

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 14 September 2011

(Extract from book 13)

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Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Darveniza, Mr D. M. Davis, Mr P. R. Davis, Mr Hall, Ms Lovell, Ms Pennicuik and Mr Scheffer.

Procedures Committee — The President, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr D. M. Davis, Mr Hall, Mr Lenders, Ms Pennicuik and Mr Viney

Legislative Council standing committees

Economy and Infrastructure Legislation Committee — Mr Barber, Ms Broad, Mrs Coote, #Ms Crozier, Mr Drum, Mr Finn, #Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pulford, Mr Ramsay and Mr Somyurek.

Economy and Infrastructure References Committee — Mr Barber, Ms Broad, Mrs Coote, #Ms Crozier, Mr Drum, Mr Finn, #Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pulford, Mr Ramsay and Mr Somyurek.

Environment and Planning Legislation Committee — Mr Elsbury, #Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, Mrs Kronberg, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, #Mrs Petrovich, Mrs Peulich, Mr Scheffer, *Mr Tarlamis, Mr Tee and Ms Tierney.

Environment and Planning References Committee — Mr Elsbury, #Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, Mrs Kronberg, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, #Mrs Petrovich, Mrs Peulich, Mr Scheffer, Mr Tee and Ms Tierney.

Legal and Social Issues Legislation Committee — Ms Crozier, Mr Elasmr, #Mr Elsbury, Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Brien, Mr O'Donohue, Mrs Petrovich, #Mr Ramsay and Mr Viney.

Legal and Social Issues References Committee — Ms Crozier, Mr Elasmr, #Mr Elsbury, Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Brien, Mr O'Donohue, Mrs Petrovich, #Mr Ramsay and Mr Viney.

* *Inquiry into Environment Protection Amendment (Beverage Container Deposit and Recovery Scheme) Bill 2011*

Participating member

Joint committees

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Council*): Mr D. Davis, Mr Hall, Mr Lenders, Ms Lovell and Ms Pennicuik. (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Ms Hennessy, Mr Holding, Mr McIntosh, Dr Naphine and Mr Walsh.

Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee — (*Council*): Mr Leane, Mr Ramsay and Mr Scheffer. (*Assembly*): Mr Battin and Mr McCurdy.

Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee — (*Council*): Mrs Peulich. (*Assembly*): Mr Burgess, Mr Foley, Mr Noonan and Mr Shaw.

Education and Training Committee — (*Council*): Mr Elasmr and Ms Tierney. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Ms Miller and Mr Southwick.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Council*): Mr Finn, Mr Somyurek and Mr Tarlamis. (*Assembly*): Ms Ryall and Mrs Victoria.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee — (*Council*): Mr Koch. (*Assembly*): Mr Bull, Ms Duncan, Mr Pandazopoulos and Ms Wreford.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Council*): Mrs Coote and Ms Crozier. (*Assembly*): Mrs Bauer, Ms Halfpenny, Mr McGuire and Mr Wakeling.

House Committee — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*) Mr Drum, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, and Mr P. Davis.. (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Ms Beattie, Ms Campbell, Mrs Fyffe, Ms Graley, Mr Wakeling and Mr Weller.

Law Reform Committee — (*Council*): Mrs Petrovich. (*Assembly*): Mr Carbines, Ms Garrett, Mr Newton-Brown and Mr Northe.

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee — (*Council*): Mrs Kronberg and Mr Ondarchie. (*Assembly*): Ms Graley, Ms Hutchins and Ms McLeish.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): Mr P. Davis, Mr O'Brien and Mr Pakula. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Ms Hennessey, Mr Morris and Mr Scott.

Road Safety Committee — (*Council*): Mr Elsbury. (*Assembly*): Mr Languiller, Mr Perera, Mr Tilley and Mr Thompson.

Rural and Regional Committee — (*Council*): Mr Drum. (*Assembly*): Mr Howard, Mr Katos, Mr Trezise and Mr Weller.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Council*): Mr O'Brien and Mr O'Donohue. (*Assembly*): Ms Campbell, Mr Eren, Mr Gidley, Mr Nardella and Mr Watt.

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

Council — Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr W. R. Tunnecliffe

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Coote, Mrs Andrea	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	O'Brien, Mr David Roland Joseph	Western Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Hon. Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
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Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tee, Mr Brian Lennox	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Koch, Mr David Frank	Western Victoria	LP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP

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Wednesday, 14 September 2011

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson) took the chair at 9.33 a.m. and read the prayer.

PARLIAMENTARY SALARIES AND SUPERANNUATION FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2011

Introduction and first reading

Received from Assembly.

Read first time on motion of Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health).

Leave refused for second reading later this day.

Ordered that second reading be made order of the day for next day.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Budget estimates 2011–12 (part 3)

Mr P. DAVIS (Eastern Victoria) presented report, including appendix.

Laid on table.

Ordered to be printed.

Mr P. DAVIS (Eastern Victoria) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

I will make a few general remarks about the tabling of this report. It is a delight to be able to table it and conclude this part of the work of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee for this year. It has been nearly six months of work, and before I go any further I will make some acknowledgements, which are often overlooked because we run out of time in these take-note motions. Firstly, I acknowledge the work of the members of the PAEC secretariat, who have made a massive contribution to the work — the three parts of the estimates reports — which is significant in total. I know some of my parliamentary colleagues who do not take as keen an interest in this subject as others among us sometimes regard the volume of the estimates reports as being equivalent to telephone books and believe that they are appropriately used as doorstops.

Mrs Coote interjected.

Mr P. DAVIS — That is a very poor reflection, Mrs Coote, on the work of PAEC, and I know this year Mrs Coote in particular will make an enormous effort to read every word of part 3 of the report.

Having said that, the committee staff put in an enormous amount of effort. Certainly the committee members themselves like to claim the credit for the work the committee does, but the reality is that the staff, headed by the executive officer, Valerie Cheong, and the senior research officer for this inquiry, Christopher Gribbin, supported by Ian Claessen, Michael Herbert, Thomas Bourleaud, adviser Joe Manders, Peter Rorke, business support officer Melanie Hondros and desktop publishers Justin Ong and Kentia Boyle, have all made a great contribution.

The report is very well put together, with 90 recommendations. That seems a great many — and it is. I am particularly looking forward to the government response because these recommendations are about enhancing government reporting in the future. I am referring specifically to part 3 — there are two previous parts which were tabled before 30 June. The budget papers are a key component of the government's accountability mechanisms. They provide Parliament and the community with an opportunity to understand the detail of the government's plans for the next year and to understand the cost and timing of new initiatives by which progress can be monitored.

The important aspect of this is that there has been a change of government, and this year is an opportunity for stocktake, if you like, of the way the government presents the state finances and an opportunity to have a look through the accountability mechanisms, because there is a commitment by the government to a new level of transparency and accountability.

It is worth noting that the committee refocused the way it provides these reports. Parts 1 and 3 are similar in some respects to the previous reports that have been tabled. Part 2 was a new initiative this year focusing on performance measures in the budget. I particularly emphasise that for the first time the committee has included an overall analysis of the new output initiatives in the budget. The committee also added a section examining the nature of expenses that are expected to be incurred through the budget period, and new ways of analysing the budget have brought to light some issues which previously have not been examined by the committee.

In terms of the quality of the report, it is important to note that a lot of input was required to achieve that

outcome. That input needs to be acknowledged. There were 48 public hearings on the estimates extending