked when I heard the Treasurer say that Victoria was living in the best of times when crime is worse than it was four years ago, when congestion is worse than it was four years ago and certainly the cost of living is worse and more of a burden, making life more difficult for Victorians than it was four years ago —

while presiding over crippling rises in cost of living, including:

- (1) unprecedented rises in electricity costs;
- (2) record costs for natural gas;
- (3) 12 new or increased taxes; and
- (4) signing Victorian motorists up for crippling increases and extended tolls.

An Ipsos survey has shown that amongst Victorians — amongst those surveyed — cost of living is now in the top three of concerns for 27 per cent of Victorians. This is up from when we left office, when it was down at 22 per cent, and it is just getting worse under this government.

In an *Age* article just this year, in April, we saw Australian Bureau of Statistics figures that:

Melbourne leads the nation in cost-of-living increases, with soaring gas and electricity prices biting into household budgets.

It is no proud thing for this state to have the highest cost of living in the country. It should be no proud thing for this government that they are worried about political mudslinging, they are worried about various shenanigans of trying to make sure that they undermine the opposition or they are refusing to accept that people are appalled by their rorting, their theft, their stealing,

their lying. They want to distract people and show them something over here — that maybe there are some difficulties over here; the opposition might be in a bit of trouble over here. Victorians understand where this government is coming from, and certainly the government, as I said, stands condemned for not looking at the things that people are actually concerned about, including the cost of living.

Further to that particular news article, there is another, which says:

Excessive power bills are crippling household budgets, and Victorians are going without food, heating and doctors visits to keep the lights on.

Is this something that the government is proud of? The government does not get up and talk about this stuff. The article continues:

One in 10 is skipping meals because of bills, while 65 per cent have been unable to go on holidays.

...

Overall, 79 per cent of Victorians felt their cost of living had gone up more in the past five years than it had before. Victorians were struggling to cope, with 60 per cent describing the cost-of-living pressure as out of control or increasing.

And just some anecdotes from that particular article:

When the latest gas bill arrived by post, Mary Boca thought she was going to have a heart attack.

‘We pay monthly and our gas bill has actually doubled in this latest one’, Mrs Boca said.

...

‘Instead of spending our usual amount on groceries we’ll have to spend \$30 for the week and keep everything to the necessities.

‘Every time we get a gas bill it looks like it’s gone a bit higher but this is the worst one yet’.

And it is these cost of living pressures that are, as I said, putting a burden on Victorian households, and with that burden comes an increasing stress on Victorian households, which can lead, unfortunately, to violence in the household and stressful situations for families and for businesses. We have brought example, after example, after example into this house during question time: businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet, businesses have gone to the wall. My honourable colleague the member for Caulfield will no doubt talk about these issues in greater depth later on during this debate, but the fact of the matter is that businesses that are the backbone of our economy, businesses that support this state’s economy and

businesses that employ simply thousands and thousands and thousands of people right across this state are under enormous pressure to the point where they are having to close the doors or put staff off, and in some cases certainly that affects families, and that is, as I said, an indictment of this government.

Before the government took office they already knew that they were going to lie to the Victorian people. We all remember — and it has been said many times in this house — that just before the election, on the night before the 2014 election, the now Premier was being interviewed on Seven News by Peter Mitchell. Peter Mitchell said:

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

The Premier said:

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

The now Premier looked down the barrel of that camera and he lied to every single Victorian. He lied to every single Victorian —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member knows the use of that word is unparliamentary.

Mr R. SMITH — Isn't it an indictment of this government that it is a worse crime to say the word 'lie' than it is to actually come in here and lie every single day? Isn't that appalling that that is the situation? Absolutely appalling!

The SPEAKER — Order! I have warned the member. It is established practice in this place. I warn —

Mr R. SMITH — All right. For the Premier I could use 'deceit'. He is deceitful. He engaged in deception. He is dishonest. He makes a distortion of the truth, an evasion of the truth, a fabrication, a falsehood, a fiction, a forgery. His inaccuracy — although that is probably not strong enough because he is more than inaccurate.

Ms Halfpenny — On a point of order, Speaker, obviously there is not enough material for the member to actually discuss the matter of public importance. I do not think all the name-calling of the Premier is relevant in this debate.

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

Mr R. SMITH — There are many other words we could use — myths, he tells tales, he tells fables, he is

false, he tells fibs, he is fraudulent, he makes inventions, he is mendacious, he tells whoppers. Let us not beat around the bush. There is a good word for this — 'lie'. Let us just call it what it is. He made that announcement down the barrel of the camera —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte will resume his seat. I have warned the member two times not to use that word. He continues to do so. If he uses it again, he will be sat down and not heard again.

Mr R. SMITH — Having made that fraudulent statement to the people of Victoria and having deceived the people of Victoria on purpose —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr R. SMITH — Anyway, let us call it what it is. Do you know what? I do not mind calling it for what it is here, because the people of Victoria know exactly what he did. He said that he was not going to increase or introduce any new taxes, and over the last four years he introduced or increased 12 new taxes. There is a new city access tax for the West Gate tunnel, he tripled brown coal royalties — and we will come back to that shortly — he introduced stamp duty on new cars and he introduced a new vacant home tax, new annual property valuations to increase land tax, a new point-of-consumption and a gambling tax. The taxes now mean that Victoria is the highest taxing state in this country. Taxes have gone up by 38 per cent. There is no state in this country that is paying more taxes.

You would think that would be enough for this government. You think it would be enough, but no, they have also doubled debt, so they are also borrowing money. Not only have they got their hand in your pocket on this side, they have got their hand in the pocket on the other side as debt doubles over the course of their government. And it is just getting worse. That is but one area where this government has made things worse. The other one, and the one that people talk to us about right across the state, is of course energy prices. Gas prices are going through the roof. An article earlier this year in the *Age* says:

Victorians are paying far too much for gas because of the Andrews government's stubborn refusal to allow onshore exploration ...

It is not this side of the house that is saying that; that is from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). The ACCC is pointing the finger squarely at the government's policies of closing Hazelwood and of not allowing gas exploration in this state. The fact that the government refuses to lift the

moratorium means that Victorian families are paying far more for gas than they should be. Mr Sims from the ACCC said that the moratorium was impeding exploration development and that lifting it could push gas prices down for all consumers. You would think that if you were in government, you would want to do that. You would think that if you were in government and Victorians were bending under the burden of increased costs that you would want to help them. That is what the government is for, isn't it?

That is totally what we are thinking about on this side of the house. That is certainly our policy. We will allow that exploration so that we can reduce the cost of gas in this state. But of course the government does not want to do that, because the government is ensnared by Greens ideology. The government is ensnared by an ideology that it will be in coalition with these people. If Victorians are unfortunate enough to see them on the Treasury benches again, the member for Melbourne will be sitting in the chair as Deputy Premier of the state. Could you imagine the policies around energy? Could you imagine, if you think energy prices are high now, what they will be under a Greens-Labor coalition? Could you imagine how bad that will be?

It is not just gas prices, it is also electricity prices. Electricity prices have gone through the roof since this government's policies raised coal royalties by 300 per cent and forced Hazelwood out of business. That took supply out of the market and meant that Victoria's household bills would go through the roof. Of course the government said — in fact the Treasurer boasted — that power companies could easily absorb the increase in royalties. That did not happen, unfortunately.

Engie said that the government's policies would put them out of business, and in fact they left. You know what? The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, who is sitting at the table, said it was a sad fact of reality that Hazelwood's closure would affect prices but that the good news was that analysis showed the rise might be less than a dollar a week. Well, that is good news, isn't it? In fact she was backed up by the Premier, who said the closure would result in higher electricity prices but that the rise would be about 4 per cent, or an average of 85 cents a week. I am not sure that there are many businesses or households saying, 'Oh well, it's only 85 cents a week; we can afford that. It is a cup of coffee a month that I might have to do without'. But no, these guys once again spread misinformation, were inaccurate, were dishonest, were deceiving, were deceptive and falsified their comments, and what we are finding now is that the cost of living as a result of these utility bills has gone through the roof and is causing burdens on this state

and on households in this state that are just too difficult for people to manage.

Of course that led to increased costs, because we had to get diesel generators in to make up supply. The minister at the table, the energy minister, said:

Victoria has more than enough capacity to meet our energy needs.

And that the government were:

... not considering any diesel back-up because we are building the generation and storage necessary to protect Victorian consumers.

That is in an article headed 'Diesel generators to bolster Victoria's energy network over summer'. In a subsequent article the question was asked, guess who pays for the cost of that? It is the poor old Victorian taxpayer, who is already bending under the weight of the cost-of-living burdens that are being imposed on them by this government.

It is also in budget blowouts under this Treasurer, who is also sitting at the table, where we are seeing something in the order of \$12 billion over budget on all major projects. The Auditor-General himself said that with the level crossing removals the cost of the program had increased by more than 38 per cent. I mean, how can you get it that wrong? 'Another billion here, another billion there'. It does not matter under this government whether it is their warped ideological policies around increased gas exploration, around the closing of Hazelwood power station or around the budgets of major projects that they find impossible to keep under control, it is the poor old Victorian taxpayer that is paying the price. That is a matter of public importance. This government cannot handle it; an elected coalition government will.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) (14:16) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to totally dismiss in many respects the matter of public importance. This government and this Treasurer, might I correct the member for Warrandyte, have delivered the highest average surpluses in this state's history. In so doing they have delivered the most substantial infrastructure program the state has ever seen, from \$13.7 billion in this year's budget compared to a \$4.9 billion average. If you want to talk about a government making a substantial contribution to the terms under which Victorians live and operate then it ultimately comes down to this: are you prepared to get up and have a go for Victorians.

The member for Warrandyte got up here today and all he did was essentially direct and call names at the Premier, which really goes back to the history of this

man. He is the shadow minister for cost of living, which I am sure is a very senior and august role in his caucus. I am curious, however, what that has to do with the work that he is supposed to be doing with his Cost Watch truck, which is missing in action at the moment. We have missed it. There have been no Facebook entries since March 2017, but they are hard at work doing nothing — hardly working. But I digress, and so rather than engage in banalities with the opposition I will talk about the substantive action that the government has taken. Let us get into the substantive issues that the member for Warrandyte has raised.

Employment: the best thing that the government can do to support Victorians with the cost of living is ensure that there are secure, full-time jobs available to them. Since this government took office we have created 370 000 jobs. The security of employment and the opportunities to be able to go out and create work, and from that labour create wealth both within your community and your family, is what Labor governments do. There have been 233 000 full-time jobs created as a consequence of this government's efforts; 40 000 full-time jobs was the total sum of jobs created by the coalition when they were last in government. So 40 000 compared to 233 000 put in economic terms is nothing short of pathetic.

Under the coalition government we saw the unemployment rate rise to 6.7 per cent, and of course it is now down to 5 per cent. The youth unemployment rate hiked to 14.5 per cent at the same time that they slashed TAFE funding and cut jobs across Victoria. Under their watch 70 000 Victorians joined the unemployment queue. That was effectively their contribution; that was the care that they had for the plight of people struggling with the day-to-day costs they confront. The first and most important thing you have to do is give people the dignity of work and give them the dignity of showing you that governments rate that as the first and most important thing that they should do. Of course those opposite were asleep on their watch. They did nothing and delivered nothing certainly when it came to employment generation.

On the issue of electricity costs, this year's budget invested \$48 million in the power saving bonus. All Victorians will receive \$50 if they go on to the Victorian Energy Compare website. We know from experience that visiting this website will save people \$330 in the first year alone on average. Big power companies of course rely on people not having the time or the capacity to look at the transparency around their billing structures, but this gives them that opportunity and it will reward them for exercising their rights as a consumer in the market environment. This comes on

top of rebates that we have offered to consumers on standing offers or expired market offers — the rebates proposed by the big retailers. For non-concession holders on standing offers where they have expired offers, somewhere between \$250 and \$400 will have to be paid back to them if the rebate was not in place. So here we are as a government looking at our capacity to do more. The utility relief grant cap, for example, had a \$21.7 million increase, with \$500 to \$650 a year being provided to put power back in the hands of Victorian consumers, particularly those most in hardship due to unexpected electricity bills.

We have also announced that a re-elected Andrews Labor government will help Victorians save around \$890 a year and put power back in the hands of Victorian households. Here we are four years into this term, but have we heard anything positive from the opposition about what they might do around how you can address power costs for households? Here is a real policy that this government is putting in place: \$890 is likely to be saved off people's power bills through the Victorian government's solar homes program; 650 000 homes will be the subject of this relief over 10 years; and importantly for Victorians hurting from high prices we have allocated \$68 million to get this program running immediately we take up government. Those who wish to take up the offer of access to solar panels will be able to do so without causing a distortion in the way that the market operates in anticipation of this program getting fully underway. Additionally for those houses that are currently unable to access solar panel discounts — we have not forgotten them either — we will make sure that a re-elected Andrews government provides for 60 000 households to replace their old hot-water systems with a new solar system and get \$1000 cash back via a rebate.

We are the government with a broad agenda. We are dealing with the impacts that the costs of electricity and power prices more generally are having on consumers, and we have put those into the public domain. We have said this is what we are going to do to help people who are struggling with increasing power prices. What have we heard from the opposition? The only policy we seem to have heard from the opposition is that they want to cut the Victorian renewable energy target, reducing supply and provoking probably further uncertainty for investors and the energy market. This is not the brains trust of the state of Victoria. They are certainly not people who should be given the responsibility of managing the state going forward in a policy sense.

It is also important to note, if we look at gas prices in this debate, that those opposite have found a way to be

on the wrong side of this issue more times than I thought would be mathematically possible. In September 2015 there were pending by-elections in the seats of South-West Coast and Polwarth. The opposition decided that they wanted a moratorium on onshore gas exploration until 2020 — that was their plan. Then in October last year they backflipped again and committed to scraping the legislated moratorium.

You just cannot trust the Liberals on gas. Their position is up for sale, and whatever their lords and masters in Canberra tell them to do, they will step to attention. By supporting the same policy position that those opposite took credit for just six months beforehand, we have been accused of playing politics. We know who is playing politics, and we know who is not letting the science lead them on this. It is clear that this is an opposition that will take any opportunity to try and score cheap political points even if it means wiping history. It is Orwellian in its concept. They like to forget about their behaviour and their lack of action in government and the harsh costs that they inflicted upon consumers that this government is taking real and tangible action to address.

The truly sad thing about those opposite is not that they are hypocrites but that they are also just plain wrong. On the evidence, we have onshore resources that would provide only about six months of gas capacity if taken by conventional means. If that is essentially what the opposition sees as a panacea in reducing gas prices, of course we know that the science does not lead us there. So to the flat-earthers on that side, keep continuing with the chant but be clear about this: we will be led by the science, and ultimately we will get an outcome that serves the interests of Victorians well.

As we know, Victoria produces almost twice as much gas as it consumes. One would have thought we should not have a supply-side problem with gas from our offshore gas wells, but of course the federal government — people that members opposite do not want to criticise — are more than happy to continue this idea that the national reserve, the national asset, is shipped offshore without an effective domestic reserve being put in place. What does that mean? That means consumers are hit, that means that essentially industry is hit. People have been crying out for some leadership and at least for this federal government to do something that might address the imbalance in pricing. We are going shortly to be the world's biggest exporter of natural gas. We are not far off it, and when that happens, we will still have a problem because essentially the commonwealth refuses to provide a domestic reserve and a surety for the needs of our consumers and our businesses.

I want to turn now briefly to TAFE. Of course it is worth noting that in government those opposite took an axe to TAFE. They closed campuses, they cut jobs and they failed our young people. We, by alternative, have put money back into TAFE. In the 2018–19 budget we gave every Victorian every tool they need to undertake a quality, accredited TAFE qualification to get the skills and the jobs that they need in building our state. We have gone further than that. We know that the cost of training can act as a barrier to getting the right skills, so this year's budget breaks down that barrier and invests \$172 million to provide 30 priority TAFE courses and 18 preapprenticeship courses to young people to give them the opportunity to get a fee-free education through TAFE and preapprentices. That means that we are investing in the future of young people. They will get jobs and they will be able to pay the costs that confront everybody in their livelihoods. We want to make sure that everyone gets this free, quality training, and we have provided some 30 000 new training places to provide for it.

Now I want to turn briefly to homes and what we have done around the cost of housing in the state of Victoria. We have put forward a comprehensive Homes for Victorians package. We have abolished stamp duty costs for properties worth less than \$600 000 for first home buyers. We have doubled the regional first home owners grant for new build properties to \$20 000 and we are making long-term leases a reality for Victorians, recognising that there is not one path by which you can have a place to call your home. Recently we have seen some 22 000 first-time buyers right across the state take up this opportunity.

We have also put in place rate capping as a government. We saw under the opposition council rates rise by 10 per cent in 2013 — 10.8 per cent, in fact — and 10.5 per cent in 2014, and they did absolutely nothing about it. So when we hear these four tiers of concern being expressed about the poor consumer being hard done by by government, let us recognise that this is a government that has actually taken tangible action. Whether it is on the housing side or whether it is on the gas or electricity side, we have taken a proactive approach to put in place measures to protect Victorians and to make sure that they are well served by a government that is focused on delivering to them.

Of course there is our land release policy, which I am sure someone else will talk to because I am running out of time. But I will make this point. This is a government that has not wasted a day in its obligations and its opportunities to look after Victorians. Today, on a day when the Victorian economy is seen as the best performing economy in the nation through the national

accounts release, what I have to do is spend my time dealing with this dross from an opposition who have no vision for the future.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (14:31) — I rise to speak on the matter of public importance. I note the Treasurer, who is just leaving the chamber, talked about job creation, yet where are the 440 jobs in Stawell that the Premier, the then Leader of the Opposition, went to Stawell in the week before the last election and promised Labor would deliver in government? Instead what we have seen is a reduction in jobs in Stawell, both full-time and part-time. There are fewer people in the labour force in Stawell than there were under the previous government, despite the specific promise of 440 jobs for Stawell.

This matter of public importance in the name of the member for Warrandyte talks about condemning the Andrews Labor government for boasting about Victoria being in ‘the best of times’. It is certainly not the best of times for many, many people in my electorate of Ripon. In particular a lot of people in Ripon are on very low incomes. They are either on fixed incomes because they are on the aged pension or they are on low wages or some combination of assistance and wages. So when they get power price increases on the scale of \$500 or more a year, they have nowhere to go because their incomes are fixed, and yet that is what this government has delivered to those people in Ripon.

What we see in Ripon are many people, particularly elderly people, spending the day or large parts of the day in bed because the cheapest way to stay warm is with your electric blanket on in bed and not heating the rest of your house. I had a meeting last week with a Legacy group in Ripon, and they said that they have increasingly found that when they go to meet their legatees and provide them with support, they come to the door in their dressing gown. They are very embarrassed by that; these are largely women who would not do that in normal circumstances. Yet it is cold in country Victoria in winter, and the very, very direct effect of this government’s policies on power prices is to drive people into poverty.

We have seen a rise in firewood collection across Ripon, as people cannot afford to heat their homes with electricity. Of course we do not have a lot of gas rolled out in Ripon, and there are a couple of reasons for that. We do have gas in some towns, but much of Ripon relies on bottled gas. If you want to talk about huge rises in energy costs, go and have a look at the price of bottled gas. It has gone up more than threefold in the last couple of years.

Even those who are on pipe gas — town gas — have had significant increases well above what has been seen in Melbourne and other places. That is because there is a monopoly provider in western Victoria, yet this government has done nothing, despite repeated requests, to regulate that monopoly price. I have personally written to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on at least a dozen occasions on this point, and the first few responses I got from that was, ‘You should shop around’. Well, how do you shop around when there is a monopoly supplier?

I note that the Treasurer was keen to talk about the Victorian Energy Compare program they have announced. Well, you cannot compare energy when you have got a monopoly. There are no discounts available. In fact one of the things I get in my electorate a lot is people coming to me and saying that they rang up to get a new price or get a discount but were told that they were not eligible because there is no discount on the gas and you need to have both gas and electricity on your plan to get the major discounts. So it really is entirely disingenuous for this government to in any way claim it is the best of times for those people in Ripon who are facing significant power prices because of the actions of this government.

If we talk about some of the actions that this government has taken that have jacked up power prices, we have to start with the tripling of taxes on brown coal to grab an extra \$252 million from the Latrobe Valley power generators. I remember at the time that there were a number of people from the government who tried to draw parallels with the taxation regime for coal in New South Wales. They said, ‘This brings it into alignment’, but what they failed utterly to understand is that coal in New South Wales is black coal and it is an export tax. In Victoria brown coal, the kind of coal we generate power from, is only used by Victorians, so when you put a tax on brown coal in Victoria — a tax of \$252 million — you are taxing Victorians and nobody else.

Of course that led to the early closure of Hazelwood, and 22 per cent of power in Victoria disappeared overnight. From that we saw significant and immediate increases in power bills. So to in any way say that we are in the best of times when people are having those sorts of increases in their power bills caused by this government is entirely disingenuous and, I would argue, more than that — it is a deliberate misleading of the Victorian people regarding their actions.

The tax increase on brown coal is not the only tax increase we have seen from this government. We saw a new land tax surcharge for absentee owners, and then

that was tripled. People said, ‘This group, they can pay. It doesn’t matter; they’re not voters — what does it matter?’. Well, they own properties that people rent, so who has to pay the tax? It is the people who rent, and it is the people who rent who are in the most vulnerable situation in Victoria; they do not have that security. Yet they put taxes on them.

Then for those who do own property we saw increases in the fire services property levy — a 15 per cent increase in the fire services property levy in two years. Across Ripon many people pay very high fire services property levies because of the nature of the tax. That is one of 12. Labor seems to be putting them up every day. I note that their 12 new taxes break a direct promise at the time of the last election by the then Leader of the Opposition that there would be no new taxes — instead there are 12. If you are going to do one when you break your promise, you might as well do 12. Who is going to notice? This government at every part have taxed Victorians, and when they are not taxing them they are creating policy disincentives for decent power prices. They have driven up the price of power in this state, and they have no solutions for it.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Ms STALEY — I note that the member for Mordialloc thinks he can just shout me down. It has been a pattern of Labor members throughout this debate.

Ms Green interjected.

Ms STALEY — Now the member for Yan Yean, who has been warned multiple times today to perhaps not interject, is back in it.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — I just warn the member for Mordialloc and the member for Warrandyte. The member for Ripon has the call.

Ms STALEY — As I said when I spoke on both the 2017 and 2018 budgets, those budgets were not fair, and this has not been a fair government for those people who live in Ripon. It has not delivered fairness for low-income earners, who are in demonstrably more difficult circumstances now than they were four years ago. You cannot argue that somebody who is unable to heat their home or to feed themselves properly because of their energy costs is in a better place than they were four years ago. That is what the legacy of this government is for the people of Ripon. That is the legacy for low-income earners across Victoria. My electorate has a lot of those people. Those on the

government benches do not care about them. They have never cared about them. They spout words that are empty but do not deliver for them in any way. They have had four years. It is time that somebody else was allowed to get in and help these people.

The SPEAKER — Order! Before calling the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, during question time the member for Lowan and the Leader of The Nationals raised concerns about remarks made by the member for Yan Yean. I would ask the member for Yan Yean to withdraw the remarks that she made.

Ms Green — I withdraw, Speaker.

Ms D’AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) (14:42) — I am very pleased to join in this debate. I think one thing that has been for sure in all of the years that this party has been in government — and the fact that those opposite spent four years doing nothing and taking the state backwards — is that ours is the only party that Victorians can trust to actually tackle square on cost-of-living pressures. That is absolutely the case. When it comes to the energy sector, you need to have a plan and you need to have a clear objective and vision about where the new energy is going to come from to be able to replenish energy that is lost through ageing infrastructure that has a use-by date on it. Those opposite failed to do that. They sat back and did nothing when we saw jobs leaving the state, when we saw people leaving the state, and those opposite have actually no plan to do anything to prepare Victorians for the new energy infrastructure that is needed to ensure that we have got sufficient supply to come into the market and of course to continue to deliver affordable energy supply.

Electricity prices have been increasing in this country because of a succession of catastrophic policy failures by the coalition federal government in Canberra and the previous coalition government here in Victoria. Every energy company, peak body and industry group has made it absolutely clear that federal policy uncertainty is stalling investment in new generation. Every energy company and peak body knows this. They have said this. Two-thirds of Australia’s gas is being exported out of Queensland and this is happening at the expense of jobs, families and businesses.

Victorians know this too. That is why our Premier took to a Council of Australian Governments meeting with the previous Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, a clear policy for a gas reserve capped to ensure that not only do domestic consumers of gas — families or indeed

industry — have not only sufficient supply of energy but actually sufficient supply of energy at the right price. The fact is Malcolm Turnbull squibbed it. He called in energy businesses and producers, gave them a cup of tea and a bit of a stiff talking to and sent them on their way. That is policy failure by the federal government, and those opposite are simply riding on their coat-tails and hoping that their mates in Canberra actually get their act together. They have failed time and time again to present any semblance of an energy policy that will see more power coming into our system to help reduce the cost of energy.

Our government's independent and bipartisan review of retail energy markets, which were privatised by those opposite, in energy and gas shows that the competitive retail market in Victoria is not operating in the best interests of Victorian families and businesses. Why is that? Because those opposite sold them off to their mates in big industry, the big corporations who are making money and laughing all the way to the bank because those opposite privatised these assets. Those opposite took the hands off the wheels and sold off assets that Victorians taxpayers paid for over decades. The ultimate 100 per cent subsidisation of the energy system is what happened over many decades. That was really in the interests of Victoria. Our old power plants, built by taxpayers and then sold off by those opposite, are getting older. The 12 years of federal policy failure caused by the coalition — always the coalition — in Canberra is continuing. The fact is that businesses and families have thrown their hands up in the air because they are not going to get anything. They are not going to get policy certainty. They are not actually going to get any ambition whatsoever or direction or vision as to where energy policy will go in this country.

Is it any wonder that our government is not going to let the circus of what happens in a coalition government, either on the opposite benches here or in Canberra, divert us, distract us, from the agenda that we have? We know that we need more energy supply into the system. We know that with more energy supply coming into the system wholesale prices will come down, and the effects of course will be there with retail pricing. If you do not have a plan to drive that, then nothing will happen. All you will have is no action from those opposite, who sat there for four years knowing that Hazelwood was getting older and had actually passed its use-by date and that Yallourn was getting older and Loy Yang A and Loy Yang B were getting older. What was their response then? Nothing. Let us leave it to the market. Let us leave it to the private corporations — their mates — to have no plan whatsoever to actually have a transition to a clean energy future, because we know clean energy is the most affordable, cheapest

form of new energy supply that you can bring into the market. Those opposite have an ideological hatred for renewable energy. They do that to the detriment of Victorian families and Victorian businesses because they do not understand that.

So what have we done in the 3½ years that we have been in government? During the time that we have been in government we have had 700 megawatts of new energy generation into the system. Hazelwood was about 1400 megawatts. As we speak, on top of that 700, we have 1700 megawatts of new generation under construction today, and very soon we will be announcing a very successful first Victorian renewable energy target (VRET) auction, where we will see up to 650 megawatts of new energy on top of all of that being built in our state, providing not only the thousands of jobs, the millions of dollars of investment but also lower energy prices.

You do not have to believe me on that front. The Australian Energy Market Commission in its annual report on retail price trends across all of the states has been very clear that wholesale prices, and therefore the impact eventually on retail prices, will start to come down. Guess why? It is as more renewable energy is built and delivered, and that is in this state, thanks to our government, not those opposite, who voted against legislation to drive more energy production in this state. They voted against that, and to this very day they are still vowing to cancel the Victorian renewable energy target legislation. What is their plan? The fact is that those opposite have no plan, and what having no plan means is that they are happy to sit back and let nothing happen — no new generation to be built and no jobs.

I note that the member for Ripon made a contribution. She is also of course very opposed to and voted against the Victorian renewable energy target scheme. Those in her community are benefiting right now from the thousands of jobs that have been created and the millions of dollars in investment that is going into her community. She has the bold face to say that she is going to oppose the VRET. I would love to walk down the street — the member for Ripon should invite me there one day, I will gladly walk down the street of her electorate. I want to hear her say that to her community with me standing there, because the fact is that those opposite have got no plan. All they are doing is consigning Victoria —

Ms Staley interjected.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — She is running scared. She is absolutely running scared and wanting to distract from the fact that she is on the ropes over there, punching her

way through her Institute of Public Affairs lens of the world and her corporate mates, and crying today that she actually does have sensitivity for her community in terms of rising prices. The fact is this: you plan, you have a vision, you put it to the people and you go ahead and do it, and everything that we have committed to as a government we are actually delivering.

Let me be very clear about this: we are not going to stop at that. We are not going to stop at the 700 megawatts we have already got generating, the 1700 that is under construction and the 650 that will be announced very shortly. We are putting 650 000 solar power stations on the roofs of Victorian family homes. That is what we are doing. That is our commitment to reducing energy bills on top of all of the other policies that we have in place, and Victorians are loving it because they know that when it comes to being bold and brave and actually doing what we say we are going to do, we get on and do it.

Victorians will know that when they come to a choice at the end of November whose side this government is on when it comes to lowering energy prices. They know that our government has got a very clear plan, either in terms of growing the large-scale renewable energy projects that need to put downward pressure on wholesale prices, or those that have got no plans whatsoever — 650 000 family homes will have a power station on their roofs that is going to save them around \$890 a year on their power bills. For those who prefer the solar hot water systems, they are looking also at making some significant savings in the hundreds of dollars. And, of course, jobs are coming out of this.

So let me be very clear: our government has got the plan, we have got the vision, we have got the commitment and we actually deliver, and we will continue to do that for every Victorian.

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (14:52) — The only thing the minister is delivering is higher prices for our community, and the only time she spoke the truth in the last 10 minutes was when she said, ‘Don’t believe what I have to say’.

Ms Thomas interjected.

Mr McCURDY — The member for Macedon might want to curb her language a little bit. I was in Lancefield the other day. In fact I went to the pollie shoot the other day, and I called past Lancefield and spoke to a few people there and asked them about their local member. I said, ‘What do you think of your local member?’. They said, ‘She is an absolute muppet’. I

said, ‘The muppet from Macedon’. ‘What a muppet’, they said.

Ms Thomas interjected.

Mr McCURDY — I thought, ‘You should be home doorknocking, not here taking it out on everybody else’, the muppet from Macedon.

Ms Thomas — On a point of order, Speaker, I am not facing 10 criminal charges in a court of law at the moment. I take exception to being described as a muppet by the member for Ovens Valley, and I ask you to ask him to withdraw.

Mr R. Smith interjected.

The SPEAKER (14:53) — The member for Warrandyte will leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

The SPEAKER — The member for Ovens Valley will withdraw any remarks he has made.

Mr McCURDY — I am happy to withdraw any comments I made, but —

The SPEAKER — Order! An unqualified withdrawal.

Mr McCURDY — Okay, an unqualified withdrawal, but I do want to stress that they were not my comments. I was just saying what I heard from constituents in Lancefield.

The matter of public importance is about the cost of living in Victoria. Victorians are disgusted with Labor’s soft-on-crime approach, helping congestion in Labor-held seats while ignoring coalition seats, and the cost of living that is spiralling out of control for many families, particularly those who are low-income earners, whether they are pensioners, vulnerable people or just regular families. For a government that always wants to say that it stands up for the vulnerable and those that are struggling, the cost of living in Victoria has gone through the roof. I am absolutely confident that the arrogance of this government to treat people in this manner will backfire on it in November.

Victorians pay some of the highest prices for electricity in the world, and the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change cannot see that. It is baffling that she either cannot or does not want to see it. The government is doing nothing to lower prices. In fact this corrupt government is encouraging higher prices by

shutting down the power stations to pander to the Greens vote in the inner-city seats of Melbourne.

The Andrews Labor government recklessly pursues renewable power over a short period of time, disregarding the people it represents and disregarding the cost of living in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. It is carelessly spending taxpayers money to finance renewable energy while slugging the people of Victoria with higher energy bills.

In relation to the tripling of the coal royalty tax, and we have heard from other speakers today, that was certainly the straw that broke the camel's back when Engie decided it needed to close its plant. This plant closed over five months, not over a five-year transition period like it should have done. I would not call that a transition. When it closed down overnight 22 per cent of Victoria's power went, so Victorians needed to source their power from somewhere else at a much higher rate. Of course our cost of living and our energy bills have gone up. Again, I say with five months to close down Engie's plant, this corrupt government should hang its head in shame.

As for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change who stood in the chamber and said do not believe what she says — well, we cannot quite frankly, because she was the one who said that price rises would be less than \$1 a week. That is another Labor porky pie, and it is an absolute disgrace that the minister has no concept and does not understand the cost of living and energy prices on constituents in Victoria.

It is just like if we were trying to move away from petrol or diesel, if someone were to think that was a good idea into the future. That is fine if that is going to help future generations and we need to move away from a resource like that. Do it in, say, 2030 or 2040, set up a time line that is achievable and a transition — not shut something down basically overnight so that everybody has to pay the price.

Labor has certainly caved in to political pressure to try to be all things to all people. It is like poor parenting skills when you just say yes to everybody, but at the end of the day you cannot be all things to all people. The government is trying to out-green the Greens, and as it removes the cheapest available source of electricity, all of us have to pay the next highest competitor. Victorians deserve better than that.

Last week I held energy forums right across the Ovens Valley. I invited the shadow minister for energy and resources, the member for Caulfield, to speak at those

forums, and we got some terrific feedback right across Cobram, Yarrawonga, Wangaratta, Myrtleford and Bright. We had good roll-ups and we got enormous feedback, and none of it was positive about this Labor government and their cruel hoax to try to convince Victorians that the stunts they are pulling will save money for Victorians.

George Mynard attended the Cobram session. He said that there was no way, if you put on solar panels, that you could save the types of dollars that this government has suggested. Well thanks, George, because it is nice to know we can get the truth from a solar enthusiast even if we cannot get the truth from this government. This is a guy who has put on solar recently. He knows the facts, and he does not listen to the spin.

Another lady, Dot — I will not give her surname — also attended a forum, and she said she cannot get access to the \$50 rebate, this boon the government keeps talking about. We are told that all we have to do is shop around and go to a particular website. However, Dot is not connected to the internet and there is no 1800 number for her to call, so she cannot get access to this \$50 rebate to shop around. We were told that by many across the electorate. This message was echoed by others as the day went on, that it was another stunt from this government. General discussion from all the forums showed that Labor is good at putting on stunts. They offer the world and they deliver very little at the end of the day. The benefit of pulling a stunt like this so close to going into caretaker mode is that nobody will ever know how many people actually get the rebate or how many have tried and failed.

Housing is another area where the cost of living is going up and up and up as we speak. More and more people are being forced to pay higher rents and higher mortgages because of this Labor government, which is doing nothing to help fix the housing market. It is busy fighting with itself and trying to pander to the Greens, the CFMEU and the United Firefighters Union. Victoria needs strong leadership, and that will only come from a Guy-Walsh government, which will genuinely govern for all Victorians. The price of buying a house is going up, as is the cost of building a house, and with demand and the cost of living, Victorians cannot afford the little things that matter. They can barely keep afloat because of that crippling cost of living.

The government is putting farmers last as it continues on its regime to get back Greens votes, and that has had catastrophic effects in regional Victoria. Farmers are losing their livelihoods, and the government is standing by and doing nothing. We have seen an example of this in Yarrawonga recently with jetty licences; they have

gone up by over 300 per cent. Without the action of that community stamping their feet and bringing the minister to account they would not have gotten these jetty licences back to a reasonable figure. As I said, they were up 300 per cent and up to 1000 per cent in some situations, so I fully congratulate the community of Yarrawonga, who got behind the cause and made the minister accountable. But it is a shame that you have to stand up to this government and make noise before you are heard, because you cannot assume the government is going to do the right thing.

Labor cannot manage money, we all know that, and now we are finding they are deciding to tax us even harder. The increases in our cost of living under this government are unsustainable, and Labor must go. At the last election we saw the Premier — he got the Nugget out and shined up the R. M. Williams boots — go out in his big red bus, pretending that he was a boy from the country who represented all Victorians. As soon as he got the keys to Spring Street he turned his back on regional Victoria, and this is so typical. We saw that with the Country Fire Authority (CFA), and although that is not a cost-of-living issue, we certainly saw the way this government has turned its back on regional Victoria and the 60 000 volunteers represented in the CFA.

You can spend as much taxpayers money as you want when you are trying to win an election, with money for infrastructure and other bandaid solutions making it look like you are doing something for people, but people will remember. They will look back and they will see this rabble of a government. They will remember how Labor lied — sorry, they did not lie; they told porky pies. They cheated, they stole and they rorted taxpayers money at a time when families were hurting financially through cost-of-living increases. We can add to this the mess the government has made out of rising fuel costs, which certainly affect country Victorians a lot more than those in metropolitan Melbourne because we do not have the public transport system, and where we do, it is very unreliable.

We have heard about the 12 new taxes from other speakers today, so I will not go through them all, but we all know that the Premier said there would be no new taxes. There are now 12 new taxes. I support this matter of public importance from the member for Warrandyte. You cannot say we are in the best of times. It is a disgrace for the government to be saying that.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (15:02) — I rise to oppose the matter of public importance (MPI) proposed by the member for Warrandyte. It is a curious matter that the member has brought to this place at this time.

In 11 weeks from Saturday the people of Victoria will be voting in the state election, and they will determine which party will form government in the 59th Parliament. I would have thought, given the proximity of this debate to that point in time, that there might have been something more substantive in the matter of public importance that has been proposed by the member.

I just want to unpack the member's MPI for a moment. Paragraph (1) refers to unprecedented rises in electricity costs. What are those opposite proposing? We have heard those opposite talk about Hazelwood. Those of us who know a bit about financing major infrastructure projects know that there is not a bank in the world that would lend to build a baseload coal-fired power station, because the cost of capital is so high and the tenure of the loan is so long that you would run the risk of investing in a stranded asset. The banks know that they will not get a return on such an investment. Are those opposite proposing that they will be the lender of last resort? That they will ask the people of Victoria to foot the bill for a new coal-fired power station? Is that their position? Because I think that is what they should say this close to an election. They should be able to turn around and say, very clearly, 'That is what we're proposing to do'.

They talk about record costs for natural gas. What does that mean? Does that mean that in the event they win, they are going to do as the Liberal candidate for Buninyong has suggested and allow fracking to occur? Is that their solution? Again, this close —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PEARSON — They talk now about conventional gas — it is not clear in the member's MPI. This close to an election you should be paying attention. This close to an election you should be prepared to be very clear and explicit in what you are doing — if you are taking this seriously. But you are not; you are distracted by our own issues.

The third item: '12 new or increased taxes'. Okay, so which of those 12 will they abolish? Which of those will they abandon in the event that they form government after the next election? Name them. Are they going to ditch all of them? Are they going to strip away the CPI adjustments that occur every year? Because if they are doing that, they should say so. They should be really clear — 'We are committed to abandoning these 12 taxes' — or two, or one, or six, but if the answer is none and they are quite happy for the taxes to stay, then why are they bringing this motion forward now?

The fourth item on the member's motion refers to 'signing Victorian motorists up for crippling increases and extended tolls'. I thought, 'This is interesting', because the CityLink contract was entered into around 1995 from memory by the former Kennett government. In actual fact I note a media release issued by the now member for Malvern, who was the Treasurer at the time on 6 October 2014, which was headed, 'CityLink Tulla widening gets the green light'. At the end of the release it states that:

To fund the project, the CityLink concession will be extended by one year, toll price increases will remain at a minimum of 4.5 per cent (annually) for an additional year —

which I would suggest to you, Deputy Speaker, is far higher than CPI —

and truck tolls will increase to become consistent with national pricing for trucks on other motorway networks.

So they were quite happy when they were in government to extend the concession deed. They thought that was a fair and reasonable way to fund a project. They were very explicit about that, yet now they bring this lazy motion where they are criticising us for doing exactly what they did in government.

I had to listen to the member for Ripon's contribution earlier. I sometimes find it very curious listening to the member for Ripon because I think she is a very confused individual. Bear in mind that the member for Ripon was a director of the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) from 2005 to 2014 — a director — and here she is complaining about monopoly providers, calling for regulation of gas and electricity supplies. Quite a curious thing, I would have thought, for a longstanding member of the IPA to be arguing. I note that when I checked the IPA's website earlier this afternoon, there was a —

Mr Foley interjected.

Mr PEARSON — Indeed, Minister. I note that there is an article that has been published on the IPA's website at the moment which states, 'In government, less is so much more'. That is a very curious thing when you are coming to this place as a former director of the IPA and you start bemoaning the market value of monopoly providers and asking for regulation. I find that very curious that in a past life she was a devotee of Milton Friedman — she would never have suggested, I would imagine for a moment, that there is such a thing as market failure —

Mr Wakeling — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, we know the debate is wideranging but this is not an opportunity to be attacking members of the

opposition. This is about the government's failure, and I ask you to bring the member back to the MPI that is on hand.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — I do ask members not to impugn other members. There have been attacks on members from both sides of the house during this MPI. I ask the member for Essendon to continue with caution.

Mr PEARSON — The point I am merely making is it is a bit hard to come in and argue now that you want to have regulation in place when you have spent your entire past career arguing the exact opposite. That is the point I am trying to make.

The other point to make is that this motion goes to cost of living. It is curious as I reflect back over my time on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee and the various estimates hearings that I have sat through the number of times those opposite have been quite concerned about wage increases in the public sector, the number of times that those opposite have been concerned about the growth in the wages bill. I would hazard a guess that one of the challenges with cost of living in Australia at the moment is precisely due to wage stagnation.

I think that where in the past, if you go back to the 1980s and the 90s, you might have had wages increasing by say 4 or 5 per cent per annum and inflation was running at 3 to 4 per cent per annum, people felt like they were getting ahead, and people were feeling a bit more confident about the progression. The reality is that we are experiencing a profound and sustained period of wage stagnation. That is not just in Victoria, that is not just in Australia, it is across the OECD. If you are serious about tackling issues around cost of living, then I would have thought you would be supportive of increases in the enterprise bargaining agreements (EBA) for public sector workers and workers more broadly, but those opposite are not interested in that.

Those opposite we know are the party of cuts and closures. We know that if they were to be returned to the Treasury benches in November, that is exactly what they would do. They are opposed to EBA increases of any real meaning, so that is the challenge that we are confronting as a community. How do you try and find ways in which you can grow the middle class? You have got the ability to have an expansion in wealth within these households to help offset some of these challenges. That is the critical challenge. That is one of the main challenges that we are confronting.

The other point I would make more broadly about cost of living is there is no mention in here about the investment in public transport. There is no mention about the fact that in the case of my good friend the member for Yan Yean, there is now a rail line out to Mernda, which ensures that the people of Mernda have got the capacity to leave the car at home and get on the train and come into the city to work. They are not compelled to drive and use their vehicle. They are not compelled to drive into the city. They have got those options, and I think when you are talking about the sorts of investments this government is making it goes to the heart of cost of living. By making sure you have got reliable, strong, efficient public transport linkages you can do these great things.

The other point I wish to make in the brief time I have left is about this government's approach — an approach I have been very proud to be associated with — to planning on our public housing estates. I know the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing is at the table and he has been passionate about this, about providing more housing stock in these communities with a constructive and very methodical approach to increasing capacity on the public housing estates to allow for more dwellings, more apartments, apartments which are modern, 21st century and energy efficient.

That is what you can try to do to address cost of living, but what has happened? We have been opposed by those opposite. We have been opposed by the Liberal Party in the other place. We have been opposed by the Greens political party in the other place at every step of the way. When we have tried to increase the source of housing supply on our public housing estates, we have been opposed by those opposite. They are not interested, so when we have gone out of our way to try to ensure there is a greater level of supply, we have been opposed and if you have got greater levels of supply, then you can certainly address these issues around cost of living. By having more energy efficient households, we will certainly be lowering the cost of living for public housing tenants.

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) (15:12) — I have the pleasure to rise to speak on this matter of public importance (MPI), because I think given where we are in the political cycle, given the fact that we are now going to be facing an election in the very near future, it is important that we take stock of what this government proposed that it was going to do for Victorians to tackle one of the biggest issues concerning the state, and that is cost of living.

Can I say when I have had the opportunity to talk to residents, not just in my community but across the state,

we know the two key issues that people talk about are law and order and cost of living. They are the two key issues that people across this state talk about. This government prides itself on the fact that — as the Treasurer had the pleasure of saying in this house when he proudly stood up here and told Victorians — we are now in 'the best of times'. We are now in the best of times, it is now the best of times to be a Victorian. I invite the Treasurer to come out to my community to talk to my residents who are struggling to pay their electricity and their gas bills, because I know they are not telling me as a local member of Parliament that this is 'the best of times' in which they have lived.

When I tell them that the government is blaming Jeff Kennett from 25 years ago — that the reason they are paying a significant increase in their electricity bills now than they were four years ago is all because of Jeff Kennett and what he did 25 years ago — people just think it is laughable. Victorians know what actually happened in the last four years under this government is that we have seen the closure of Hazelwood. When you take 22 per cent of energy production out of this state, you do not have to be a rocket scientist to know that is going to increase your electricity bills. That is exactly what has happened in the state of Victoria.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WAKELING — Those opposite can laugh as much as they like. They can stand in their spot in this house and tell Victorians that everything is wonderful. They can stand in their spot and tell Victorians there is nothing to complain about. They can stand in their spot and tell Victorians that their electricity and gas bills are not going up. But what Victorians do know is that the government led by this Premier has brought about a significant increase in electricity and gas prices.

When the changes took place at Hazelwood, what was the commitment on radio that this government gave to Victorians? They said, 'Your electricity bill will only go up by 4 per cent — 85 cents'. I have invited residents in my community to come in and show me that 85 cent increase. Where was that 85 cent increase? Their electricity bills have gone up by hundreds and hundreds of dollars. Businesses have seen increases of thousands of dollars. When businesses are making the choice whether they keep their business open or close their business, whether they do not employ extra people or whether they significantly increase the cost of their services or products as a direct result of the increases in electricity under this government, we know this is a government that does not care about what it is doing for Victorians.

With respect to natural gas the position we have is very clear. We will lift the ban on onshore conventional gas. That commitment has already been made very clear. Those opposite are opposed to that. We think that is sensible; we think that is reasonable. The member for Caulfield is sitting beside me. When he takes over as the incoming minister, one of his first actions will be to lift the ban — to get on with the job of ensuring that we bring more gas on-stream through conventional means, drilled onshore. But those opposite are fighting that, they oppose that, and they do not want to see extra gas production.

Mr Southwick — What did Bill Shorten say?

Mr WAKELING — What did Bill say? Bill actually takes a very different view to those opposite. The Labor Party is all over the shop when it comes to the issue of onshore conventional gas. On this side the house our position is very clear. We want to get on with the job. We want to ensure that if there is conventional gas that can be found on land in Victoria we are going to get on with it and we are going to actually do it.

When I talk about motorists facing a crippling increase in costs through the extending of tolls, I do not recall at the last election my opponent, when he was standing as the Labor candidate for Ferntree Gully, standing up and telling the Knox community that under an elected Labor government they will be paying tolls on the Monash Freeway to travel to Melbourne for a longer period of time to build a tunnel that is going to service the western suburbs. I do not recall that conversation. I do not recall the brochure being put out to my community telling my residents that under a Labor government, ‘You’re going to be paying tolls on the Monash Freeway for 10 years longer than you currently would be and you’ll be paying for a road you’re never going to use. You’re going to be paying tolls for 10 extra years for a road, for a tunnel, that you actually won’t be using’. I do not remember the Labor Party telling my community that. In fact I do not remember the Labor Party telling anyone that. I do not remember the member for Macedon telling her community that that was going to occur. I do not remember the minister at the table saying that to his community. In fact I do not recall the then Leader of the Opposition, the now Premier, standing up and telling Victorians that under an elected Labor government residents in the eastern suburbs, residents in the south-east of Melbourne, would be paying tolls on a road for 10 extra years to fund a tunnel they would not be using. If it is such a good policy and if it makes such perfect sense to do that, why didn’t this government come out and tell residents in my community that that was in fact what they were going to do?

But, no, what did the Premier actually say? What did the now Premier — the then Leader of the Opposition — say when asked about whether or not he would be increasing taxes or introducing any new taxes? What did he say? We all know that he stood out the front of this building the night before the election and told Peter Mitchell that he made a commitment to every single Victorian that there would not be any increases in taxes or any new charges. He did not say when he stood out the front that he was going to be extending the tolls on the Monash Freeway for 10 years. He did not say that the night before the election. He did not tell that to my community. He did not say that to Peter Mitchell. No, he gave a commitment there would not be any new taxes and that he would not increase any taxes. That is the commitment he gave to Victorians. But we know this government has introduced a range of new taxes, which is what they promised they would not do. They stood up under the leadership of the now Premier and he committed to Victorians that under a government he led there would be no new taxes and there would be no increases in taxes. We now know that that was simply not true.

We have seen 12 new taxes and charges under this government. We have seen increases in taxes and we have seen new taxes. This is a government that is more than happy to say one thing in opposition and do the complete opposite in government. They were more than happy to hide the fact that they are going to extend the toll deed on the Monash Freeway for 10 years. People in my community who drive to Melbourne from Knox on the Monash Freeway and return five days a week have 10 trips a week, and they will be doing that for 10 years. They are going to be paying tolls on that road 10 times a week for 10 years. Those opposite do not think there is an issue. They do not think it is a problem. They are more than happy to interject, but when I ask a simple question asking them to justify their actions, no-one in the government is prepared to stand up and say it was a good decision. No-one on that side is prepared to stand up and say it was a good decision not to tell my community that that was going to occur. No-one on that side is prepared to stand up and say they think it was a great decision that residents in my community are going to be paying tolls for 10 trips a week for an additional 10 years. I look forward to hearing the next contributor from the government on this MPI stand up and explain to my residents why it is a great idea to extend the tolls for 10 years, because the Premier to date has been unwilling to do so.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (15:22) — There has never been a time in Victorian and Australian politics when the community has been more disappointed with those

in public office, and I think it is incumbent upon all of us to admit when we have got it wrong and to always back what the electorate says. This matter of public importance (MPI) this afternoon shows absolutely that those opposite have not accepted the will and the decision that the electorate made at the previous election. It is the exact same position and the exact same responsibility that those opposite — some who still sit there — had in 1999, when the Kennett government was thrown out of office. The Napthine and Doyle-led oppositions refused to acknowledge the verdict of the Victorian people. They spent four years saying, ‘The electorate got it wrong’.

I entered Parliament in 2002 in that ‘Brackslide’ election, following three years of those opposite refusing to accept the verdict of the Victorian people. I was re-elected in 2006 along with a number of my other colleagues, including the now Premier and Deputy Premier, and then in 2010 the Victorian community said, ‘We don’t like what you are doing’, and voted those opposite onto the government benches. What I respected about my leader, the now Premier Andrews, who was then the opposition leader, was that he immediately accepted responsibility and accepted the verdict of the Victorian people. He said, ‘We’re going to put our noses to the grindstone, and we’re going to do better. We’re going to have a better offer. We’re going to show that we can tackle the problems that beset Victoria, including the management of the growth in population, and we’re going to be a good opposition and keep the government that has come in, the Baillieu government, to its promises’.

Its promise was to fix the problems and build the future. What they did was build some problems and fix the future. It was absolute smoke and mirrors, and they are still in denial. They are absolutely still in denial. To come forward to this house —

Mr Southwick — Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Ms GREEN — Before I was rudely interrupted I was trying to say that you actually have to do what you said you were going to do when you came into office. We took that message in 2010, and we came forward with an absolutely detailed program of how we would turn things around in this state and how we would deliver. We have kept every promise, and we have gone over and above that.

I know in my community in 2010 those opposite promised nothing, and they delivered in spades. We had

a detailed program, the jobs plan that we had. We had an absolute jobs plan. In opposition the Labor Party had a jobs plan. Those opposite when they were in government did not even have a jobs plan. The City of Whittlesea and the Shire of Nillumbik have jobs plans, but those opposite did not — and I do not think they have got one now. They have no environment plan, they have no education plan and they have no health plan, and they come forward with something like this in the second-last week of the Parliament. Well, you will be judged by what you do, not what you say.

The level of hypocrisy from those opposite knows no bounds. The member for Ripon talked about market intervention after spending more than a decade as a director of the Institute of Public Affairs. Do they live in a parallel universe? I think sometimes they say these things so often that they then believe them to be true. They repeat these things so often. The fact that the member for Ovens Valley can get up in this place and talk about truth — I mean, give me a break. You are facing 10 charges for dishonesty, and you come in here and talk about truth.

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I understand this is a wideranging debate, but I ask you to bring the member back to the actual MPI, which is all about the cost of living and the boast about Victoria being in ‘the best —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Thank you, member for Caulfield, I am aware of the MPI. I am aware of what the MPI says.

Mr Southwick — Can I just finish my point of order? I am allowed to finish my point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — You did make your point of order.

Mr Southwick — I have not finished my point of order. Can I please finish my point of order? While presiding over crippling prices and costs of living, I would ask you if you could bring the member back to the matter of public importance.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — This has been a very wideranging debate, but I do ask the member for Yan Yean to be mindful of what is in the matter of public importance.

Ms GREEN — I would say that a Labor government is always more mindful of the cost of living for Victorians. When I think about fire-affected communities in particular, we saw the abject ignorance of those opposite about what those communities were facing and what they were undergoing. And they had

bus services completely ripped out of the Kinglake ranges. Not only did that affect that community's mental health, it also affected their hip pockets. How were they able to get themselves to work and their kids to school? They had Victorian certificate of applied learning coordinators ripped out, they had TAFE places ripped out and institutions closed and cut down, as well as a cut to the education maintenance allowance.

And what are the solutions of those opposite? They would say they care about housing affordability. The former Minister for Planning, now the Leader of the Opposition, says he wants to release 290 000 lots in metropolitan Melbourne. That much land does not exist within the urban growth boundary. Rest assured they have a plan to rip up the green wedge and be on the side of corporations and not on the side of those that they say they are concerned about now — concerned about their cost of living.

The member for Eltham and I deal with a terrible, terrible Liberal-led council in the Shire of Nillumbik, who are also hypocrites when they talk about the cost of living. They talk about managing money, but there are cost blowouts. They asked us for a youth officer — over \$100 000. They have just engaged a new CEO — over \$100 000 more than previous CEOs. The \$16 million: we have gotten them to deliver projects, but 40 per cent of the Growing Suburbs Fund projects that remain undone are in the Shire of Nillumbik. They got \$4 million in this year's budget, and they will only spend \$50 000 this financial year. Those opposite are the biggest hypocrites out there.

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (15:32) — I rise to support the matter of public importance from the member for Warrandyte, which really goes to the heart of every Victorian right now feeling the cost-of-living pressures, thanks to the Andrews Labor government.

Deputy Speaker, as you would be aware, last sitting week I had a four-day unpaid holiday. It gave me a great opportunity to go around and visit a number of electorates and talk about cost-of-living pressures in all of those electorates. We went on a rorts tour through a number of different electorates, focusing on the cost of living.

Mr Staikos interjected.

Mr SOUTHWICK — The member for Bentleigh's electorate is certainly one of those that we visited. I will be getting to you, member for Bentleigh. The first stop was Mulgrave, the Premier's own electorate. It was very interesting on this tour, because cost of living is hitting everybody, especially those in the member for

Mulgrave's electorate. What is very interesting is that the Mulgrave Country Club, where the Premier normally holds his election victory party — so he is certainly a frequent flyer at this particular pub — is facing enormous pressure from their electricity bills. In fact, they have almost doubled: they are expected to be over \$113 000 more this year thanks to the Premier. This means they would need to sell 11 000 beers a month just to meet the increase. We know that having to sell 11 000 beers a month is just not possible in a pub like this. This pub is certainly a great local, and it donates \$240 000 of its profits to charity. What Kerry said to me in the Premier's own pub is that they will have to reduce their donations by about half because they cannot meet their rising energy bills under this government. If there is a better example, then I do not know of it. It is a pub that gives back to the community in the Premier's own electorate, and it is absolutely suffering under its own local member.

But wait, there is more. We then went and spoke to a number of people at Wheelers Hill shopping centre. We visited Bakers Delight, with the great Maree Davenport, the Liberal candidate for Mulgrave. We visited the florist, we visited the fruit and veg store and we spoke to Paul, Robyn and Desi. They all told me that they are suffering huge cost of living pressures under their own local member, the member for Mulgrave — the Premier. They are all suffering under the Premier, and the Premier has turned his back on the residents of Mulgrave.

Then we went on to Monbulk and visited the Deputy Premier's electorate. We wanted to see what residents in the electorate of Monbulk had to say. John Schurink — a great candidate who is well-known, who is the captain of his fire brigade and is actually liked by his fire brigade — went along with me, and he took me to Rob from Sunny Hill Flowers. Rob has a great business in the flower business, but their bills have gone up \$35 000 in a month. Unfortunately, Rob, who has a big business that has grown over a number of years — a great local — is now facing import replacement because gas bills are going through the roof under a government that has a moratorium on gas, on a government that has locked up gas and will not let businesses like Rob's participate in a market with fair and equitable pricing. They will not help Rob in terms of ensuring that he is able to compete in the market. Instead they are looking at import replacement, because the government do not care — they just do not care.

We then visited Stuart, the local barber, who has had 10 years in business. I asked Stuart about the solar panel scheme that the government announced. I said, 'Well, Stuart, will you benefit from this?'. Stuart

laughed. Stuart said, 'What an absolute expensive ploy to win votes while Victorians are doing it tough'. That is what Stuart, the local barber in the main street of Monbulk, had to say. After 10 years in business, he thinks this government is an absolute joke.

I spoke with Melissa from Poochies Woof N Wonderful Dog Grooming, which is a great establishment. If you have a dog that needs grooming, I suggest you go and visit Melissa. Well, Melissa was very quiet there. She was listening as I was talking with John and to locals that were visiting to get their dogs groomed. Melissa said to me, 'Can I just tell you what we have had to do in our dog-grooming business? We've had to put prices up by \$5 a haircut to pay for the increase in power bills under this government'. They had a sign on the counter: '\$5 increase in our dog grooming thanks to this government'. This is again in the Deputy Premier's own electorate. He is missing in action in his own electorate and does not care about small business and does not care about people that are doing it tough.

But wait, there is more. Monbulk Pizza are paying \$1400 every three months for their energy costs. I spoke with Matt from Northby's Bakery, a great local establishment on the top end, just opposite Mitre 10 in Monbulk. I went in and Matt was sitting there, just having his break after a busy day. I said, 'Matt, tell me about your power bills'. He just shook his head. He said, 'Mate, I'll tell you what, we've got to sell 260 pies a month just to pay for the power bill increase'. I said to him, 'Well, you know what? You'd be able to get solar, wouldn't you?'. Again he laughed at me. He said, 'Mate, we rent the premises. There's no way we're getting solar here. We're just struggling to survive because this government is missing in action and doesn't care about the cost of living'.

We then went on and visited the electorate of Oakleigh with Andrew Edmonds, the Liberal candidate for Oakleigh. People there were telling me how residents were struggling with the cost of living. One of the interesting things that Andrew Edmonds did was take me into the member for Oakleigh's area where the sky rail is. We went and visited a couple of houses where the sky rail is over the top of the houses. We asked them, 'How are you going to go with the solar panels?'. They said, 'We don't have any sun thanks to this government. There's no way we would get solar panels thanks to this government, because they have taken the sun off us'. That is right. The member for Oakleigh, who laughs in this place and is responsible for the sky rail in his own electorate, has stolen the sun. The member for Oakleigh has stolen the sun and ensured that there will be no solar panels going up in Oakleigh.

But do not worry, because we then went over and visited the electorate of the member for Bentleigh, another guy missing in action. And do you know what? Because the hardworking Asher Judah, the Liberal candidate for Bentleigh, is out there knocking on doors and campaigning, Sportsbet now has the Libs as the favourite at \$1.90 versus Labor at \$1.95. That shows they do not even like him out there. They do not like the member for Bentleigh. He has shortened off to me — you know, a rough bet. He has shortened off, and that is because the cost of living is out of control in Bentleigh, crime is out of control and people have woken up to a member for Bentleigh that does not care about the cost of living.

We then visited Mordialloc — there he is. I tell you what: again we just went through and people shook their heads, because they saw the rorts truck and saw that in Bentleigh's case there was \$22 000 that got the member for Bentleigh elected. For the member for Mordialloc it was \$5000 to be elected. We showed them all. We visited the member for Frankston's electorate as well. There was \$19 000 spent for him to be elected. It just goes on. All of these people in these electorates that are struggling to pay the cost of living could not believe that taxpayers money was used to get members elected. Taxpayers money was being used while these people were doing it tough. It is a huge hypocrisy. People are completely turning their heads.

Just before I finish, in Frankston there is Mariam, who purchased a small business, Beach 162, in 2015. She would now need to sell 720 cups of coffee just to meet the increase in power bills. Seventy-two small businesses have closed in the main street since the Premier took the reins and became Premier of this state. The cost of living is out of control in Frankston. In Patterson Lakes, in the Carrum electorate, Dina from Boathouse Clothing Co. has soaring energy bills. Dianne from Patterson Place Cafe needs to sell 600 coffees just to pay for her power bills. Freddie from Freddie's cafe has had a 30 per cent increase in power bills. Richard from the Carrum post office says that local usage of energy is going down while power bills are going up under Premier Andrews. This is what the local post office has to say. Everyone is saying it.

Wait, there is more. Pamela from a Cranbourne fruit and vegetable shop is paying \$5000 each month. We have got 5000 beers that need to be sold at Kelly's Hotel in Cranbourne for them just to be able to pay the increased power bills. Bills for Frank from Frank D. Hairstyling are up \$300 to \$400 each month, and even the customers there are saying, 'Get rid of this government'. People have got to go to bed early because they cannot afford to keep the heater on. These

pensioners have to go to bed early while this rorting government is spending a huge amount of taxpayers money on nothing.

Narre Warren North, again — huge trouble. I need part 2, because there are so many people complaining —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The member's time has expired. I remind members that if they are not in the allocated seats, they should not interject.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (15:42) — ‘The best of times’ is a quote from *A Tale of Two Cities*. The Victorian Treasurer used it in the context of sending up the Turnbull government's proposal for a city deal for Victoria's second-largest city, Geelong, because it has not delivered the money — yet again. The Australian coalition government signed the Geelong city deal in January. The Andrews Labor government committed \$153 million in this year's budget. So there was the goodwill, there was the commitment and there is the money to actually get things done. We delivered in good faith and trusted that the federal government would meet their commitment, but it has not happened.

So I am going to adopt the Jerry Maguire approach from now on with the Australian government and just say, ‘Show me the money’, because that is the reality of what is happening. The tale of two cities could really just be described as a tale of two administrations — the difference between the Victorian government, which delivers, and the Australian government, which duds us on infrastructure in particular and in so many other ways as well, like in health and service delivery right across the board. This is the proposition. We have seen how the opposition has tried to verbal the Treasurer on this matter.

The reality is that Victoria is Australia's fastest growing state. We are driving a AAA-rated economy and we are providing record investment, surpluses and an unprecedented pipeline of infrastructure to reimagine Melbourne as it evolves into a metropolis and we spread opportunity right across the state. The reason I am interested in the city deals program is that I have developed a proposal for building smarter cities and stronger communities in looking for a city deal for Melbourne's north and Melbourne's west, because soon both of them will have populations larger than Adelaide. But we need unity tickets. We need the Australian government to actually be a partner not just in gesture politics but in delivering the money to aggregate assets, create greater opportunities and deliver where infrastructure is needed most. The

proposition is to anchor a city deal on issues of national significance where we do have unity tickets.

The first one is the rail link to Melbourne Airport. There is the \$5 billion that the Australian government has said it will sign up for. Again, we need to take the Jerry Maguire position: show me the money. The Andrews Labor government has said that it will match that, and then the private sector will be brought in for the rest. The other proposition would be the missing link in Melbourne's road network, the north-east link. Why do we need this? Because this investment would also help to redress the disparity in the other tale of two cities — Sydney and Melbourne — in the Australian government's infrastructure funding.

That is really what we are doing here when it comes to these issues. It would fast-track smart city investments, provide affordable housing and access to lifelong learning, skills and jobs, convert rust belts into brain belts, change the population mix and stop entrenching disadvantage in some of these postcodes that really need a hand up at this stage. But we need the Australian government to be a practical partner where jobs and growth are needed most. This is the ongoing problem with dealing with the Australian government. To complete the quote from *A Tale of Two Cities*:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair ...

This is more aptly applied to the tale of the two administrations of Victoria and the Australian government.

The new Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, yesterday described the fiasco that brought down his predecessor as a muppet show. That is what our Prime Minister described it as. I have heard that word used in this debate. Let me quote the Oxford dictionary definition of ‘muppet’:

An incompetent or foolish person.

That is how the Prime Minister described what happened between his colleagues to bring down his predecessor. It is the insanity of doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results, because this is the third Liberal Prime Minister in five years and this is dividing our nation. Malcolm Turnbull defined the chaos as a form of madness, saying:

The reality is that a minority in the party room supported by others outside the Parliament have sought to bully, intimidate —

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, while it is quite interesting to hear a recounting of what happened in the federal Parliament, this has nothing to do with the MPI whatsoever. I would ask if you could bring the member back to talking about cost-of-living pressures that all Victorians are facing. I think it would probably be best if we get onto that rather than getting a history lesson on what happened in Canberra a week or so ago.

Mr McGUIRE — On the point of order, Deputy Speaker, it is an inconvenient truth to the opposition, we know that, but it goes to the issue about our energy policy and what has happened in the commonwealth Parliament. That is exactly what has happened and why we are looking at these issues today. I would argue that there is no point of order, and I am drawing this proposition to its climax.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! This has been a very wideranging debate. The member for Broadmeadows has indicated that there is a correlation between his speech and the MPI and I ask the member for Broadmeadows to continue.

Mr McGUIRE — Thank you, Deputy Speaker. The proposition is this, and it is Malcolm Turnbull describing his own party. He said:

The reality is that a minority in the party room supported by others outside the Parliament have sought to bully, intimidate others into making this change of leadership that they're seeking.

... it's been described by many people, including those who feel they cannot resist it as a form — resist it — as a form of madness ...

Madness in politics festers when the powerful make pacts with zealots. This is the point: the coalition cannot govern itself. The Liberal Party is being torn apart by an existential threat because the powerful have made a pact with zealots. This is at the heart of the issue —

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, I know the member said that he was going to reach his climax, but we have been waiting for a very, very long time. Again there was not one mention of energy in what he just had to say. He just went back on to talk about the events of the last week or so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Thank you, member for Caulfield, I encourage the member for Broadmeadows to return to the MPI.

Mr McGUIRE — I will go directly to the point: Malcolm Turnbull would have been better off bringing the National Energy Guarantee legislation to a vote.

This would have placed and framed in opposition former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, former Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce and the Greens' Adam Bandt as the deal-breakers. They would have been framed as that. This is what we are going to, this is the critical issue that has stopped Australia for over a generation. Because what happens in these arguments about what the issues should be and how we should get a resolution is that the Greens political party cannot be green or left enough, then you have Tony Abbott using this as wedge politics to deliver for his vested interests and his factional supporters and then you have Barnaby Joyce there as well, and we know who finances and backs him. That is what it has been about. This is the triumph in the Australian government of absolute factionalism beyond control, and that brings us down to the issues of how do we get cheaper prices for energy.

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, you cannot just mention the words 'cheaper prices for energy' as you are sitting down when the member has been rambling along on everything about the events of a week or so ago in Canberra. Again, we do not need a history lesson. This is about cost of living. We ask the member to come back to the MPI about cost of living and at least mention energy prices, at least talk about energy prices within the context. That is what we are asking.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Thank you, member for Caulfield. Member for Broadmeadows, please return to the MPI.

Mr McGUIRE — We have had the Treasurer and the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change outline it chapter and verse, but I will repeat it for you if you need to have it. This year's budget invested \$48 million in the power saving bonus. In its first three weeks 300 000 Victorians visited the website and more than 80 000 claims have been made, so that is going to help people. We have had money for rebates and there has been a whole series of other initiatives on gas prices. We have gone through it, and the Treasurer and the minister for energy outlined it in detail. We have given the catalogue. It is there, it will be in *Hansard* and I refer you to it. But we need to actually go to the critical forces that are stymieing this country and that is the critical issue. It is because of the hyperpartisan and hyperfactionalised nature of the coalition government, and the votes will come in very soon from the Victorian and the Australian public.

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) (15:52) — That was a very exciting climax by the member for Broadmeadows. I am not quite sure if he actually reached it, but never mind. I have got 10 minutes to start highlighting some

of the failings of this government in regard to the crippling cost of living.

It is clearly evident to my constituents that that is the case, and there are many, many examples as I doorknock house after house and speak to local businesses. If members have the opportunity to get out, I suggest they do that with their local businesses and ask them exactly how they are suffering, because they will find very quickly many examples of crippling electricity prices. In fact in some situations it is up 200 per cent, and businesses are suffering and not even able to sign contracts with electricity suppliers because of the unprecedented costs of electricity as a result of the actions and the failings of this government, who do not support local businesses, who do not support family businesses and who do not support the energy sector. We have seen that on many, many occasions, and if members spoke to their small businesses, they would find exactly the same thing.

This government fails to support family businesses and fails to support small businesses by failing the energy sector. We have seen unprecedented price rises, and that will continue to be so. It has put businesses in jeopardy and businesses in doubt and it is making business decisions very, very difficult for our family business owners. It is the same with gas prices — businesses are unable to lock in supply of gas because of the ridiculous decision to ban onshore gas exploration. This should be lifted, and everybody knows it should be lifted. Businesses know that it should be lifted and this government simply has no answers to that — the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change certainly does not. When she is asked questions here in the chamber she continually fails to answer the questions that are put to her by our shadow minister for energy and resources, the member for Caulfield, who is well-versed in this area because he talks to businesses.

That is the critical point here: when you talk to the people that are in business, family and small business you start to understand the issues, and you actually need to do that. You cannot come in here and expect to answer questions or think that you know a bit about the energy sector unless you have either worked in it or spoken to businesses that are being impacted by the decisions made by this government. So get out to your local businesses and get to understand the impact of the decisions that you are making on their power bills and on their gas bills because these businesses are our future. These are the businesses that employ people. That is what makes our economy tick. What makes our communities tick is that small businesses employ people who then spend that money in our local

communities at our grocers, our milk bars, our cafes, our education facilities and the like. So supporting small and family businesses is absolutely critical, and a government that does not do that is a government that is doomed to failure.

Let me assure you that there is no support whatsoever for this government out there in the business community, and many in the sector and the industry representatives would support that view. Members on the other side have got absolutely no idea because they do not listen. They need to listen to people like Mark Stone who actually represent business and talk to business on a daily basis. He has warned that as a result of the actions of this government some businesses are unsustainable because electricity price increases threaten their competitiveness and in some cases their ongoing operation. Speak to small business and they will say exactly that same thing.

Electricity prices have risen, gas prices have risen — it goes on and on. It is clear that Victorian gas consumers are now paying the highest prices in the country because of the Premier's mindless bans on conventional and unconventional gas exploration. It is very clear that this government is failing to act on behalf of the Victorian community, small business, consumers and families who are suffering under the decisions made by this government because they simply do not care. They simply do not care.

They also mislead the public — they know they do. They say one thing and they do another, and they are led by the chief misleading Premier of Victoria, who is the most misleading Premier in the history of this great state of ours because he blatantly went out and told mistruths to the public. He said on record that there would be no new taxes, and we see quite clearly that there have already been 12 new taxes. You can stand there and dispute it but the evidence is there for all to see because you continue to come into the chamber and you say one thing but your government is doing another one. Tripling coal taxes, new stamp duty on property transfers between spouses, increased stamp duty on new cars, stamp duty on off-the-plan purchases, a new so-called vacant home tax, a new point-of-consumption tax, a new land tax surcharge — it goes on and on. New stamp duty surcharge, increased fire services property levy — there are taxes as far as the eye can see. There will continue to be high taxes under this government, which is the highest taxing government in the country. We are the highest taxed state in Australia. Electricity bills have gone through the roof, construction costs are up by more than 5 per cent above the national average under this government. It goes on and on because this

government is incompetent and is unable to manage its own backyard, let alone the Victorian state.

I will get to them in a minute because the cost blowout on projects just goes on and on. The highest in Australia, the highest state taxes in the country, and it goes on and on. But there is one person who stood above all this and said, 'I am not going to take cost-of-living pressures any longer; I am going to do something about it'. That was the rorting member for Melton, who took actions into his own hands and decided that instead of facing the pressures that normal Victorian people do and his constituents of Melton would do, he would rort the system. He would do that by shifting to Queenscliff. He said he shifted to Queenscliff so that he could claim the living away from home allowance and it would cover his bills.

Ms Green — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I think it is quite obvious that the excitable member for Bass has strayed well away from this matter of public importance (MPI). You correctly pulled me back into line in my contribution, along with a number of others. I ask you to do the same with the excitable member for Bass.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Thank you, member for Yan Yean. I do encourage the member for Bass (a) to address the house through the Chair and (b) to return to the MPI.

Mr PAYNTER — My sincere apologies, Deputy Speaker — it was Telmo who was in Queenscliff and it is Don who is in Ocean Grove. My apologies, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Member for Bass, you would be aware of the requirement to refer to members in this place by their correct titles. Please continue on the MPI.

Mr PAYNTER — It was the member for Tarneit who was living in Queenscliff and rorting the system, and it was the member for Melton who was rorting the system by living in Ocean Grove, my apologies.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Member for Bass, please resume your seat.

Mr Foley — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I think the honourable member for Bass is flouting your direction earlier in this debate. Whilst this is a wideranging debate, perhaps the honourable member might want to reconsider the now on-the-record comments that he has made regarding fracking and his comments about the mindless decision to ban fracking. No Buninyong misinterpretation there, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Thank you, Minister. I will rule on the point of order. The member for Bass has 17 seconds to return to the MPI.

Mr PAYNTER — The member for Broadmeadows has said, 'Hey look, we are overcommitting. This is not just a set figure. We are actually overcommitting to that'. But it does look like they are putting into it because perhaps this government or governments cannot trust themselves to actually spend the money required in those outer suburbs and rural and regional Victoria, which is a bit of a shame because much of the urban growth and urban sprawl has been in outer suburbs.

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

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BETTER ROADS VICTORIA AND OTHER AMENDMENTS) BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (16:02) — In concluding my remarks on this bill, which we are supportive of, I was just making some general points in regard to transport governance in this state and the lack of an integrated transport plan even though it is required by the Transport Integration Act 2010. In fact multiple governments since the Brumby government have actually been in breach of that act by not having a plan. The result of not having a plan is essentially that we are now seeing pop up out of nowhere projects of various benefit. Obviously we have had the Suburban Rail Loop pop up out of nowhere — it did not seem to have anything to do with Transport for Victoria or Infrastructure Victoria — although we certainly welcome a long-term investment in public transport.

The other project is the West Gate tunnel proposed by Transurban. It is such an incredible project. I have described Transurban as essentially the first privatised transport department in the country. Transurban now are essentially planning, building, owning and operating transport projects in this state. Instead of getting their appropriation from the budget, they are getting it from a sweetheart deal to extend tolls that go straight into their profit margin. It is such a sweetheart deal that even the opposition are not impressed with it. In a long-term transport plan for the state no doubt you would see those other options available to serve the west, whether it is Melbourne Metro 2 or of course the

government's first original proposal, the West Gate distributor project and the \$500 million off-ramps there — I think there was community consensus that was the right way to go — instead now we have got this incredible project that even the Liberals think is a bit too much of a sweetheart deal with the private sector. That is what happens when you do not have an integrated transport plan, which is certainly what we need in this state.

I would also make the point that if money from these funds is going to be expended on various roads, upgrades and repairs, we do actually need real, meaningful community engagement and community involvement in decisions in regard to transport projects in their area. You probably could not find an electorate or community that has not been, quite frankly, appalled by some of the consultation and by the decisions that have been made by transport agencies in regard to projects big or small.

In my own area, the Prahran electorate, we had the case of High Street, where without warning, without anyone telling us, the speed limit was lowered to 40 kilometres an hour and some solid bike lanes were put in. I thought the bike lanes were good, but they were dropped unawares on the community. Sure as day, several months later the bike lanes disappeared, replaced by some dotted lines, again with no real explanation or consultation. After that suddenly we saw an ad on Facebook that they were going to do some community consultation about what to do with High Street.

Another example was the Hornby Street crossover. I think some mail went out saying, 'This is what's happening' — that this crossover was being closed. It took a very long time, community petitions, some meetings — I met with residents on the street — but VicRoads finally were convinced to hold some community engagement and meet with residents there, and there was complete, absolute chaos about whether this was just information or whether they were actually consulting on what was going to happen. Was this just VicRoads telling residents what was happening or were they actually genuinely seeking feedback? There was chaos in terms of how many people they thought would turn up and what the location was. If you really want to fire up a local community, that sort of failed consultation is the right way of going about it.

I can mention several other cases where people in a local area were quite unhappy about not being involved in meaningful decision-making about transport projects in their area. Certainly we should look at involving local groups in public meetings so that all transport projects, big or small, in a local area can be taken to a

public meeting and we can have a formalised process with decent, meaningful community engagement in decisions about transport projects in their own area rather than, quite frankly, what is often a pick-and-choose approach from the transport agency as to what level and what form of engagement they are going to have on transport projects in local areas.

With that, we are supportive of this bill. As I said, we will probably have a bit of another look at the provision to not require the Treasurer to sign off on VicTrack selling, disposing of or developing land, but other than that we are supportive of this bill.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (16:07) — It gives me great pleasure to join the debate on the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. This gives effect to commitments that we made to hypothecate funding from traffic camera and on-the-spot speeding fines revenue into Better Roads Victoria and guarantees a minimum proportion of Better Roads Victoria funding will be allocated to outer suburban and interface communities and to rural and regional communities into perpetuity.

Occasionally I have been caught going a little bit over the odds. I really try to use cruise control as much as I can — most of the time in my area I am going under the speed limit because of concerns about kangaroos, deer and things like that — but occasionally I have transgressed. Particularly on social media you get people being concerned about fines and being fined, but I would rather see that no-one actually ever gets fined because none of us speed. However, we are all human, and even when we try not to speed that sometimes happens. But even when it does, I think the community wants to know that that fine revenue does not simply go into consolidated revenue but into better road funding. I think people would have a lot more faith in the fines system and in the road funding system were this measure to be adopted.

I found it curious that the opposition have criticised the breakdown for how the Better Roads Victoria fund money will be allocated. The bill states that 33 per cent of the revenue will be used for the repair and upgrade of roads in outer suburban and interface communities, 33 per cent of the revenue will be used for the repair and upgrade of roads and level crossings in rural and regional communities and the remaining 34 per cent will be allocated to the repair and upgrade of roads and level crossings in metropolitan, outer suburban and interface, or rural and regional communities. I think those opposite have completely misunderstood this would be the bottom-line level of funding — the base

level of funding of what would be spent in this state. We have gone well over and above what we committed to pre-election. I would say that I support that one-third, one-third approach and then the 34 per cent being the balance, because it can top up the lumpy nature of capital projects from year to year. I would say that particularly in the event of disasters or particular problems in the network it is entirely appropriate that this should be the case.

I think maybe the member for Ovens Valley or the member for Benambra may be interested in this. I know the previous member for Benalla, Bill Sykes, certainly was no stranger to the Great Alpine Road going up to Mount Hotham. During the previous government there was a huge landslide that happened in the lead-up to the ski season, just before Easter. That road was completely blocked, and it looked like it would jeopardise the opening of the ski season — not just for the fun and the visitors that like to go there but also because it had the very real potential to disrupt the economy of the mountain and the Ovens Valley below. It could have had a huge impact on jobs. So the funds were transferred to do that work, and the road was able to open at the beginning of the season.

I think the opposition needs to understand that the 34 per cent is there so it can be used in the event of situations like that. For example, on the Princes Highway during the Morwell mine fire there were slippages and the road was closed for some period of time. If you actually did not have the base enshrined in legislation — a third for country and regional areas and a third for outer suburban and interface — and if you were to fix the other 34 per cent, you would not have that flexibility. So I believe that that is absolutely appropriate.

The background to this is Labor's 2014 transport plan, Project 10 000, which was actually a transport plan and a jobs plan. We said that we would create 10 000 jobs within that plan. We have gone well over and above that. As part of the plan we committed \$1 billion over eight years to repair and upgrade roads across Melbourne's outer suburbs and another \$1 billion to repair and upgrade roads and level crossings in country Victoria. In just under four years this government has exceeded that commitment of \$2 billion over eight years. In only four years I am pleased to report to the house that \$3.035 billion has so far been allocated. There is \$1.917 billion for outer suburban and interface communities and \$1.118 billion for rural and regional communities. This locked-in investment is on top of Labor's massive program of major road projects, which includes the West Gate tunnel, the north-east link, and the \$4 billion suburban roads upgrade as well as

upgrades to the Tullamarine Freeway, the Monash Freeway and the M80 ring-road.

My community has been a beneficiary of this roads expenditure. We have stage one of the Yan Yean Road duplication underway at the moment, for which nothing was done in the four years when those opposite were in charge. We have the duplication of Plenty Road to Bridge Inn Road underway. As part of this year's budget, with the suburban roads upgrades in the north we have committed to duplicating the second stage of Yan Yean Road all the way to Bridge Inn Road. It was already funded in the previous year, but we are going to do that project together with Bridge Inn Road. In the north we are also going to duplicate Epping Road all the way to Bridge Inn Road. From the member for Thomastown's area, from McDonalds Road or the extension of that road — I cannot think exactly what the name of that is right now — it is going to go all the way to Epping Road. Craigieburn Road is being duplicated, Childs Road is being duplicated and we have a number of works around Fitzsimons Lane and the lead-up to Fitzsimons Lane that are going to hugely improve the transit into the Eltham electorate from south of the Yarra.

We have also had investment in Bolton Street, that road that was just ignored by the Nillumbik shire, the Banyule council and those opposite. It is now providing much safer passage for commuters. We are also doing the preplanning now for the intersection of Wallowa Road, Allendale Road and Ryans Road, which the member for Eltham and I are certainly welcoming. I know as a volunteer firefighter I cannot count how many times I turned out to motor vehicle accidents at that intersection. Also, another congested and very difficult intersection is the Civic Drive roundabout, which surely must be the largest roundabout in the Southern Hemisphere. We certainly have plans underway to do that, and it does not include a bizarre spaghetti freeway like you would see in Los Angeles. It will be done in a much more measured way that will provide good traffic flow onto the M80 and the north-east link, which we are committed to building.

I find it curious that the Greens are opposing our measures in relation to giving the Treasurer power to transfer land between different transport agencies. I think that that is really important. I think it will be important in places like Hurstbridge. It was certainly a factor in us trying to speed up the delivery of walking and cycling paths to Mernda station, because you are dealing with a private landholder, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and also VicRoads. A VicRoads engineer publicly stated at a public meeting that it actually took her more to organise that path than it did a

major road project. So I think this will assist in delivering major road projects, and the Greens should support it.

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) (16:17) — I am very pleased to contribute to this debate on the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. The purpose of the bill before the house is to make a range of changes. One of the key principles will be for the redirection of traffic infringement fines that have been collected — that they be hypothecated into a new Better Roads Victoria Trust Account, which will be utilised to fund road maintenance and upgrades in the outer suburban interface communities, as well as through regional Victoria, and I will come back to this in a moment. The opposition is of a view that more needs to be done in this space in terms of the allocation. The member for Croydon moved a reasoned amendment, which I strongly support.

The other issue that I would like to talk about first, though, is that the bill makes changes to the operation and administration of interlock devices that are in place. Obviously interlock devices are in place as a consequence of people who have had their licences disqualified or had some sort of sanction imposed on them because of drink-driving. The context in this bill is that it removes responsibility from the courts, transferring it directly to VicRoads, in terms of the removal of interlock devices. The commentary that the member for Croydon made during his contribution was interesting. He referred to advice from a concerned Victorian that the involvement of the courts means there is potentially a greater psychological commitment by an offender not to undertake the behaviour that led to the imposition of an interlock device in the first place. Under this arrangement it will simply become an administrative process, where VicRoads will effectively manage the interlock device, removing it from the court system.

I think it is important that the government understands that and provides an explanation as to what the likely impact will be of the removal of the court system and the fact that an offender is not required to be involved with the court system in order to provide either an explanation or more importantly a commitment that they will not undertake into the future the inappropriate behaviours which led to the implementation of the interlock device in the first place. As we know, VicRoads is fundamentally interested in the management of Victorian roads; it is not concerned about the management of issues pertaining to health and safety or these areas of law. In fact it would see that as being the responsibility of other areas of

government. I place that on the record, because that certainly is a potential issue of concern.

If I can come back to the Better Roads Victoria funding, the opposition is of the view that the government's allocation of 33 per cent for rural roads and 33 per cent for interface communities is not enough. We believe it should be mandated to be 40 per cent for regional Victoria and 40 per cent for interface communities. We believe that sends a very clear message to those communities that the government supports them, understands their concerns and wants to put money into those communities.

When you travel through regional Victoria, you see the shocking state of some of our roads, with the potholes and with the lack of attention and funding on many of these roads. We also see across the interface councils the dire need for investment. That is why we believe that this hypothecation should in fact be mandated so that there is a guaranteed 40 per cent allocation for rural communities and a 40 per cent allocation for interface councils.

I think also it is important to pick up on the issues that have been raised by others about the road systems that apply across the state but also those road systems that affect my community. One road which is of significant importance to my community is a road that has not been built but which needs to be built — everybody says it needs to be built — and that is the east–west link. The Labor government under John Brumby commissioned a study by Sir Rod Eddington, and he recommended to then Premier John Brumby that the top rail project was the metro rail tunnel and the top road project was east–west link.

We had a change of government and a change of Premier, and Premier Ted Baillieu picked up the recommendations of Sir Rod Eddington and said, 'We will continue that work. We will continue the work on a metro rail tunnel and we will continue the work on an east–west link'. At the time, the then opposition supported that position, and why wouldn't they? It was their idea; it was their proposition that was championed by then Premier John Brumby.

Then all of a sudden they changed their position because the polling was showing that they needed to out-green the Greens in the inner north, and they were concerned about the loss of seats. They changed their position to say, 'We don't support it, but if the contract is signed, we'll honour the contract'. Then the Greens ran the message around the north that, 'This is a Labor Party that is not committed to getting rid of the east–west link because they will honour the contract'. All of

a sudden polling showed that they could lose some seats, so they changed their position again, and this time instead of saying that they would honour a contract, they said that they would not honour a contract. But as we know, they then said that in not honouring the contract it would not matter because the document was not worth the paper it was written on, and they had legal advice to that effect. We know that \$1.2 billion later plus —

Mr M. O'Brien interjected.

Mr WAKELING — Sorry, \$1.3 billion later. What's \$100 million between friends? I forgot about that \$100 million. Thank you very much, shadow Treasurer.

So \$1.3 billion later Victorians did not get the road, but Victoria's population has increased by half a million during the term of this government. We know that 93 to 95 per cent of those people live within the metropolitan area of Melbourne, so the pressures for the east–west link have not gone away; in fact they have just got worse. That is why a future Liberal-Nationals government will build the east–west link, because we know it is needed. Everyone in the community knows it is needed, and do you know what? A lot of Labor voters actually know it is needed, because a lot of Labor voters say, 'I can't believe my party got rid of it'. Yes, it should have been done, and it will be done, but unfortunately it will not happen under this government; it will only happen under an incoming government. In addition to that, we will get on with building the north-east link, because we see both roads as being vital to this state.

The final one I want to talk about is the West Gate tunnel —

Ms Ward interjected.

Mr WAKELING — I will be interested to hear the member for Eltham's explanation of this, because prior to the last election the Labor Party provided no explanation to my community — it provided no explanation to the people who live in the eastern suburbs or in the south-east of Melbourne about a future Labor government signing up to a contract with Transurban to build a tunnel and the residents of the east and south-east of Melbourne paying tolls for an additional 10 years to use a road and to pay for a tunnel they are never going to use. So my residents are going to be paying tolls for an extra 10 years to use the Monash when they travel from Knox to the city and when they return home at night to Knox to pay for a

tunnel on the other side of the city, a tunnel they will be lucky to use.

I am looking forward with interest to the next speaker from the government, from the Labor Party, providing an explanation, when they talk about roads, as to where they see the justification in forcing my community to pay tolls for an extra 10 years for a road they will not use. But that is what you get from the Labor Party.

I support the reasoned amendment put forward by the member for Croydon. I think it is important that we provide the necessary support for rural and interface communities. With those remarks, I look forward to the success of the member's reasoned amendment.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) (16:27) — I am certainly pleased to speak on the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018 because, as 'better roads' suggests, that is what this government is about. As a regional member of Parliament I am especially pleased to be a Labor Party member. I hear the member for Lowan cackling at the suggestion, and I heard her contribution before in which she decried how dreadful the roads are under Labor. Well, she just needs to look back four years, because I remember in the last term of government one of the things that so many of my constituents were saying as we moved along was that the standard of our roads had dropped under the then government.

Labor established a program called 'dob in my local pothole'. The one that won was in my electorate — it was on Colac-Ballarat Road, which incidentally runs down to the then Minister for Public Transport's electorate in his area of Colac. That was declared by 'dob in my pothole' as the worst road because under the former government nothing was happening to upgrade it except that signs went up along the sides of Colac-Ballarat Road that warned drivers to travel slowly, not at the speed limit, because of the rough edges and the condition of the road. All that the people on that road got was signage saying travel slowly because of the rough surfaces.

Ahead of us coming to office we not only committed to of course funding upgrades to Colac-Ballarat Road but we also acknowledged Project 10 000, which said that over an eight-year period we would commit \$1 billion to upgrading regional roads. We would also commit \$1 billion over eight years to upgrading interface, suburban and outer suburban roads. Since we came to office not only have we honoured that commitment but we have already in four years bettered that commitment. We have seen that in the first term of the

Andrews government we have allocated a total of \$3 billion already towards not only the regional roads but also the suburban and interface roads. We have already increased that commitment.

I have heard the moaning from members on the other side that we cut the roads and bridges funding. Instead of that we now have the Local Roads to Market funding, and I have seen that at work on roads in my electorate. We have seen bridges upgraded in my electorate and we have seen roads upgraded in my electorate and in a range of other electorates where we acknowledge that there is a need for produce to be able to be transported to market and where we need to upgrade bridges. That is another major project that this government has been getting underway.

Within my electorate of Buninyong we have recently upgraded the Midland Highway, something that we commenced in earlier terms during the Bracks and Brumby governments. We put in more passing lanes between Elaine and Meredith, and this year we completed significant upgrades to that major road that carries traffic between Ballarat and Geelong and we have seen another four passing loops completed. There is now a much better road surface between Meredith and Geelong, and that has been greatly appreciated by so many people.

In completing that work the other thing that this Andrews government has been committed to doing in terms of our road infrastructure is improving not just the standard of the road surface but also the safety features of the road surface. In terms of the Midland Highway works that have been undertaken, we have put in more wire rope barriers both on the edge of the road where there is potential for run-off-the-road crashes and down the centre of the road. This has been an extension of a trial so that we can have less head-on crashes, which of course is the most devastating form of crash. When people wander into the centre of the road and across into oncoming traffic, that is a pretty disastrous thing, so we have put wire rope barriers down the centre of the road as part of these upgrade works on the Midland Highway. This is great work from this government.

In terms of this legislation, what it is really aiming to do is enshrine that a third of the funding — and that is a minimum of one-third — that is going to be spent on road infrastructure will in fact be committed to regional roads in the future. If we look at this last budget, the 2018–19 budget, we know that it alone delivered \$433 million to regional road restoration, \$261 million for road upgrades and \$229 million for safety works. The people in my electorate have seen these roadworks

happening over this last year, and they are telling me they are very happy that we are addressing safety issues. We are putting in more of the rumble strips, as people know them — the tactile edging on roads — and trialling them down the middle of roads where, again, we want to reduce the risk of head-on crashes, of people wandering to the right and across into oncoming traffic as they are driving. We have been putting more of the tactile edging down the middle of roads, and this is part of this government's commitment to the Towards Zero strategy.

VicRoads has been working very actively to develop strategies to lower the road toll by making roads safer, and I notice that they will be undertaking a number of community consultation sessions across my electorate and the broader Ballarat region in coming months because they have identified some particular intersections that need upgrading — on Creswick Road, for example, heading north out of Ballarat and at a number of other sites where we know there is a crash history that needs to be addressed.

We certainly know that our regional roads continue to require substantial investment, so that is why we have established the Better Roads Victoria fund and why we want to insist that that fund grows. We also note that within this legislation we are guaranteeing that funding from traffic camera fines and on-the-spot speed fines or the equivalent funding will be going into Better Roads Victoria's trust account. We will be building that account to ensure that more and more money can be spent on our roads. We know it needs to be done. Country people continue to identify roads that need upgrading. That is right, because roads deteriorate as we have more transport travelling upon them. It is vitally important that we do commit to funding, and the Andrews government has really in this term demonstrated that we are serious about getting on with addressing the quality of our roads right across the state while certainly recognising that regional roads need to be funded. We are providing that funding. This legislation guarantees that at least a third of the ongoing funding within the Better Roads fund will go to upgrading regional roads.

We have heard from other MPs about other aspects of this bill that look at the issue of alcohol interlock devices and transferring the responsibility for administering that program from the court system, freeing up the court system, to VicRoads to administer that program as a result of this legislation. That is a sound approach to progress as it will take pressure off our courts for things that are unnecessary and that VicRoads can do as an administrative matter. I hope we have less of those alcohol interlock devices being

required to be implemented. I hope more and more people will understand the message that you cannot drink and drive and that it is totally inappropriate. I hope that people will learn those messages that we keep promoting in so many ways, including through television media, that we want people to drive safely.

The work that this government is doing through VicRoads to continue to make our roads safer is also important. We have got to work from both fronts to try to bring down our road toll, make people safer on the roads and make their travelling experience across country Victoria more pleasurable as well as being safer, because we know people in our regional electorates are doing a lot of travelling on regional roads. We want those to be good, sound, safe roads, and we want people to be able to travel from A to B safely. So I commend this legislation.

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (16:37) — I rise to make a contribution to the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. I do so with much amusement, because the quality of the roads in Victoria is something that everybody in my electorate is screaming about. When I listen to the contributors from the government benches I am sure that I am living in a different state to them.

The bill seeks to do many things and to amend quite a number of acts, including the Heavy Vehicle National Law Application Act 2013, where there are some adjustments of rules relating to fatigue management; the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act 2017, where there are some amendments in relation to when the regulator may take disciplinary action against a permission holder; the Transport Integration Act 2010, streamlining land transactions between transport agencies; and the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983, which is about rail staff involved in fatal incidents. The two that I will spend a little bit more time on are the amendments to the Road Safety Act 1986, which refers to changes around interlock devices, and also the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act 1979, which talks about the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account.

In short, one of the key areas here is the amendment to make compulsory the payment of traffic camera and speeding fines to the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account. With that comes guaranteed funding of 33 per cent to rural and regional areas and 33 per cent to outer suburban and interface areas, and at this point I will refer to the reasoned amendment that is being put forward by the member for Croydon. I will be supporting that, because he is suggesting that this bill be withdrawn and redrafted to provide for an increase

in the guaranteed level of funding for rural, regional, outer suburban and interface communities from Better Roads funding and to ensure that such funding is not reduced over time by a reduction in the total funding pool. At the moment we have got 33 per cent for both the rural and regional areas and the outer suburban and interface areas, and we would like to see that increased and certainly the overall pool not decreased over time.

With regard to the administration of alcohol interlocks, there are changes that are being made here that reduce the pressure on the courts, taking that pressure that is primarily on the Magistrates Court and moving the alcohol interlock offences into the VicRoads alcohol interlock program. Following the removal of all alcohol conditions for drink-driving offenders once they have met the mandatory criteria and can demonstrate that they have separated drinking from driving, this will now be under the auspices of VicRoads.

If we look at the larger context here around Better Roads Victoria, I have certainly noticed that the government has said a number of times and certainly said in the second-reading speech that they want to build better roads for more communities. I would say that that is something that they have failed miserably at up to this point. People in the Eildon electorate refer to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety as the Minister for Uneven Surfaces, and we know that is very much the case.

Rather than roads and road safety, what is being done in the electorate of Eildon in terms of safety is typically just the installation of barriers. These barriers are either roadside or in the middle of the road, and I note with the first ones that were done — the trial installation on the Melba Highway and then probably the 10 kilometres between Molesworth and Alexandra — that the uprights had quite thick padding around them. I have seen since down in Gippsland that this padding is not being rolled out, and that padding I understood was to reduce some of the trauma for motorbike riders. I am very disappointed to see that it was really only put forward in that first little bit to try to appease people.

The other thing that the Minister for Uneven Surfaces has done is popped 80-kilometre signs up everywhere in 100-kilometre-an-hour areas. In fact the very first thing that was done was the axing of the country roads and bridges program.

Ms Green — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I think the member for Eildon knows that she should refer to people by their correct title. She did it once and that was funny, but to keep doing it — you know, the rest of us could keep calling her Cindy from the City

but we have stopped that now. I think she should pull her head in as well.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny) — I ask the member to use correct titles in this place.

Ms McLEISH — I will try not to refer to him again. The first thing that was done was the axing of the country roads and bridges initiative, which was an extremely popular initiative that the coalition government adopted. Country shires were the great beneficiaries of that, receiving \$1 million each year for four years. This allowed them to really make a big difference locally on their roads. They had a large backlog of maintenance issues and surfacing issues, and this really made a huge difference to them. They have been behind the eight ball ever since in trying to keep up with their needs.

We have got increasing traffic in much of country Victoria. Tourism is on the rise, and there is a lot of transport. The trucks are bigger, vehicles are bigger and we have got people with four-wheel drives moving through all the time, and the local roads are taking a bit of a beating. We have also noted that the Premier through the country roads program managed to somehow convince the department that country roads were actually in the Mulgrave electorate and to put some bridges on the Monash down in his area. People in the country were absolutely appalled to think that money was being diverted from country Victoria to his electorate in the city.

There are a number of solutions that can be undertaken to make our roads safer. A lot of these are not being done. We are seeing the funding for improvements coming out of the Transport Accident Commission rather than the roads budget itself, and some of the more complex changes that are needed — the corners, the surfaces and the camber of the roads — continue to go unaddressed. A lot of the improvements that have been made in my electorate have been made after we have done an enormous amount of campaigning. I look at the Melba Highway and I look at the Healesville-Yarra Glen Road, where a lot of work was needed. We did a lot of campaigning, and that finally happened. Disappointingly it happened during the rainy season. We were constantly being told that these improvements would be made over the summer period when you would get a better result, so I am expecting those to fall apart again fairly soon.

I think the introduction of this bill at this particular point gives the government a pre-election opportunity to bang on about country roads, which they have neglected. I want to draw the attention of the house and

certainly the minister to some of the smaller areas in my electorate that they have missed. I refer to a letter from Chris Bennetts, who is the new president of the Barjarg Community Group. Barjarg is a small community just out of Mansfield. They have written, through John Rutley, to the mayor of Mansfield but they have also written directly to VicRoads in Benalla. They have suggested a number of changes that could be made to improve safety in the area. In particular they refer to a 3-kilometre stretch on the Midland Link Road between McGills Road and the Barjarg Country Fire Authority shed, which is at the Mansfield turnoff. The letter from Chris Bennetts says:

This stretch of road narrow, is hilly with high embankments either side, it has many crests in the road that conceal the view of oncoming traffic ...

and there are many concealed driveways. The letter talks about the fact that the drainage on the side of the road is within 1 metre of the bitumen and that there have been accidents there where people have driven into the drains. It is a heavily timbered area and there is a lot of slow-moving agricultural machinery there, and the graders on the road are being overtaken. There have been quite a number of accidents. As I have mentioned, there are lots of concealed driveways along the road, and there is poor signposting and the road is difficult to navigate at night because of the lack of lighting. The group think there are a number of simple things that can be done to address this section of road. They also think there is a desperate need — and I agree with this because a lot of people have raised it — for an extra passing lane similar to the one at Merton to provide an easier opportunity for overtaking.

Also within my electorate we have had issues with Jamieson-Licola Road. We were told that VicRoads would undertake traffic counts but that has failed to happen, which is really disappointing because I raised that issue as an adjournment matter quite some time ago. In the main street of Healesville there is an ordinary intersection at the corner of the Maroondah Highway, Badger Creek Road and Wilson Street. The minister seems to think that there is nothing wrong with this road and that it does not need changing, but I can tell you that all of the people of Healesville think it does need changing.

There has been an enormous amount of neglect by this current government and the minister in terms of country roads and indeed outer suburban and interface council roads, and I know that we certainly need increased investment in this area.

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) (16:47) — I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr M. O'BRIEN (Malvern) (16:47) — The coalition opposes this motion. Why should this debate be adjourned? These are very important issues currently before the house. We are talking about the state of country roads, and given the appalling performance of this government, and in fact of Labor governments for 15 of the last 19 years, I am probably not surprised they are trying to shut down debate. I am probably not surprised they are trying to avoid any scrutiny being placed on the abysmal status of country roads which have been under their watch for 15 out of 19 years. This is a very important bill before the house. More importantly, a very important reasoned amendment has been moved by the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Croydon, to increase the proportion of funds that would flow from fines towards fixing country roads. As a former member for Benalla, Dr Sykes, used to say when he was in this place, 'If you fix country roads, you save country lives'.

I think the real reason the government wants to try and postpone further debate on this bill is they have a stunt they want to engage in. We offered them the opportunity to bring on their little stunt, their censure motion, this morning. But of course the government was too gutless, the government was too spineless, the government was too cowardly to actually bring on the debate when they raised it in the house in the first place. We wanted to debate it this morning but the government wanted to push it off. The government wants to make sure that we cannot have opportunities to debate important issues like fixing country roads and saving country lives. They want to focus tomorrow on their stunt. Well, we say no. We say the business of this house should be the business of the people of Victoria. We say the business of this house should be the things that matter to the people of Victoria. The government's political games, their mudslinging and their self-obsession are not what matter to the people of the state. What matters to the people of this state are things like roads, public transport, schools, hospitals and fixing the broken justice system that we have seen under this government.

So we do not support the motion to adjourn debate on this bill. We have many members on this side of the house — many members of the Liberal and National parties — who want to speak on this bill. It was the government's decision to leave this bill until the second-last sitting week of this Parliament — the second-last sitting week of four years. This was an

election commitment, the government said. They made this commitment over four years ago. They could have brought this legislation in at any time at the end of 2014 or in 2015, 2016 or 2017 or any time before October or November 2018. But, no, they left it to the very last minute, and having left it to the very last minute, they now want to gag debate. Well, that is not what we are going to accept. We vigorously oppose this adjournment motion. This motion is a disgrace. This motion is simply an attempt by this rotten Labor government to avoid scrutiny of their policy failures and to try and provide more debating time for their ridiculous political stunts and distractions.

This debate should not be adjourned. This motion should not be agreed to. This debate on the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018 should continue. We have many members on this side of the house who want to talk about the status of their own roads. I would like to get up and talk about the fact that this government wasted \$1.3 billion ripping up the east-west link contract. I would like to talk about the fact that my constituents will be paying higher tolls for using CityLink for 20 years as a result of the government's dodgy West Gate tunnel deal — their dodgy deal with Transurban before the election that they never took to the people. I would like to talk about the fact that this government is so incompetent when it comes to road management that they actually pulled down noise walls on the Monash Freeway and then said they did not have the money to replace them, so there were huge gaps in the Monash Freeway affecting my residents.

There are too many issues of importance to members on the side of the house for this motion to adjourn debate to pass. If members vote for this motion, it tells you only one thing: they do not care about Victorians and they do not care about the issues that matter to Victorians. All they care about is grubby politics and grubby political stunts. It is an indictment of a government that has lost its way and an indictment of a government that no longer deserves to function as the government of this state.

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) (16:52) — That was a little melodramatic from the member for Malvern, I would have thought. It was quite a performance. I am not sure that a mere adjournment motion warrants that degree of excitement, but who am I to tell the member for Malvern how to suck eggs?

An honourable member interjected.

Mr PAKULA — I will explain later. The government seeks to adjourn this debate, which has

been going for many hours now. We seek to adjourn the debate because there are some very important bills returning from the Legislative Council: the Long Service Benefits Portability Bill 2018, which I know those opposite did not support but which nevertheless is an important bill with some important amendments that we will be moving that this house accepts; the Prevention of Family Violence Bill 2018, where indeed we will be moving to accept amendments moved by the Liberal Party in the other place and passed by that house; and a bill of my own, the very important Victims and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, where there were amendments moved in relation to the statement of recognition that was provided to care leavers — those people who were treated so unfairly by the justice system which this bill seeks to remedy.

There is also a very important bill, the Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2018, which is worthy of debate and which the government will seek to move at the conclusion of the consideration of those amendments from the Legislative Council. So whilst I appreciate the fervour with which the member for Malvern put his position, there are simply a number of other important matters that this house needs to attend to. The bill is currently before the house. It has been debated for many, many hours, and I support the motion moved by the Minister for Industrial Relations and urge other members to do so.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) (16:55) — I rise to oppose the adjournment of the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018. We on this side want to continue to debate roads, and in particular country roads, from the National Party's point of view. These roads have deteriorated and many of them have some quite serious concerns. Also, we want to look at how infringement revenue is to be divided. In particular we are looking to have a reasoned amendment and to insert that 40 per cent of the revenue should go to the maintenance of country roads. That is very, very important.

In my electorate, I have a number of roads that have had their purpose dramatically changed by development in recent years. One of those is the Robinvale-Sea Lake Road. This is a feeder road from the table grape and grain areas around Robinvale and south of Robinvale to the Calder Highway. This road has seen a considerable increase in traffic, both from grain and from containerised table grapes making their way to the port of Melbourne. The road is narrow; it is one of those older bitumen roads that does need shoulder work. Some of the crests have been done but when you have got trucks now carrying containers and

using these when they get off the road, it damages the shoulder, damages the edge of the bitumen and also generally damages other vehicles with the inevitable stones that are thrown up. This was a bill where I wanted to talk in some detail about how we can manage country roads.

The country roads and bridges program was axed in this term of government, something that smaller municipalities around the country Victoria, and in particular Yarriambiack and Buloke councils in my area, put to good use. That million dollars that they got — they made that go a very, very long way to maintaining those roads which are so important for communication in my areas.

The bill also streamlines land transfers between transport agencies — VicTrack to VicRoads. The requirement for the Treasurer to approve all VicTrack land transactions is to be removed. This is important for Mildura. We have a riverfront. In our term of government we funded the riverfront development in Mildura, but stage 2 is there and sitting on some VicTrack land. There are a couple of parcels of land there that are significant, and it is generally understood within the Mildura community that they will be made available for expressions of interest for businesses in Mildura to come forward with ways to develop that land. Certainly we want to see the process streamlined and, in particular, the removal of one bureaucratic layer so that land can be made available as quickly as possible for expressions of interest from businesses about how to develop that and thus further develop that Mildura riverfront.

I am very concerned that this is an effort to gag debate on issues that are important, particularly to country Victoria. There is a lot in this bill, and a lot of it is important, but nothing is more important to many of my rural communities than the state of their roads and many other roads have deteriorated over the term of this government. It is the one thing that they keep coming to me about as I travel around. They ask, 'What are you going to do about the roads? What is the government going to do about the roads?'. Because they do not have public transport in these more isolated rural areas, they need their road network for communication and for safety and to move their goods to market so that they can have an income.

Adjourning this bill should be vigorously opposed. There is so much to discuss. In the words of Bill Sykes and as has been said before, 'If you fix country roads, you save country lives'. This debate should continue to ensure that those issues are fully debated.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) (17:00) — I certainly support the motion before the house to adjourn the current bill. I would argue that the member for Mildura has now had his opportunity to speak on the Better Roads Victoria legislation — that is the opportunity, I guess, of the motion to adjourn. In regard to the Better Roads legislation that we are proposing to adjourn, we have had of course in the order of 10 people speak on the legislation and explain why it is important legislation before the house, but we know we have a number of other important pieces of legislation to move on to.

Clearly the Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2018 is due to come up now. I know that there are some people who have attended Parliament today — some nurses — who are particularly interested in the issue of nurse-patient ratios, as all members of this house should be, because obviously we do want to progress that important issue before the house and give members in this house plenty of opportunity to debate that legislation.

As we heard from the Attorney-General, we know that there are also three bills that are now coming down from the upper house that need to be addressed, so in order to ensure that there is opportunity for these important additional matters to be dealt with, it is important that we do adjourn the Better Roads bill, recognising that a number of people have had an opportunity to speak on the bill. We recognise that it is important, but there are other important matters to move on to.

I do not want to take up any more time of the house. I want to see us adjourn this current bill before the house, move on to the safe patient care legislation and other important legislation that needs to be discussed in this house this week.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (17:01) — I also want to vigorously oppose this adjournment. Why do we need to be gagging something which is an important issue — the most important issue in my electorate? Did they know that I wanted to speak? I am the one who has the worst roads in Victoria. VicRoads data proves that. So, what — do they want to keep me quiet because they do not want to hear how bad the roads are? Do they really not understand what the west looks like?

I heard the Minister for — what was it? — Unsafe Roads speaking about ‘out west’. Well, let me tell you that ‘out west’ goes a lot further than the western suburbs, and the safety of people right out west to the South Australian border is just as important as

someone’s safety in metropolitan Melbourne. That is how you govern for the state of Victoria.

We have got pothole on top of pothole. It is so unsafe on our roads that people who are quite young will not drive in the evenings and the night-time because it is so dangerous. And when we fix the potholes, they just come back again in no time, because we are just not giving enough resources to the contractors to do the job. And what did the Auditor-General say? This government has no plan, no strategy; they do not monitor the work; they do not hold contractors to account and they do not provide enough resources. So, yes, those opposite do not want to hear that from me — I am sure they do not. The resources they do give, they do not make sure they are utilised well.

My daughter was at a function the other day and was handed a bag of goodies with no less than 10 freebies in it, all from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). What was it? A bag of mints, a USB — all with ‘TAC’ on them. How many freebies do we need to get in one bag to get the message? It is just wasteful; it is absolutely wasteful. The message is clear. Okay, let us have safety on our roads, but we do not have to give away 10 things to one person, and so many of them in one hit, to get that message through. It is just wasteful.

It is just like when the Myamyn-MacArthur Road was fixed. Within weeks after the first rainfall that road fell apart. Well, I ask you: who was holding people to account? Who was monitoring it? How could a very new road, just completed, fall apart within weeks? Of course when we raised that issue — oh, yes — we embarrassed those opposite. It was embarrassing. I would be embarrassed if I did a job that fell apart in three weeks — absolutely disgraceful.

And what is this government’s answer to fixing roads in south-west Victoria, in South-West Coast? Oh, that’s right: put up some 60-kilometre zone slow-down signs on major highways — on major highways, such as from Portland through to Dartmoor. It is a disgrace. Slow people down? Do they think that is going to help our safety and our productivity in getting product to market so that we can make sure that the area of the state that actually does produce the most agricultural product for our whole state is embraced rather than disadvantaged? How do you increase productivity when you are actually slowing down the transporter getting product to market? You do not. You are actually doing the opposite. You make it uncompetitive; you make it internationally uncompetitive.

We have actually looked at the reports of the productivity of the state of Victoria, and we are the

worst. There are no worries there, are there? We are the worst. We do not know what productivity means. In fact I would ask those opposite what it does mean. I would hope they would try and explain it, but they have no idea so far. So slow us down! All we are asking for is the opportunity to debate, because we are prepared. I heard from my colleagues — every single one — and many of them have come and visited and actually driven on our roads. The shadow minister for roads, the member for Croydon; the shadow Treasurer — the Treasurer-to-be — the member for Malvern; and the shadow minister for tourism, the member for Bayswater, are people who understand roads' importance to the state of Victoria. They have all driven on these roads, and they were horrified.

What we have seen is our side of politics very committed to the decentralisation approach of having connectivity given a high priority and our roads given a high priority so that when we start governing, when we win the election in November, the whole state of Victoria — not just Melbourne, but the whole state of Victoria — will have better connectivity.

Of course we have to govern for the whole state. We want this state to be a state of cities, a state where we embrace the whole community. We want a community of people who have every right to contribute, but they need the roads to do that. They need the roads to be in a form that can take product to market. I have a constituent who has a bluestone quarry. When he was taking bluestone pavers down to Acland Street, they were broken by the time he got there. If that does not tell you about the size of the potholes in South-West Coast, nothing will. It is pretty damn hard to smash up some bluestone, but our roads can manage it.

Can you imagine the cost to businesses of truck maintenance? One guy told me his maintenance bill had gone up by \$40 000 a month. This is not going to take our state forward, so do not gag us. Our roads are important.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 47

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

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

Noes, 36

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

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Debate adjourned until later this day.

LONG SERVICE BENEFITS PORTABILITY BILL 2018

Council's amendments

Returned from Council with message relating to amendments:

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport)
(17:13) — I move:

That the amendments be taken into consideration forthwith.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (17:13) — On the question, it seems that the government is in a mood where they are prepared to tear up conventions and practices in order to try to get their own way instead of following proper and legitimate processes and being prepared to listen to the input of other parties in this house. We have a bill here that has been returned from the Legislative Council, and, without any notice whatsoever, the government is seeking to bring it on for debate forthwith without any attempt to make arrangements with the opposition for it. Up until this point by and large the Leader of the House and I have had an established working relationship where we

arrange for bills to be scheduled when they are on message from Legislative Council to come on for debate, as we have seen with other bills that are now listed on the notice paper, such as we have seen with the bill on family violence matters that was received yesterday, where the Leader of the House had debate adjourned until later in the day. It was then listed for debate today, and arrangements have been made. The member for Bayswater, as the opposition spokesperson, is aware that it is coming upon the notice paper in a scheduled time. But here with this bill and without any forewarning to the opposition and, as far as I know, any forewarning to any of the crossbenchers either, the government suddenly wants to bring it on for debate. This is a bill that contains a wide range of significant and complex amendments that deserve to be available for consideration and for all members on this side of the house who want to contribute to the debate to make arrangements accordingly.

I am the lead speaker in relation to this bill because it is an industrial relations bill, but it also affects three other very important sectors. It affects the member for Gippsland East in his capacity as shadow minister for disability matters, because there are crucial issues about the coverage of disability service providers in the bill. It affects the member for Bayswater in her capacity representing the shadow minister, Georgie Crozier, in the other place because there are provisions relating to early childhood and learning matters. It also affects the member for Lowan in her capacity representing the shadow Minister for Health because it has serious implications for the community health sector. Each and every one of those members on the opposition side, as indeed the Greens party representative and any other crossbencher who wants to take part, are entitled to adequate time to consider this. There are procedures and processes that are normally well established in this house that notice will be given as to when a bill on message from the Legislative Council will be received. Without any warning and without any prior arrangement the government is seeking to pre-empt all of those and bring these amendments of the Legislative Council on for debate.

In any instance where there is a genuine case of urgency and where messages in relation to a bill need to be dealt with quickly by this house, this opposition has shown by our practice over the life of this Parliament that we have been prepared to accommodate the government. But there has been no attempt at that. There has been no approach made to us to say, 'We need to get this through this afternoon, and here are the urgent reasons why this bill needs to be dealt with this afternoon rather than being listed on the notice paper tomorrow'. We have to assume that the only reason the

government is trying to tear up convention yet again and ram this bill and its amendments through the house is that the government wants to clear the decks for their political stunt tomorrow.

As we have seen with the adjournment of the debate on the Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Bill 2018, the government's priority seems to be political stunts rather than things that really matter to the citizens of Victoria. Be it transport, be it disability services, be it early childhood learning or be it community health centres, those all seem to be irrelevant and second-order priorities as far as the government is concerned. Their number one priority seems to be wanting to come into this house and throw mud and make baseless attacks on others in order to try to divert attention from their own wrongdoing. That is not the way in which any parliament should go about doing its business.

These amendments should not be rushed on for debate today. There has been no good reason advanced as to why they should not be put on the notice paper and sequenced and scheduled for debate tomorrow, as has always been the case. It is disappointing that with only five sitting days left in this Parliament the Leader of the House and the government are departing from this practice and seeking to ram this bill through. It is clear this government is unravelling, it is clear this government has lost the capacity to govern and it is clear this government has lost the respect and credit of a government and needs to go. This bill should not be brought on for debate now.

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Industrial Relations) (17:18) — This debate should proceed because how long do these workers have to wait? How long do they have to wait? There has been 14 hours of debate on this bill, including 11 in the upper house. It is time to get on with it —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister can resume her seat for a moment. Members in this debate are entitled to be able to be heard. If members shout, they will be asked to leave the chamber.

Ms HUTCHINS — The long service portability scheme has been debated in this house for numerous hours, for 11 hours in the upper house and there have been many hours of discussion behind the scenes around the amendments that are before us today. Those opposite do not know what real work is. They do not know how to deliver in the industrial relations space. Clearly our side does, and we want to get on with

getting these amendments through so we can get this established.

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) (17:19) — The Minister for Industrial Relations said that this bill has been debated at great length. It has gone to the other place and had amendments made to it, and it is those amendments and those changes that should come back in here and be given full consideration by this side of the house. I think everybody in this chamber would agree that this bill is of extreme importance to everybody who is engaged and involved in the disability sector.

National Disability Services, the peak body for the deliverers, has expressed an enormous amount of concern about the potential impact that this bill may have on service delivery where we have a thin market of disability providers. When they are talking about that, they are talking predominantly about areas in rural and regional Victoria where we do not have an abundance of disability service providers. The disability service providers that exist in those areas have expressed grave concern about the additional cost that comes with portable long service leave. We have not had any explanation of where the additional funding is coming from to those providers to compensate them, and they are saying that this is going to call into question their very viability. So where we already have thin markets of disability service providers the providers themselves are expressing concern that this will impact on their very viability to be able to operate in the marketplace.

The national disability insurance scheme (NDIS), by anybody's description, is a huge reform; it is massive. I think the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing has said in this chamber on a number of occasions that there will be a few bumps in the road along the way as we iron out these problems. This is one of the areas that has the potential to have significant ramifications not only on the service providers but because it will impact the service providers it will also impact on the clientele, the families and the people who are caring for those with special needs and disabilities who need these services.

When you have National Disability Services, the very body that represents these service providers, flagging huge concerns, then we ought debate every amendment that has been made to the nth degree to make sure we get it right. That is what we come to this Parliament for. That is our job in this place: to make sure we get it right. So whilst we had a debate on this bill when it was initially in this place, the bill has changed, so we should be given the opportunity to not bring the amendments

on forthwith but to have the opportunity to consume those changes, to have the opportunity to consult with the stakeholders that are going to be impacted by those changes and then bring that debate back into this house and go through it very, very thoroughly. This bill should be debated in great detail.

The member for Box Hill pointed out very pertinently and very accurately that when we have changes or legislation that needs for a particular reason to pass through this place with speed we have shown on this side of the house that we are cooperative in doing that. That includes not only bills that have been introduced into this chamber initially but also bills and legislation that have come back from the other place with changes to them. What we are asking for is the opportunity to consider in detail those changes that have been made.

When we are talking about families and people with special needs there are people who live in all of our communities around the state who are quite concerned about some of the implications of this legislation on service provision in the disability sector. I think members of Parliament on both sides of the chamber owe our constituents who through no fault of their own are engaged in the disability sector the right and the courtesy to be able to debate any changes, to go through extremely thoroughly and fully and explore the ramifications and implications of any issues that will impact on their day-to-day lives. God only knows it is hard enough already without the worry about if you are going to have your provider tomorrow.

The NDIS is a massive reform. This bill and this legislation will impact on service delivery and will impact on providers. We ought to come to this chamber and have good notice of when these amendments are going to come up for discussion, and we ought to have the right to discuss and debate all of those ramifications in full.

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) (17:24) — That was a very detailed contribution by the member for Gippsland East. It demonstrated the fiction it is to suggest that those opposite are not fully cognisant of all the amendments that have been made in the other place and have not been fully involved in discussions with their colleagues in the other place in regard to those very amendments. As the member for Gippsland East knows, in fact one of the amendments that has been made which we are trying to seek support for in this chamber is the removal of activities funded under the national disability insurance scheme from the scope of the bill, with the possibility of having them included later via regulation. At the end of the day there is always something, isn't there? Those opposite are always able to find a reason

not to support legislation that is to the benefit of working people. Whether it is the labour hire legislation or the long service leave legislation, there is another attempt to filibuster and delay.

The fact is that this motion that we are debating now is a motion to have the debate that the member for Gippsland East seeks conducted forthwith. It is not about avoiding it or denying the opportunity to have it. It is about saying, 'Let's deal with it and let's deal with it now'. This has been the subject of many hours of debate, many hours of consideration. This an important piece of legislation, as are the other pieces of legislation which the government seeks to deal with today, including the Victims and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, and the time for delay is over. This has been the subject of a great deal of debate and consideration, and the house should deal with it now.

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) (17:26) — I rise on this motion, and I note that the Attorney-General said that, outside of the house, we will use any excuse we can or any reason not to support legislation. I think he understands that what he said is not correct in any shape or form. We have dealt with lots — I have dealt in my shadow ministerial role with lots — of legislation that has come down from the upper house that has had some minor tweaking. We have dealt with it pretty well forthwith and known what we were dealing with.

I have had a look at the amendments, and there are 39 of them. I think we owe it to the people of Victoria who are actually affected by this to go out and consult with those groups. If you have a look at one of the areas that involves what I am speaking on today, the Children's Services Act 1996, we need to be able to go out and talk to the people whose lives may be changed by any modifications. We actually do not know what a lot of these modifications are because we are only seeing them for the first time. I would think that the house owes respect to the other members but also respect to those who were involved and who might benefit from some of these changes. They also might not benefit from some of these, but we owe them the respect of at least consulting with them. I note that there were changes and there were things that were rescinded in the upper house motions that were put during the committee stage. All of those things need to be taken into consideration.

We certainly consulted far and wide on the original bill, but in relation to what is being proposed now with the 39 changes I think we need the opportunity to be able to do that. I understand that we do have other changes that are coming from the other house on, for example, the Prevention of Family Violence Bill 2018. I would have

thought that that is also a priority. It is one that we were given notice on, and it is one that we have had a chance to look at. We are certainly ready to move on that now and, as has been said across the house, we are going to be supporting that. We are not unreasonable in any way, shape or form. We are only asking for the respect of the house for members opposite, on our side, and also for the people who this may affect to actually be able to consider these in detail.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 47

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

Noes, 36

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

Motion agreed to.

Message from Council relating to following amendments considered:

1. Clause 2, line 10, omit "April" and insert "July".

2. Clause 3, page 4, line 25, omit all words and expressions on this line.
3. Clause 5, omit this clause.
4. Clause 75, line 9, omit “The” and insert “A”.
5. Clause 75, lines 10 and 11, omit “after the 3rd anniversary of the commencement of this Act” and insert—
“after—
(a) the 3rd anniversary of the commencement of this Act; and
(b) the 7th anniversary of the commencement of this Act”.
6. Clause 75, line 13, omit “the” and insert “each”.

NEW CLAUSE
7. Insert the following New Clause to follow clause 81—
“AA Amendment of Long Service Leave Act 2018
(1) Section 3(2) of the **Long Service Leave Act 2018** is repealed.
(2) In section 12(1) of the **Long Service Leave Act 2018** omit “even though in a strict legal sense it could be said that the employee’s employment was interrupted”.
(3) For section 12(7), (8) and (9) of the **Long Service Leave Act 2018** substitute—
“(7) An employee’s employment is taken to be continuous despite the employer standing down the employee—
(a) during industrial action if the employee cannot be usefully employed because of the industrial action; or
(b) because of a breakdown of machinery or equipment for which the employer cannot reasonably be held responsible if the employee cannot be usefully employed because of the breakdown; or
(c) because of a stoppage of work for any cause for which the employer cannot reasonably be held responsible if the employee cannot be usefully employed because of the stoppage.
(8) An employee’s employment is taken to be continuous despite any interruption arising directly or indirectly from an industrial dispute.”.
- (4) In section 12 of the **Long Service Leave Act 2018**—
(a) in subsection (10), for “(10)” substitute “(9)”;
(b) in subsection (11)—
(i) for “(11)” substitute “(10)”;
(ii) for “(10)” substitute “(9)”.
(5) In section 14 of the **Long Service Leave Act 2018**—
(a) in paragraph (c), for “, (8) or (9).” substitute “(a), (b) or (c).”;
(b) after paragraph (c) insert—
“(d) an interruption described in section 12(8).”.
8. Clause 82, omit this clause.
9. Schedule 1, page 66, lines 18 to 20, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert—
“(2) *Community service work* does not include—
(a) an activity that is funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme within the meaning of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 of the Commonwealth, unless such an activity, or class of activity, is prescribed to be community service work; or
(b) a service provided by an entity that is a licensed children’s service under the **Children’s Services Act 1996** or an approved provider under the Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria), unless such a service, or class of service, is prescribed to be community service work; or
(c) an activity, or class of activity, prescribed not to be community service work.”.
10. Schedule 1, page 66, lines 24 to 31, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert—
“(a) a non-profit entity that employs one or more individuals to perform community service work; or”.
11. Schedule 1, page 70, line 11, omit “15” and insert “14”.
12. Schedule 1, page 70, line 13, omit “clause 16 specifies”.
13. Schedule 1, page 71, lines 21 and 22, omit “worker’s service period is taken to be continuous” and insert “period of absence is taken to be a day of service for crediting service”.

14. Schedule 1, page 75, lines 3 to 33, page 76, lines 1 to 35 and page 77, lines 1 to 22, omit all words and expressions on these lines.
15. Schedule 1, page 77, line 25, before “The” insert “(1)”.
16. Schedule 1, page 77, line 26, omit “referred to in clause 14”.
17. Schedule 1, page 78, line 25, omit “assets.” and insert “assets;”.
18. Schedule 1, page 78, after line 25 insert—
- “(f) any other period of absence that the employer and worker agree to being credited as days of service of the worker.
- (2) Any periods of absence from work other than a period referred to in subclause (1) are taken not to be days of service for the purpose of crediting the days of service of a worker for the community services sector.”.
19. Schedule 1, page 78, lines 26 to 35 and page 79, lines 1 to 18, omit all words and expressions on these lines.
20. Schedule 2, page 85, line 22, omit “22” and insert “21”.
21. Schedule 2, page 85, line 24, omit “clause 23 specifies”.
22. Schedule 2, page 86, lines 35 and 36, omit “an employee’s service period is taken to be continuous” and insert “a period of absence is taken to be a day of service for crediting service”.
23. Schedule 2, page 94, lines 19 to 34, page 95, lines 1 to 35, page 96, lines 1 to 35 and page 97, lines 1 to 17, omit all words and expressions on these lines.
24. Schedule 2, page 97, line 21, omit “referred to in clause 21”.
25. Schedule 2, page 98, line 22, omit “assets.” and insert “assets;”.
26. Schedule 2, page 98, after line 22 insert—
- “(f) any other period of absence that the employer and worker agree to being credited as days of service of the worker.
- (2) Any periods of absence from work other than a period referred to in subclause (1) are taken not to be days of service for the purpose of crediting the days of service of a worker for the contract cleaning industry.”.
27. Schedule 2, page 98, line 23, omit “(2)” and insert “(3)”.
28. Schedule 2, page 98, lines 30 to 36 and page 99, lines 1 to 21, omit all words and expressions on these lines.
29. Schedule 2, page 100, line 23, omit “24” and insert “22”.
30. Schedule 3, page 106, line 22, omit “22” and insert “21”.
31. Schedule 3, page 106, line 24, omit “clause 23 specifies”.
32. Schedule 3, page 107, lines 35 and 36, omit “an employee’s service period is taken to be continuous” and insert “a period of absence is taken to be a day of service for crediting service”.
33. Schedule 3, page 115, lines 14 to 34, page 116, lines 1 to 34, page 117, lines 1 to 34 and page 118, lines 1 to 15, omit all words and expressions on these lines.
34. Schedule 3, page 118, line 19, omit “referred to in clause 21”.
35. Schedule 3, page 119, line 18, omit “assets.” and insert “assets;”.
36. Schedule 3, page 119, after line 18 insert—
- “(f) any other period of absence that the employer and worker agree to being credited as days of service of the worker.
- (2) Any periods of absence from work other than a period referred to in subclause (1) are taken not to be days of service for the purpose of crediting the days of service of a worker for the security industry.”.
37. Schedule 3, page 119, line 19, omit “(2)” and insert “(3)”.
38. Schedule 3, page 119, lines 26 to 31 and page 120, lines 1 to 21, omit all words and expressions on these lines.
39. Schedule 3, page 121, line 25, omit “24” and insert “22”.

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Industrial Relations)
(17:36) — I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

These amendments were made to the Long Service Benefits Portability Bill 2018 by the Legislative Council on 4 September this year. In supporting these amendments the government is supporting the following changes.

One, the amendments change the default commencement date of the act to 1 July 2019, thus allowing more time to establish the authority and to communicate with employers and workers about how the scheme will operate. Two, they remove activities funded under the national disability insurance scheme from the scope of the act but allow such activities to be included in the portability scheme at a later date by way of regulation, which goes to many of the issues that were raised at the table earlier. Three, they remove a licensed children’s service under the Children’s Services Act 1996 or an approved provider under the Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria)

from the scope of the act but allow such an activity to be included in the portability scheme at a later date, again by regulation. This really pertains to the community-based kindergarten sector. Four, they clarify that any absence from work does not break continuity of service unless that absence exceeds four years. Further, only certain defined absences, such as sick leave, count towards service. Five, they amend the Long Service Leave Act 2018 to ensure that if an employee is absent from work because of an industrial dispute or because their employer has stood them down, their continuity of employment is not broken. This corrects a technical error in the drafting of that legislation when it passed through this house and the other house in previous months.

The government has also established a working group made up of departmental, union, employer and peak body representatives around the establishment of this scheme. That working party is helping to develop regulations to assist in the operation of the scheme, including addressing any issues that have been raised around double dipping in the community sector. The working party will also consider what needs to be done to facilitate the reintegration of those now-to-be-excluded areas back into the scheme in the longer term. These amendments and this bill have been the subject of substantial discussion and debate in the upper house.

I think we should not lose sight of the fact that a long service leave portability entitlement is something that many workers here in Victoria have missed out on and certainly something that some workers specific to industries such as cleaning, community services and security have not had due to the nature of the work that they do. Ordinarily when a business transfers from one owner to another the service that an employee has accumulated with their first employer transfers on the sale of the business or when the transfer happens to the new employer. Unfortunately it is quite common in the sectors that I have outlined that what occurs instead is the termination of those entitlements and no transfer happening. We have seen that through the work that has been done through the parliamentary inquiries and through the evidence that we have certainly heard from many workers who have missed out on this entitlement and who have worked in the same building or in the same sector for many, many years.

There was mention earlier of disability workers and general community sector workers and their needs for entitlement. Well, we are facing some very, very big challenges coming in the near future around building that workforce and attracting new employees to that workforce but also retaining the levels of workers in

that workforce who have very, very valued skills. Quite frankly if they do not have the entitlements that other workers in this state have, why would they stay in the sector? This is one of the many remedies that this government is looking at to attract more workers to the community sector. We are investing, particularly in the family violence space, to grow jobs and to professionalise the community sector even further but also to attract new workers as the needs of the sector grow into the future.

We know the portability of long service leave is a very important issue. We know that the community sector in particular is female dominated in terms of the nature of the make-up of the industry, and we know that it is actually often women in that sector that are missing out on the leave entitlements that they should be getting and would be getting if they were in other sectors. So this is a major step forward. It delivers respect to these workers — to these workforces. It keeps workers, as I said, more likely to be retained, particularly when they have had the opportunity to have a break from their industry, and particularly for those workers who are working in very intense situations of dealing with family violence day in and day out over the course of many, many years. To have that break and to be able to return with their skills is a very, very important element of this bill. So I commend the amendments to the house and say that they are supported by this government.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) (17:42) — The amendments that we are being asked to consider this evening fall into a number of categories. The most extensive of those seek to overcome various drafting errors both in relation to the Long Service Leave Act 2018 and in relation to this bill. There are also amendments that attempt to respond to concerns raised by the disability sector and the early childhood education and care sector, albeit very inadequately for reasons that I will come to. There are also amendments that were moved by the Greens party in the Legislative Council to provide an additional period for review of the act.

A number of the amendments that we are being asked to consider now are further evidence of the poor process that has been followed by this government in the preparation of the bill. They referred this issue to a parliamentary committee, and when that parliamentary committee came to make a decision a majority of the members felt that the case had not been made out for the introduction of a long service benefits portability bill. But instead of accepting the view of the majority of the committee, the government members of the committee waited until one of the majority members was absent and then reversed all the conclusions that

the committee had reached. So we are in the bizarre position where the so-called majority report of that committee was in fact the view of a minority of the members. The so-called minority report was in fact the view of a majority of the members of that committee. That is the sort of ramshackle poor process that this government has followed in arriving at this bill, and this lack of attention to detail is reflected in some of the amendments that are having to be made now that we are being asked to consider.

The other aspect of the poor preparation of this is evidently the lack of consultation with affected sectors before the government proceeded with this bill. Three sectors in particular have expressed enormous concerns about the effects that this bill will have. The sectors are in relation to disabilities, early childhood education and care, and community health centres. It very much seems that within government the left hand did not know what the right hand was doing. The Minister for Industrial Relations was intent on pressing through with her scheme without having properly consulted with her cabinet colleagues or without having ensured that she or they properly consulted with the affected sectors. It is yet another demonstration of the fact that this government is putting its ideological agenda ahead of sound legislation.

I certainly do not want to canvass the overall merits of this bill, but as I said during the second-reading debate in this house, it is a bill that departs without an adequate case having been made from the longstanding principle that long service leave benefits are there for long service with one employer. That has been the accepted prevailing view in relation to long service benefits for decades, with perhaps the sole exception of the construction industry, which by its very nature of being project based makes long service with one employer very difficult. But the experience with the operation of the scheme in the construction industry shows how we have to be very careful and cautious indeed in contemplating any extension. Certainly as the majority of the parliamentary committee concluded, the case has not been made for the extension of portability of long service leave benefits.

So coming to the amendments that are before us today, and I am sure some of my colleagues within the Liberal and National parties with portfolio responsibilities will have more to say about them, we are being asked to agree to a significant number of amendments that correct an unintended error, an anomaly, in the Long Service Leave Act itself, and that is not strictly speaking something that is consistent with the scope of the bill as it came to this house. That matter was canvassed at some length in the Legislative Council, and again the

government was struggling to follow proper processes in bringing their amendment to that house.

But it is one that we on this side of the house are happy to agree to because it does ensure that the status quo in relation to long service leave, when there is a strike or a stand-down or another unexpected reason why a worker is unable to be given work, is in existence. The longstanding principle has been that when someone is on strike, that does not count as service — nor should it — but on the other hand it does not interrupt continuity of service. The drafting error that was made in the Long Service Leave Act 2018 was one that could, as we were advised by departmental officers, have had that unintended consequence. So that set of amendments reinstates the position as it has stood for a very long time and ensures that workers do not unintentionally lose that position. As I say, for that reason we are happy to support that amendment.

There is also a long series of amendments that strip out of the bill words that departmental officers have realised are redundant and in fact inconsistent with the logical structure of a portable scheme. I certainly do not hold that error against the departmental officers concerned because these sorts of oversights can happen from time to time, but it is perhaps a further reflection on the lack of consultation that the government chose to engage in that there was not sufficient external stakeholder scrutiny of the bill prior to it coming to the house that would have picked up these sorts of problems.

The principal amendments I want to address are those that relate to the disability sector, the early childhood education and care sector, and community health. These are areas in which the government has either proposed inadequate amendments or failed to propose any amendments whatsoever. These failures threatened to have very diabolical consequences indeed for the affected community sectors. I want to pay tribute to my colleague the member for Gippsland East in his capacity as shadow minister responsible for disability matters for the enormous amount of work he has done and the engagement that he has had with the disability sector regarding their concerns about the bill, and the efforts that they and he have been making to try to get the government to recognise the problems to which it was exposing that sector and to effectively deal with them.

The sector and the member for Gippsland East have had at least some success in getting the government to admit that there is a problem, but the response that they have made to that problem is appallingly inadequate and leaves the sector incredibly exposed to risk, particularly if the Labor Party should continue to form government after 24 November, because they have put

provisions in the legislation for variation of the coverage of the scheme — variation of the coverage of the exemptions — by way of regulation. They made clear to the opposition in the briefing that we received that their view is certainly, in relation to disability, that the amendment that they have proposed to the bill is only a short-term one and that when the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) has been fully rolled out and is in place it is one they will withdraw. What they have failed to realise is the fact that the problems that will be created for Victorian disability service providers by this bill are not temporary problems; they are ongoing problems and they need ongoing solutions.

The government has also failed to recognise that there are many disability service providers who will not receive the benefit of the amendments that have been proposed by the government, even in the short term. For that reason, in relation to this sector and the early childhood education and care sector and in relation to community health, I wish to move some amendments to the amendments of the Legislative Council that we are being asked to agree to in the motion that has been moved by the Minister for Industrial Relations. I move:

Amendment No. 9

1. In proposed subclause (2) omit paragraph (a) and insert—
 - “(a) a service or support provided to a person with a disability that is, or is of a type that could be, funded or provided under the National Disability Insurance Scheme within the meaning of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 of the Commonwealth; or”.
2. After paragraph (a) in proposed subclause (2) insert—
 - “() a disability service within the meaning of section 3(1) of the **Disability Act 2006**; or
 - () an employment service within the meaning of section 7 of the Disability Services Act 1986 of the Commonwealth; or”.
3. In paragraph (b) in proposed subclause (2), omit “, unless such a service, or class of service, is prescribed to be community service work”.

After amendment No. 10, insert—

4. Schedule 1, page 68, lines 23 to 28, omit paragraph (b) and insert—
 - “() if the employer is a community health centre registered under section 48 of the **Health Services Act 1988**— an individual employed by the employer, unless—

- (i) the individual’s role is to carry out community service work at the community health centre; and
- (ii) the individual does not have a long service leave entitlement under a fair work instrument or an applicable award-derived long service leave entitlement within the meaning of the Fair Work Act;”.

In relation to disability services, let us look first of all at the provisions that relate to providers of services under the NDIS. If we look at the Council’s amendment 9, we can see the reason why that is necessary.

Mr Pakula interjected.

Mr CLARK — The Attorney-General, who is at the table, interjects and suggests that we were in fact prepared for this debate because the amendments have been circulated. I must give credit to the chief parliamentary counsel, who was able to put those amendments together with approximately three-quarters of an hour to an hour’s notice when it became clear to this side of the house that the government was manoeuvring to do something improper. The parliamentary counsel who actually has responsibility for the amendments to this bill does not work on Tuesdays or Wednesdays. Up until a short time ago we were entitled to assume that these were amendments that he could put together and have available for the house for tomorrow. So I do express my thanks, and the opposition’s thanks, for the exemplary service that the chief parliamentary counsel has been able to provide in circumstances in which he should not have needed to be called on to respond and of course therefore to interrupt other work to do so.

In relation to the government’s proposed amendment, their proposal is that community services work does not include an activity that is funded by the national disability insurance scheme within the meaning of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 of the commonwealth unless such an activity or class of activity is prescribed to be community service work. There are two aspects of this that deserve attention. The first is that it only exempts services provided by a disability service provider when that activity is actually funded under the NDIS. I am not sure how much the Minister for Industrial Relations knows about this area or indeed how much the minister responsible for community services knows about this area. If the minister responsible for community services does know about this area, I am not sure what representations she made to the Minister for Industrial Relations about it.

If you have any involvement with the provision of disability services, you realise that there can often be a

range of intervals in which a person with disabilities receives services funded from different sources. To give a classic example, a child may be diagnosed with a disability, or indeed an adult may be diagnosed with a disability or may succumb to a disability, and processes are put in place for them to seek funding under the NDIS, but in the meantime they may be provided with care funded by their parents or funded gratuitously by a disability service provider and not funded by the NDIS. In those circumstances the work that is provided to help that person with a disability will not come within the terms of the government's amendment and therefore the disability service provider will be required to contribute to the portability scheme.

That has two consequences. First of all, it means that the additional cost that is being imposed on service providers by the portability scheme will have to be incurred by them. They will have to pay the amount of the levy into the fund. It is not completely clear what amount the levy is going to be, but a figure of 1.5 per cent was mentioned during the Legislative Council debate. That 1.5 per cent is a very large amount in the context of the NDIS and indeed in the context of many providers of services in many areas, for-profit and not-for-profit, when one has regard to the margins on which they operate and the fact that the sectors that are going to be covered by this bill are very labour intensive. Those sums are far higher than what they have set aside at the moment — they are almost equal to 100 per cent of the amount that they would have to set aside were they required to provide 1.66 per cent of payroll for every single one of their employees. Of course unless and until this legislation comes into operation the amount they currently have to provide in their accounts is far less than that.

This will be a very significant burden, and the point that the disability service providers make is not only of the significance of this burden itself but the fact that they in Victoria are being required to bear this burden which is not being imposed on disability service providers in most other states. The funding that they receive under the NDIS is set at the national level and therefore is not going to take into account the particular extra costs that service providers face in Victoria. They have said to us, 'Our operating surplus margins are in the order of 1 per cent to 1.5 per cent, so an obligation like this could take out our entire operating surplus'. That of course has flow-through implications for the clients of these services, because if their capacity to operate is impeded, it is going to flow through to cuts to services to people with disabilities, and that is the bottom line of what the government is doing with these inadequate amendments and its failure to properly fund disability service providers for the additional costs of this scheme.

The government is forcing these providers into a situation where people with disabilities are at risk of having their services cut. The government has been unable or unwilling to stand up and defend that, but that is the reality, and I am sure the member for Gippsland East will have more to say about that later on. That is the direct cost.

The second aspect is the administrative difficulty in which disability service providers are going to be placed. They could be providing exactly the same service, they could have exactly the same member of staff providing a service to a person with a disability but whether or not that worker's work is covered by the scheme is going to depend on who is paying the bills. A client may be supported by a particular worker and be funded initially by parents or other family members or funded ex gratia by the service provider or funded by some other benevolent third party and the service provider will need to be paying the 1.5 per cent into the scheme. Then of course the client may be assessed as being eligible for NDIS but the funding might not come through initially, so up until that point the worker, again, will be covered by the scheme. Then there may be funding that actually comes through the NDIS, and the worker at that point would not be covered by the scheme and the provider will not need to make contributions into the fund for them, but then the client's NDIS plan may come up for review and the review may scale back the services that are provided so that again the client is not being funded by the NDIS and is again being funded by family or by third parties, and that will take the work of that worker outside of the coverage of the scheme.

It seems incredible that the government should be proposing to go ahead with such an incredibly convoluted and unworkable arrangement, and of course each and every one of these additional administrative burdens is going to flow through as an administrative cost to the provider on top of the direct cost of contributions to the scheme. Again, we have had no commitment from the government to pick up these costs. If the government said, 'Well, we think it's so good as a matter of public policy that we'll pay for it, we'll ask the taxpayer to contribute to this scheme and we'll reimburse the service providers so that people with disabilities do not have to bear the brunt of our policy measure', then we could debate that on its merits, but they are not prepared to do that. They are going to force a cut to the services and support received by people with disabilities but they are not prepared to accept responsibility for it. When service providers are forced to scale back their services, however reluctantly, the government, if they are true to their previous form, are

simply going to wring their hands and say, 'Isn't this terrible', and try to blame anybody but themselves for it.

The second flaw in the amendment that I have referred to is that there is a catch to it. The activities funded by the NDIS are only excluded from community services work up until the point where the government may decide by regulation to put them back in again. The government can prescribe an activity or class of activity to be community services work, and if they do that, it is back to being covered by the bill again. The exemption that the government has so reluctantly provided has been taken off the table, and any disability service provision there is liable to contribution to the scheme. As I said previously, the difficulties that disability service providers are facing under the NDIS are not short-term difficulties; they are ongoing difficulties because this is a scheme peculiar to Victoria and the funding is provided at a flat national level under the NDIS — or rather the prescribed rates of charging are specified nationally and that is the way the funding flows in consequence.

The second area of amendment to which the government reluctantly agreed was to apply to services provided by entities that are licensed children's services under the Children's Services Act 1996 or an approved provider under the Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria). The difficulty with that is similar to the second of the difficulties that I referred to in relation to disabilities — namely, that while the government is giving this exemption, it is only giving it for as long as it sees fit. If they remain in office after 24 November, if they are re-elected after 24 November, they could withdraw that amendment at any time, so it is small comfort to providers in that area, who again, ironically, are not-for-profit providers who are being forced to come under this scheme, whereas their for-profit competitors are not covered by this scheme. Again we have had no logical explanation from the government as to why they have hit these not-for-profit providers but exempted the for-profit providers, and we have had very strong representations about that.

I should also make a couple of further points in relation to the exemption for disabilities, because on top of the two problems I referred to earlier the government have entirely left out two other areas of disability service support from being exempted. The first is disability services that are provided within the meaning of section 3(1) of the Disability Act 2006 and the second is employment services within the meaning of section 7 of the Disability Services Act 1986 of the commonwealth. The amendments that I have moved in relation to disability services would include both of those areas of disability service as well as making clear

that services of a kind that are eligible for funding under the NDIS are covered by the exemption, whether or not they are actually being funded under the NDIS, to deal with that very set of absurdities and anomalies that I highlighted earlier as to when a client might be receiving exactly the same service, at some points funded by the NDIS and at some points not. It is very difficult to fathom why the government has not accepted that all of these disability services should be excluded from coverage of the scheme given the enormous pressures that disability service providers are under and the very thin margins on which they operate.

The final area on which I wish to touch is in relation to community health centres, where the government has point-blank refused to make any provision for exclusion of them from the coverage of the scheme. The case that this sector makes is that they have had a portable long service leave scheme in place within their sector for a long time, either under enterprise bargaining agreements or under awards under the Fair Work Act 2009. Those schemes have worked very well and been widely accepted. There is not a problem in that area, and yet they are not being provided an exclusion under this bill.

So the final amendment I am proposing is that an employer in a community health centre registered under the Health Services Act 1988 does not come under the scheme in relation to individuals who are employed by that sector where they are carrying out community services work, unless they do not happen to have the benefit of the long service leave entitlements that already exist. In other words, for the vast majority and probably 100 per cent of workers in that area who are performing community services work who have the benefit of these existing portable long service leave schemes, the bill will not apply to them. Otherwise these employers are saying that they have got the overlap between the two schemes, that they are being forced to provide and contribute to a portable long service leave scheme that already exists, that they are legally exposed to that and yet they are being expected at the same time to contribute to this new scheme.

The government says, 'No, no, we don't intend that. We'll make sure by regulation or by some other means that there is no double dipping and that everything's going to be fine'. I am not sure exactly how they are going to achieve that, and we believe it is far more appropriate that it be enshrined in legislation and very clear that where there is an existing portable long service leave scheme, this new scheme does not apply.

The government also said that is not good enough because if people move outside the sector, then they do

not get the benefit of the existing scheme, but the evidence that has been provided to us by that sector is that the vast majority of their employees do move to other positions within that sector or else they move on to work in hospitals where they would also get the benefit of this portability. So there is only a very narrow class of people who might potentially be covered by the government scheme that do not have the benefit of the existing scheme, and that is people who move somewhere within the community services sector but not within the community health sector, because if they move to a new sector entirely other than community services, then they will not get the benefit of the new portable scheme anyway.

So to conclude, this is a bill that is flawed in principle and is also badly flawed in execution. There has not been proper consultation and in particular the way in which the provisions of the bill relating to community services have been put together has been with disregard and indeed in total ignorance, from what we can see, of the very important challenges that these sectors face. Even when those challenges have been drawn to the attention of the government, they have not properly responded to them, and the amendments that have been moved by the Liberal Party and The Nationals are to fix up the government's inadequate amendments to ensure proper exclusion of these sectors from the coverage of the scheme.

What everybody involved with these sectors — be they service providers, be they workers, be they clients — needs to recognise is that it is only the Liberals and Nationals who are in touch with them, who know what is needed to properly protect these sectors and who need to be supported to form government on 24 November. Because if the Labor Party is returned to office on 24 November, these sectors will be very badly exposed to what this government might do — they are out of touch with these sectors, not caring about their needs, so clients with disabilities, young children in need of early education and the community health sector will suffer.

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) (18:12) — I rise to make a contribution on the Long Service Benefits Portability Bill 2018 and support the amendments as proposed by the member for Box Hill and support the commentary by the member for Box Hill. I pay tribute to the extraordinary amount of work that has gone on over the last month, not just between chambers but well prior to that, by the shadow minister in leaving no stone unturned to get this right.

I wish to put on the record before making a few comments on these amendments that I do not think

there are any members of this chamber that do not have an enormous amount of respect for those people who work within our disability sector. It can be an extremely challenging environment at times, and it takes a special person to be able to work in that sector. Yes, they should be looked after, and yes, they should have good working conditions, and I do not think anybody would reject that, but I do want to make a few comments on where this bill goes.

As has been stated by the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing — and I have certainly agreed with him when he has said this on a number of occasions — the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) is a massive reform. It is a reform of the disability sector the likes of which we have not seen before, and it is one of the biggest reforms I think that any government, particularly at a federal level, has undertaken in relation to any sector. It is my very firm and strong belief that while that implementation takes place and while that massive reform is underway, we should not be making significant changes to the working conditions of those employees and putting additional burdens on providers of services. I hold a very strong view that we should be letting the dust settle on this.

We had a parliamentary committee look into this, and I believe the member for Ringwood was on that committee, as was, I believe, the member for Mildura. Both of those members, who are in the chamber, were on that particular inquiry. As the member for Box Hill touched on, when this report was being finalised we had one member of that committee absent. What inadvertently occurred when that committee member was absent was that we had what should have been a majority report in fact become a minority report. We cannot help absences; they occur for various reasons. But I do not think that that is why we have committees looking into these matters of great importance to the Victorian community — to take advantage of the absence of a member of an inquiry to pull back on recommendations and have what should have been a majority report become a minority report and recommendations being rescinded based on the absence of a member.

Even this week — and I know that the shadow Minister for Industrial Relations will support me on this — we have had disability service providers, both NDIS and non-NDIS, coming to us and saying that in this period of great reform in the disability sector we should be letting the dust settle and leaving this alone rather than implementing massive, massive change.

As the member for Box Hill touched on in his contribution and as I read in the amendments of the government, these are changes that at the whim of the government can be made through regulation to include NDIS employees at any time. For those who are delivering services under the NDIS, that is far from concrete. It is far from concrete in relation to the concerns that they have, which I will touch on in a few moments, around the implementation of portable long service within their sector. They have a high level of discomfort that with the stroke of a pen that can change and their entire workforces can therefore be included.

The amendments that have been proposed by the government do remove NDIS workers, and that is a step in the right direction — absolutely it is — but, as I have mentioned, it does not include non-NDIS workers in the disability sector, and it ought to. Both National Disability Services, which is the overarching body that represents providers, and individual providers have sought to have all disability service providers included in this exemption — as I said, whether they are NDIS providers or not. There are very, very good reasons for this. The NDIS has a massive disability workforce, and this legislation will have implications across the disability workforce, whether you are an NDIS provider or not. Some providers have said to me that if we have portable long service leave for disability services that do not fall under the NDIS and we do not have it for those that do fall under the NDIS, that could be a trigger for a transition of a workforce that could impact significantly those who are NDIS service providers. They could have staff move away and work for non-NDIS service providers.

This has resulted in a number of service providers stating that while we are going through this reform, let us let the dust settle and let us make sure we do not rush into this before we see any unforeseen, let alone foreseen, consequences of what this might do to the sector. We should be including all disability workers in this, and the amendments that have been proposed by the member for Box Hill certainly touch on that. His amendments outline the meaning of ‘disability service’ as being that within the meaning of the Disability Act 2006, whether it is NDIS or not, and it also includes an ‘employment service’ within the meaning of section 7 of the Disability Services Act 1986 of the commonwealth. That is where these amendments should be adopted because these are commonsense amendments that create a level playing field right across the entire disability sector.

Before I finish, I want to talk about costs. One of the overwhelming pieces of feedback that we have had from providers in the disability sector — and I stress again,

whether NDIS-registered or not — has been on the additional costs that these providers will have to meet. We do not introduce portable long service leave for the sector without imposing additional costs on those that are providing the services. As yet we have had a void in relation to who will pay for these additional costs. Service providers are under the impression that they will have to subsume these costs into their day-to-day operations. I can tell you: some of them are sailing pretty close to the wind in relation to viability. They are providing very important services in our community, but they are not rolling in it. A lot of them are not-for-profits. We should not be putting any impediment in their way that is going to impact on their viability, especially without consulting with them appropriately — and that has not occurred. Even in the last week we had disability service providers waking up and realising what was in this legislation and the additional costs that it would bring with it to their sector. If consultation had been done to a reasonable level and had it been fully understood and communicated right across the sector, we would not have had those providers coming forward at the 11th hour expressing those concerns. That is a huge issue.

I will finish my contribution by saying that some of these amendments are a slight improvement, but they certainly do not go the whole way in addressing all of the concerns that have been raised by the sector. Our disability workers are a special group. Like other members of this house, on both sides of the chamber, I do not know where my family would be without the incredible support that it has had from workers in disability services. This is not about denying them their rights and denying them a good workplace. This is about providing a fair environment that does not send some providers to the wall and allows them to keep providing services.

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) (18:22) — I rise to make a contribution on the Long Service Benefits Portability Bill 2018. I rise also to support the member for Box Hill’s amendments, which I think he clearly articulated. Our shadow minister for disability knows only too well from consultation and from his experience with the disability sector just how important it is to make sure that sector is well looked after, and there is clear understanding. The last thing anybody wants is for us to have a loss of providers or a loss of services in the disability sector as a result of high levels of compliance costs and a large burden as a result of having to administer — for different employees — multiple different processes and schemes.

I will just come back to the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee’s majority report that the

majority of the committee members endorsed, but whose motions were rescinded by a minority, which were the Labor members on that committee. What we found throughout that committee hearing, in all of the presentations that were made, all of the submissions that were made and in our investigation — and that is why we have parliamentary investigative committees to actually undertake these investigations — was an enormous lack of empirical data or information that actually supported anything that the government wanted to do in this space.

In relation to that, our recommendations were that the government actually undertake independent, quantitative research into the schemes to determine the suitability and whether they would actually meet the objectives of the government, and to commission independent research to also look at the impacts on employers as well. Certainly impacts on employers in the disability sector impact on workers and on those with disabilities.

I am not too sure, from my understanding, how closely the Minister for Industrial Relations has worked with the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing in relation to this and how closely they have worked with the disability sector on this, because from what I can understand from the shadow minister's contribution there has been very little consultation. As a result of this unprecedented — and we go through a little bit of unprecedented action from the government side — rescinding of motions, we ended up with the majority of the committee writing a minority report. It was unprecedented in Parliament, or in the history of this Parliament anyway.

What became evident was that this was a Labor Party push-through in response to union pressure, as opposed to actually doing the responsible thing to create an evidence-based approach to implementing such a scheme. That would have been the wise thing to do. That would have been the important and impartial thing to do — to make sure that those who are impacted by a scheme such as this are inconvenienced as little as possible, that it broadly protects the workers and people who work in the sector as well as those people with a disability.

What we did find from the disability sector when they came and presented to us in that committee was a plea. It was a plea to not make waves during this incredibly tumultuous time that they were undergoing as a result of the implementation of the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS), a time when they were struggling, obviously, to make major, major changes in their implementation of the NDIS. When you have now

got employers — and you are talking about not-for-profits as well — who do not run on huge margins trying to separate out those with the NDIS and those not under the NDIS, you start to increase the administrative burden and ultimately the cost on organisations that have no fat in their budgets.

These sorts of things have not been thought through in relation to the ultimate impact in the rush to do the bidding of unions from outside of this Parliament — who invariably are the Labor Party doing their own bidding. At the end of the day these are people's lives' people's lives depend on this.

Ms Hutchins interjected.

Ms RYALL — Now, the minister might sit there and interject, but I just bring to her attention those people with a disability who came and spoke to us. I am not sure how many disability organisations the minister has actually sat down with in relation to this, and I am not sure how many businesses the Minister for Industrial Relations has actually rung and how many employees she has actually had, but compliance costs are significant.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms RYALL — There is lots of noise coming over from there, Acting Speaker, and I would like you to afford some protection from those interjections, if you would. The minister has had her opportunity to speak.

Ms Hutchins interjected.

Ms RYALL — No, I asked questions. I do not know how many, so there are no assertions there, Minister. What I am suggesting here is that they have, like I have, actually been in positions where your life is your workforce and they are people who are actually so important to you — their livelihood is so important to you. Ultimately in the disability sector, they are looking after people. As the shadow minister for disability services said, this is a really, really important and delicate sector. These are people we cherish, who look after people with disabilities. If our workers end up out of a job because the compliance costs are so high that the company goes to the wall, or the not-for-profit goes to the wall, it ultimately impacts those workers that the minister is purporting to want to protect. It ultimately affects them.

As I said, this is an incredibly tumultuous time, this implementing of the national disability insurance scheme. The wish during our committee by those people from the sector was that we do not put any further impost, obligations and burden on them at a

time when they are trying to bed down significant change. That is their request. That has not been listened to. They have been totally ignored. They have not been consulted with. These are massive changes that are being undertaken. We want to make sure — and I am sure everybody wants to make sure — that the national disability insurance scheme is applied appropriately and that those with disabilities are able to get the best out of the scheme, but no-one is able to get the best out of anything when even further burden is added to these organisations that are trying to implement massive compliance change and massive structural and massive financial compliance change as well.

It is not just a case of saying, 'Yes, we're going to implement this, and this is what we're going to do'. It needs to be, firstly, evidence based and, secondly, very well thought out, not something done in a rush by suddenly bringing it back into the department — 'Let's do it in a complete rush'. This is something that has a massive effect on so many vulnerable Victorians, not something that just needs to be plonked on top of a sector that is already grappling with tumultuous and massive change to the way its own organisations — their own not-for-profit, their own company — function.

This is a matter of respect, it is a matter of decency and it is a matter of getting things right, not just chucking it in and hoping that everything works out and we will fix it later. These are people's lives that are being dealt with here. People's lives are being impacted, so I support the amendments moved by the member for Box Hill.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) (18:32) — I rise to talk about the amendments to the Long Service Benefits Portability Bill 2018. As outlined, there are a number of these amendments and, as the Minister for Industrial Relations laid out, they fall broadly into five categories: firstly, to change the default date to 1 July 2019 and to allow time to communicate these changes within the sector; secondly, to exempt the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) from the scope of the act, but it can be included by regulation; thirdly, changes under the Children's Services Act 1996 around kinders and other of those community service providers, but they too can be included at a later date under regulation; fourthly, to change some of the absence from work provisions around how long someone can have a break before their portability of long service leave is not effective — that can be changed around sick leave and other areas; and lastly, to allow for industrial disputes not to break that continuity, which is an interesting one. It is also proposed to establish a working group to develop the regulations.

What is a concern on some of this is the inclusion of provisions later by regulation. That is always a concern, because it is seen by many to be more a risk due to whim rather than understanding of process.

I also want to acknowledge the work done by the member for Box Hill, who broadly says that his amendments are to overcome drafting errors, to address concerns from the disability sector and to address concerns from the early childhood care and education sector. There is also a Greens amendment for an additional period to review the act.

However, it is still a poor process that has been gone through, and it is that process that concerns many people. I guess some of the issues with process began a long time ago when I too was a member of the same committee that the member for Ringwood was a member of. We were asked to have a look at this issue back in 2015 as a parliamentary investigative committee — the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee's inquiry into the portability of long service leave entitlements. It was a lengthy inquiry. We did take a lot of evidence from various groups, and then we had a situation where the majority had come to a view and had their recommendations prepared.

That committee subsequently went through a very difficult period. I have been on parliamentary committees for a long time, and probably the most difficult issue that I have dealt with was the process around the preparation of the committee's report where the majority report became the minority report, and the minority report became the majority report. That is certainly one of the difficulties that we grappled with, and it did not cast the committee system in a good light. Also, it is not a good basis for legislation when you have had a very tumultuous period.

Out of that there was a recommendation, though, that I thought would have been picked up — that is, that there was a need for more research into this issue. There is little evidence that that work was done, and that unfortunately leads this piece of legislation to look like legislation by whim, and that is not a good basis, particularly when we look at what we now have and how things have developed. We do need consultation with the affected sectors, but not with the regulations being put in place at the same time.

We have heard quite a lot about the concerns of the disability sector. The early childhood sector is also very important. When we took evidence on that early childhood sector, the cost involved in child care was something that families were very much concerned about. It was a cost-of-living concern for them about the

fees and charges with early childhood. Although they wanted staff to be as qualified as possible and have what were fair and just conditions, they were quite concerned about the impacts of rising costs for child care.

The community sector are another sector which are exempted under this but again has it hanging over their heads. When they are bidding for funding programs and looking at implementing programs, the budgets are very, very tight. I have had some considerable experience in dealing with the community health sector. These too are vital community services. In Mildura our main service is Sunraysia Community Health Services. When they bid for these programs, most of the time they find that they are going to have to find, out of their reserve funds or funds that have accumulated in trusts for the benefit of the community, funds to top up a lot of the programs.

In an area like Mildura, which is a little bit further from Melbourne than most, in order to attract the skilled people you need in the community sector, you certainly need to pay a little more, and that little more has to come from somewhere. Adding some of these additional costs will make such services wary about bidding for programs that they need. Particularly when you are bidding for programs, you want them to go to people who are highly experienced in those areas, and Sunraysia Community Health Services is one such organisation.

It is similar when you look at the disability sector. At present we have not transitioned to the NDIS in the Mildura region. In fact that is going to happen next year, and there will be issues with that transition. We have all seen that and we all know that. There are a number of services out there that may or may not be able to be NDIS providers. Many of them have got services as well as structures under them that might mean parts of their organisations may or may not be able to be NDIS providers.

Sunraysia Residential Services offers some fantastic services for people with disabilities, as does the Christie Centre, particularly through a large number of their social enterprises. Again, they have to structure budgets and prepare. It makes it difficult if they are bidding for a funding stream that may run over a long period of time and they then find that under the regulations another cost is added. That can further stress those organisations, and the last thing we want is for these experienced organisations that provide fantastic services to my community to not make bids for the services. In a place like Mildura it may well mean that that service is not made available to the community or the funding may go to a service provider elsewhere far

away and not be delivered in quite the way everybody expects.

Regarding the NDIS sector, I liked the words of the member for Gippsland East when he said, 'We need to let the dust settle', particularly for a sector that goes above and beyond to deliver the services that the community needs. There is concern about short notice over the regulations when the regulation may determine when to bring something in. Again, it could be at the whim of the government and at the expense of the service providers. We know that that sector does have tight margins. It is about the minimum costs that go with it. The service providers that I know are running really tight ships because they are endeavouring to deliver for those who cannot look after themselves as well as for the rest of us so that we in fact have the services that we need. These are my concerns.

I do support the amendments to the Council's amendments that have been put forward by the member for Box Hill because I think it is important to deal with this properly now and at this time so that we are not back here trying to fix this at a later date. These are really important issues. We have to get them right, and we need to do that now.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) (18:42) — I move:

That the question be now put.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 48

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

Noes, 34

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

Motion agreed to.

The SPEAKER — The Minister for Industrial Relations has moved that the Council amendments be agreed to. The member for Box Hill has moved amendments to amendment 9 and proposed a further amendment. I will deal with the Council amendments and the member for Box Hill's amendments in turn. The question is that Council amendments 1 to 8 be agreed to.

Council amendments 1 to 8 agreed to.

The SPEAKER — On Council amendment 9, the member for Box Hill has moved three amendments. I will deal with them as a block. The question is that the member for Box Hill's amendments 1 to 3 inclusive be agreed to. All of that opinion say aye. To the contrary, no. Is a division required? A division is required. Ring the bells for 1 minute.

Bells rung.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, you have ordered the bells be rung for 1 minute. The normal rule for when the bells are rung for 1 minute is when there are questions being put consecutively. In this instance there are other questions in between and there is also at least one member who is not present in the chamber and we do not know whether or not they want to come to the chamber. At least one of the members will take some time to get to the chamber so I suspect that the bells should be rung for 4 minutes.

The SPEAKER — I thank the member for Box Hill for that point of order. We will ring the bells for a further 3 minutes at the conclusion of the 1-minute bell.

House divided on Mr Clark's amendments 1 to 3:

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

*Ayes, 34**Noes, 48*

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

Amendments 1 to 3 defeated.**Council amendment 9 agreed to; Council amendments 10 to 39 agreed to.****House divided on Mr Clark's amendment 4:**

Angus, Mr	O'Brien, Mr D.
Battin, Mr	O'Brien, Mr M.
Blackwood, Mr	Paynter, Mr
Britnell, Ms	Pesutto, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Riordan, Mr
Burgess, Mr	Ryall, Ms
Clark, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Crisp, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Dixon, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Fyffe, Mrs	Staley, Ms
Guy, Mr	Thompson, Mr

Ayes, 34

Hodgett, Mr
Katos, Mr
Kealy, Ms
McCurdy, Mr
McLeish, Ms
Morris, Mr

Tilley, Mr
Victoria, Ms
Wakeling, Mr
Walsh, Mr
Watt, Mr
Wells, Mr

Noes, 48

Allan, Ms
Andrews, Mr
Blandthorn, Ms
Bull, Mr J.
Carbines, Mr
Carroll, Mr
Couzens, Ms
D'Ambrosio, Ms
Dimopoulos, Mr
Donnellan, Mr
Edbrooke, Mr
Edwards, Ms
Eren, Mr
Foley, Mr
Garrett, Ms
Graley, Ms
Green, Ms
Halfpenny, Ms
Hennessy, Ms
Hibbins, Mr
Howard, Mr
Hutchins, Ms
Kairouz, Ms
Kilkenny, Ms

Knight, Ms
Languiller, Mr
Lim, Mr
McGuire, Mr
Merlino, Mr
Nardella, Mr
Neville, Ms
Noonan, Mr
Pakula, Mr
Pallas, Mr
Pearson, Mr
Richardson, Mr
Sandell, Ms
Scott, Mr
Sheed, Ms
Spence, Ms
Staikos, Mr
Suleyman, Ms
Thomas, Ms
Thomson, Ms
Thorpe, Ms
Ward, Ms
Williams, Ms
Wynne, Mr

Amendment 4 defeated.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

**Sitting continued on motion of Ms ALLAN
(Minister for Public Transport).**

**PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE
BILL 2018**

Council's amendments

**Message from Council relating to following
amendments considered:**

1. Clause 27, omit this clause.

NEW CLAUSE

2. Insert the following New Clause to follow clause 26—

**“A Report of the Board on the financial
performance of the Agency**

- (1) The Board must prepare a report on the financial performance of the Agency during the financial year ending on the preceding 30 June.
- (2) The Board must cause a report under subsection (1) to be laid before each House of the Parliament as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year to which it relates.”.

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence) (19:02) — I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

The amendments affect clause 27 of the Prevention of Family Violence Bill 2018. Subclause 27(1) of the bill states that:

The Board may, on the request of the Minister, prepare a report on the financial performance of the Agency during the financial year ending on the preceding 30 June.

The amendments replace the word ‘may’ with ‘must’. I moved that the amendments be agreed to as they are minor and technical and do not represent a policy change. The requirement to report financial performance is consistent with the obligations that are conferred on statutory authorities under the Financial Management Act 1994. This is a fantastic bill that supports the establishment of Respect Victoria.

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) (19:03) — I rise to speak on the Prevention of Family Violence Bill 2018 amendments as moved by Ms Crozier in another place — the omission of clause 27 and the insertion of a new clause to follow clause 26:

**“A Report of the Board on the financial
performance of the Agency**

- (1) The Board must prepare a report on the financial performance of the Agency during the financial year ending on the preceding 30 June.
- (2) The Board must cause a report under subsection (1) to be laid before each House of the Parliament as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year to which it relates.”.

Of course one thing that we have agreed on across all parties in this house and certainly in this Parliament is that the prevention of family violence is incredibly important. The prevalence of family violence is too great and, as was discussed during question time today, the fact that women do not have somewhere to run, such as 24-hour police stations, is a blight on this state at the moment. Of course now we know that there are about 16 or 17 police stations that were in fact open for 24 hours when they were promised to be 24-hour stations under the former Liberal government. We have people like Ron Iddles saying that there is no doubt that we have got a community safety problem and that police stations should be open. In fact he said there is no shortage of family violence victims who attend stations seeking refuge at all hours when other community services have closed and they have nowhere else to go.

One of the things about this bill is that it does allow for grants to be given to community groups and other providers to actually do prevention and service work. Of course if there is no reporting back to the Parliament, how do we know that they are acquitting their responsibilities? In every portfolio that I have ever been associated with — for example, the arts — if a grant is given, it must be acquitted against. We need to know how the money is being spent. The bill proposes reporting every three years or at the discretion of the minister. Well, that is fine, but if you are going off on the wrong tangent and the taxpayers money that is being spent is not being spent in the right areas and not having the right outcomes, you need to be able to change tactics.

Certainly the amendments moved by Ms Crozier in another place make sure that the government of the day is responsible to the taxpayer and also make sure that things are on the right track with the delivery of the services that are required by society at that particular time, because obviously things change. I am fully in favour of these amendments. I commend Ms Crozier for bringing them to the upper house and wish them a speedy passage through our house.

Motion agreed to.

VICTIMS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Council's amendment

Message from Council relating to following amendment considered:

1. Clause 35, line 26, after "responsibility." insert "In many cases, crimes were committed against a child and instead of the perpetrator being held to account, the child was subject to a historical care and protection order, despite the child not having committed any crime."

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) (19:07) — I move:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Legislative Council made a very simple amendment, which was to add extra content to the statement of recognition in the bill relating to historical care and protection orders. The words that were added are as follows:

In many cases, crimes were committed against a child and instead of the perpetrator being held to account, the child was subject to a historical care and protection order, despite the child not having committed any crime.

They are sensible words to be added to that statement of recognition. They had the unanimous support of the other place, and they should have the unanimous support of this house.

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) (19:08) — I am pleased to rise in this debate and happily advise the house that our side of the house will support this amendment.

Motion agreed to.

Remaining business postponed on motion of Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).

ADJOURNMENT

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I move:

That the house now adjourns.

Healesville freeway reserve

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (19:09) — (14 931) I raise a matter of importance for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is for the minister to provide an update to me and residents in the Forest Hill electorate regarding the plans for and future use of the Healesville freeway reserve (HFR). The Healesville freeway reserve is a stretch of land in the Forest Hill electorate running from Springvale Road to Boronia Road over approximately 3.3 kilometres which had originally been set aside for a freeway to Healesville.

The previous coalition government protected over 15 hectares of the HFR by transferring it to Crown land. In the 2014 election campaign the then Labor candidate for Forest Hill, together with the current Premier, campaigned in my electorate of Forest Hill on the issue of the HFR, promising that a Labor government would not sell any part of it. This campaign included a visit on 25 February 2014 to the HFR in the Forest Hill electorate by the current Premier, where he stood on a stump in the HFR and categorically promised to preserve the reserve. We now know that this promise was another Labor intentional untruth and that, according to a VicRoads letter dated 7 October 2016, land within the HFR is being sold. I asked the Premier about this issue in Parliament earlier this year, on 24 May 2018, and unsurprisingly he did not answer my questions then, nor has he answered them since.

Local residents remain very concerned about this issue and are keen to learn how much of the Healesville freeway reserve the current government is selling and when it will advise them of the extent of the government's broken promise on this issue. Local

residents are also very keen to know what is happening with the previously promised shared walking and cycling path in the HFR. This project was announced by the current government most recently on 13 April 2015, and nothing has been seen or heard of about this promise since. Many residents have been contacting me over the last almost four years asking me what is happening with the HFR and what the government is doing. The answer to date has been absolutely nothing, but the answer now is selling off parts of the HFR, contrary to its earlier promise.

I ask the minister, who I note is at the table and hopefully can give me an answer before the house rises tonight — he is at the table, so I trust that he will answer my question in full tonight — to write to me as a matter of urgency to advise me what is happening with the HFR, in particular how much of the land is being sold and when the shared walking and cycling path will be started, so that I can then notify the residents of the Forest Hill district and provide them with a detailed update regarding this land.

Growing Suburbs Fund

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (19:11) — (14 932) My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Local Government, and the action I seek is for her to support applications from the Shire of Nillumbik under the Growing Suburbs Fund. The shire has done very well in previous years out of the fund, and I believe the figure is in excess of \$16 million. The minister herself came out in November last year and announced a number of projects in the area. This year I understand Nillumbik shire is seeking some funds for a range of projects, including a further \$3 million for the Diamond Creek trail, which I have been supporting for more than a decade. I think it has been 14 years. Last year the council said it was shovel-ready. The land still has not been acquired, so I hope that this year it is shovel-ready, because I know the community has waited long enough. So I am very supportive of that funding for the trail.

The council has also sought \$4 million to build a second level on the Greensborough Hockey Club. I am the number one ticketholder at the Greensborough Hockey Club, and I was previously pleased to support funding that went to the original upgrade of their rooms and also an additional pitch. But I am a bit nonplussed about why \$4 million is required, because the club have told me themselves it is only about \$2 million. I really hope that that can be resolved between the council and officers, because it is very much needed for broader community use and as a regional facility.

Council have also sought funding for a regional play space on the old pony club site on the banks of Diamond Creek. Originally this was proposed to be allocated for soccer, and I said to council that I would support it being a regional play space — and I am supportive of it — provided that council also supported a synthetic pitch to be located at Diamond Valley College, given that this was going to be lost from what was proposed at the pony club site. Sadly, even though the ward councillor supported this, during debate the councillor described this as my vanity project rather than thinking about the kids and players of Diamond Creek.

This week's *Diamond Valley Leader*, on page 3, describes the lack of pitches as a sad state of affairs for soccer's booming popularity and says that there needs to be an additional two pitches in the Shire of Nillumbik. So I really hope that in future years, if we are re-elected, Cr Perkins will get the numbers and the mayor will actually either come on board or be rolled, because this really should have been part of the applications.

With that said, I support the other applications and I urge the minister —

The SPEAKER — The member's time has expired.

Ovens Valley electorate bus services

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (19:14) — (14 933) My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Public Transport, and the action that I seek is to have the V/Line bus stop in the small town of Everton on the early morning run along the Great Alpine Road from Bright to Wangaratta. I was recently contacted by Mr Findlay, who works as a volunteer driver. He said that he recently collected a person from Everton so that he could get into Wangaratta on time. This cost that person \$25, whereas a taxi would be \$60 and a V/Line bus only \$2.20. Mr Findlay said that the man was short of money, as can be the case in regional communities, as we know.

The earliest pass on the Bright–Wangaratta run leaves Bright at 6.10 a.m. and gets into Wangaratta at 7.10 a.m., skipping past Everton and many other small communities. A bus stop exists in Everton already. It would be easy for the bus to depart 5 to 10 minutes earlier so that the people of Everton can get to where they need to be. This would affect not only Everton but also other small communities nearby that need public transport. They would save on transport costs because the distance they would need to travel to a bus stop would be much less.

Currently, Minister, the earliest a person from Everton can get to Wangaratta is at 8.30 a.m., which is several hours wait until the next train arrives. We know there is outrage in the city when a train skips a stop to make up time, so why wouldn't it be the same in the country for those who do not have as much access to public transport? This stop would only add a few minutes to the journey time and can be easily made up by running the service slightly earlier, and it would support the people of Everton. I am not asking for a stop in every small community, but Everton is a logical one-off stop.

Centenary Park, Bentleigh East

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (19:16) — (14 934) My adjournment matter tonight is for the attention of the Minister for Sport, and it concerns Centenary Park in my electorate. The action I seek is that the minister fund a lighting upgrade for St Peters junior football club. Glen Eira council has applied for this lighting upgrade. It is a project worth \$300 000 in total to provide 100-lux lighting at Centenary Park that will allow for night-time competition. That is very important in my electorate because my electorate has really embraced female participation in football. That means so many more kids are playing footy, and therefore we need to be using our grounds for longer and at different times of the day. That is why we have already funded lighting upgrades at Bentleigh Hodgson Reserve, McKinnon Reserve and Bailey Reserve. Centenary Park really is next. I know the St Peters junior footy club have really embraced female footy and have growing numbers of girls playing football at the reserve.

I would like to acknowledge Vicki Durston, president of the club, as well as Sarah Loh, CEO of South Metro Junior Football League, who have championed this issue on behalf of St Peters but also other clubs that really are in desperate need of proper lighting to be able to hold games in the evenings. Glen Eira council has requested \$150 000 towards this project, and I encourage the minister to provide that funding.

V/Line rolling stock

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) (19:17) — (14 935) I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is for the minister to provide detailed information and details of the justification of the cost and time frame involved in Bombardier's project to design bogies for new standard gauge V/Locity trains for the north-east line. Although the rorting Labor government does not like to admit it, we all know that the trains that run to Albury and Wodonga each day are well past their

use-by date. These clunkers should have been replaced several years ago.

We know that because it was highlighted in a Victorian Auditor-General's report last year. That same report told us that almost half the cancellations on the north-east line were caused by these ancient and failing train sets — trains that were originally designed for freight. Of course as the minister for thought bubbles is prone to do, she deflected the findings and blamed the tracks, the same tracks that the federal coalition is investing \$235 million in to appease this Victorian state Labor minister. That report also highlighted the fact that these heavy, aged and poorly cushioned trains fail to get to their top speed of 115 kilometres an hour while the New South Wales XPT cruises the same track at 130 kilometres an hour.

Surely for any responsible government, that report from the Auditor-General should have been the catalyst for an immediate replacement order for new trains, and for the member for Bendigo East and Minister for Public Transport the correct answer should have been yes. These trains run through all of regional and rural Victoria, so you would think she would have some empathy with our plight, particularly in the north-east of Victoria. Unfortunately the minister did nothing again. She deflected and threw \$10 million from this year's budget to keep the old classic fleet just going.

In the past month, the same month that this rorting Labor government came up with a storyline that is beyond even the most satirical of TV send-ups, the minister announced a 12-month project for Bombardier to design bogies, the wheels, for the standard gauge track — so new bogies but no mention of when any new trains might be ordered. The government cannot give a dollar figure, but let me tell you that the trainspotting fraternity went into meltdown. 'VLocity were designed for standard gauge bogies', they yelled. 'Changing bogies is no big deal. What's the fuss?', called out others. 'Doesn't Bombardier have trains running on standard gauge tracks in England?', they said.

We on this side of the house are not deflectors, we are not sitting on the fence and we will not paint fantasy when people want reality. A Liberal-Nationals coalition government will order \$632.9 million worth of new trains for long-haul lines in Victoria in next May's budget. We will deliver 96 locos and carriages that are faster, smoother, safer and more reliable from 2021. So the minister needs to tell the people of my electorate and those along the line from Melbourne to Albury why it will take 12 months to work out a design for these bogies.

South Gippsland Highway, Dandenong, level crossing

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) (19:21) — (14 936)

My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek from the minister is that she provide an update on the removal of the South Gippsland Highway level crossing in Dandenong South, which is also the home of Bombardier. The South Gippsland Highway level crossing is one of the most dangerous and congested level crossings in Victoria, so when we came to government in 2014 we decided that it had to go. The South Gippsland Highway is the gateway to Gippsland from Dandenong and Greater Melbourne and an important route through Dandenong's manufacturing precinct. Thirty-one thousand vehicles use this route every day and are routinely brought to a standstill by the boom gates.

For years the community and the industrial community have been crying out for the removal of this death-trap level crossing and the congestion it causes, so it is with great pride that I stand here as a member of a government that is committed to getting it done. Of course we have already achieved an enormous amount in a short time. We have seen Noble Park transformed over the last 18 months or so with the removal of three level crossings at Chandler Road, Heatherton Road and Corrigan Road. Only last week I was there as the boom gates were carried away from the level crossing at Abbots Road in Dandenong South as well. That is another very important one for the industrial community in Dandenong South.

Dandenong is now ready for the next one, and the South Gippsland Highway is a pivotal connection point, as I have said, to our industrial precinct and also obviously the connection point to Gippsland, and the removal of this level crossing will deliver great benefits for my community. It is the next step in unclogging Dandenong's road and rail network in that area and to getting our commuters and particularly the workforce in that area where they need to be safer and sooner.

Rural Access program

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (19:22) — (14 937) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, and the action I seek is the continuation of funding for the Rural Access program. I have been told that as Victoria transitions to the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) several state-supported services are being wrapped up, and there is a real fear among those who work in the sector that the work done by those services will fall through

the gaps. I have been made aware that state funding for Rural Access finished in June this year, with the federal government picking up the bill until June 2019.

Rural Access works in partnership with local organisations, businesses and the broader community to develop new ways of including people with disability in the life of their communities. Rural Access plans and develops projects across the full range of community infrastructure, including education and training, transport, health, accommodation and housing, the built environment, community planning, communication and information, sport and recreation, arts and culture, community events and activities and community awareness. In my electorate this has resulted in programs like beach wheelchairs, scooter recharge points and the welcoming business program, which easily identifies businesses that are accessible to people with mobility aids.

The fear is that when funding for this program ends this important work will cease and the positive and proactive programs it was rolling out will stop being developed. There is also a fear that it will be left to others who work in the disability space, overburdening them and meaning the work will not be done in the best way it can be because they will be stretched thin. I believe the state government must remain involved in the space to ensure important work like this is not falling through the gaps and being forgotten.

In recent months I raised a matter in this place regarding disability access to the Warrnambool line train and the issues with accessible toilets being out of order over successive weeks. This is just one example of where people with a disability are disadvantaged when trying to be involved within their communities. I know there are many more challenges people with disabilities face in my own electorate and right across the state, so it seems like a blatant cost-saving measure for this government to cease its responsibility.

This is a government that purports to be making things fair and putting people first, but I am struggling to see how wrapping up funding for important programs like this is making things fair or putting people first. The Victorian government must not wash its hands of the disability sector, especially when we are talking about ensuring people with a disability are able to be involved in the communities in which they live. As with the rollout of any major policy there are bound to be teething problems with the NDIS, and I sincerely hope this is one of those and not a deliberate cost-saving measure.

The state government has a responsibility to stay involved in the disability space and should not be rushing to shift its disability services. State governments still have a role to play, and that responsibility should not be shirked. I urge the minister to continue this funding as a matter of priority and to continue improving accessibility for people with a disability in our community.

Sunbury electorate schools

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) (19:25) — (14 938) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the minister to join me on a visit to schools in my electorate, starting at Gladstone Park Primary School. Gladstone Park Primary School is a wonderful local school that in the 2018–19 state budget received \$1.5 million for a significant upgrade. The school and the school community were incredibly grateful and have started planning the upgrade with this funding. I would be delighted to have the opportunity to discuss with the minister how we can make Gladstone Park Primary School bigger and better than ever.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible work that has been done by the minister in creating and building the Education State. This government, the Andrews Labor government, committed to make Victoria the Education State, not in words but in action. In my electorate alone we have invested over \$45 million in local schools. I am sure members will be pleased to know that is the equivalent of roughly 11 million meat pies from the tuckshop. This investment in local schools is not just about numbers; it changes the lives of our students, making sure they have the best resources and the greatest support available to thrive and succeed. I want to put on record my thanks to local principals, school councils and school communities who all work tirelessly to provide the best education and ensure that their voices are heard.

It is outstanding the amount that has been delivered in four years. There has been over \$8 million for Sunbury College, \$3.9 million for Sunbury Downs College, \$500 000 for Salesian College, \$900 000 for Gladstone Park Secondary College, over \$19 million for the two campuses of Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School — one of those is in the member for Macedon's seat, I should say — over \$700 000 for Kismet Park Primary School, \$3.5 million for Sunbury Primary School, \$700 000 for Sunbury Heights Primary School, \$1.5 million for Gladstone Park Primary School, \$4 million to rebuild Tullamarine Primary School and \$150 000 for Diggers Rest Primary School, as well as \$7 million for a shared facility on land shared between

Sunbury Heights and Sunbury Downs College. This is just capital. Time does not allow me to go on, but we have of course the school camps and excursions fund, the doctors in schools program, free breakfasts, eye tests and a huge increase in equity funding.

In politics you are not judged by what you say but by what you do. The Andrews Labor government has delivered in education in my electorate, and the community knows it. We said we would make this state the Education State, and that is exactly what we have done.

Voluntary assisted dying

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (19:28) — (14 939) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Health. The action I seek is for the minister to provide details on how the government is planning to fund, support and implement the necessary training for doctors in my electorate who wish to become qualified under the conditions of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017. Following the long and thoughtful debates in this place around the care this government promised both supporters and critics of the voluntary assisted dying legislation, much was made of the support and training that would be made available to doctors who wished to provide care in this area. The government has set up a variety of expert committees to help guide the training regime for doctors to ensure appropriate levels of training and understanding of this new way of managing terminal health conditions and expectations. This change to life management will affect rural medical practitioners in a way not necessarily experienced by their city colleagues. It will be important that country GPs are listened to in their training requirements and that the best possible system is put in place and properly funded.

Williamstown Football Club

Mr NOONAN (Williamstown) (19:29) — (14 940) I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Sport; in fact it is similar to the matter raised by the member for Bentleigh. The action I seek from the minister is for him to consider favourably the application made by the Williamstown Football Club for a community sports infrastructure loan. The Williamstown Football Club has been part of the Hobsons Bay community for a very long time; in fact its inception in 1864 makes it one of the oldest sporting clubs in the country. Notably the club fielded their first women's team in this year's VFLW competition, the first standalone VFL club to do so. This initiative is obviously very exciting for the development of women's football in Melbourne's west, and I think it will pave the way for a generation of young girls and

women to play football at the highest level without ever needing to leave our region in the west.

Beyond the club's VFLW endeavours, it plays a very significant role in the community. Not only does the club support numerous grassroots clubs, but it also features prominently in the development of budding young footballers at our local schools. For example, the club delivers an accelerated football program at both Williamstown High School and Bayside College.

With the success of women's football and the introduction of the club's VFLW side it has become apparent that facilities at the Point Gellibrand ground are no longer fit for purpose. What that means in a practical sense is that when the women's game is completed what they are often doing is returning to the changing rooms just as the men are in their final stages of warming up and about to run onto the ground, and that is obviously not practical any longer. The club have developed a very sensible and strong solution and are willing to invest heavily in their own facilities. They have won considerable support from the AFL, which has made a funding pledge to upgrade the facilities as well.

I will never miss an opportunity, as the club's number one ticketholder, to wish the club's men's senior team every success for the remainder of the season, particularly given they are just two wins away from claiming their 17th premiership. Therefore I would very much urge the minister to consider favourably the loan application made by the club.

Responses

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (19:31) — What a great policy the Labor Party has to actually reserve the open space at the old Healesville freeway reserve for that community locally, because obviously we needed to protect it from the Liberal Party's policy of selling off 20 hectares, which is what the member for Forest Hill and his team were proceeding to do. Obviously we have allocated already 21.7 hectares. Let us be very clear: 21.7 hectares has already been allocated. If the member for Forest Hill actually wants to get something done, he should talk to his local council about the permits we require to hand over another 13.2 hectares of the Healesville reserve to ensure the community has a marvellous reserve and marvellous open space, which is what we have committed to doing.

But let us be very clear: the Liberal Party had a policy of selling off 20 hectares, so for the member for Forest Hill to come in here and start carrying on like a pork chop as if we have not committed to doing these things

and then further encouraging his local council to put blocks in the way of delivering another 13.2 hectares — I would encourage him to do the right thing by the community —

Mr Angus — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister has just accused me of meddling in the arrangements and causing the council to block the government's processes. That is a complete lie, and I urge you to get him to withdraw that.

The SPEAKER — Order! If the member for Forest Hill is offended by remarks that the minister made, he can ask for them to be withdrawn.

Mr Angus — I am offended because he has totally misled the house.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr DONNELLAN — Okay, I withdraw the offensive remarks, but let us be very clear: this is a specific policy of the ALP, and the Liberal Party was proceeding to sell off the Healesville reserve. That is a basic fact of life — let us be very clear. If I was a member of the local community in Forest Hill, I would be asking the member why he supported the proposition of actually selling off that land in the first place when the Labor Party has already delivered 21.7 hectares of that land and is currently trying to work through to deliver the other 13.2 hectares. We have made a commitment, and we are meeting that commitment and doing the right thing.

Mr Angus — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is failing to recognise the fact that his team went to the 2014 election swearing black and blue that they would not sell a square inch of the thing, and they are actually —

The SPEAKER — Order! Is there a point of order? The member for Forest Hill needs to raise a point of order.

Mr Angus — The minister is misleading the house again, because they are breaching their election commitment.

The SPEAKER — Order! I understand the issue the member for Forest Hill is raising. He can raise those issues further in the house in debating other items of business, but the minister is responding to the issue he has raised.

Mr DONNELLAN — We said very clearly we would save that open space, and that is what we have

done. So let us be very clear: the games which are going on with the Liberal Party pretending somehow or other they are there to provide that open space to the community, when they are about to sell it, is absolute rubbish.

For the rest of the matters, the member for Ovens Valley, the member for Benambra and the member for Dandenong raised matters for the Minister for Public Transport. The member for Yan Yean had an issue for the Minister for Local Government. The member for Bentleigh and the member for Williamstown raised matters for the Minister for Sport. The member for Sunbury had an issue for the Minister for Education. The member for South-West Coast had an issue for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. The member for Polwarth had an issue for the Minister for Health, and I think that is it.

The SPEAKER — The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 7.35 p.m.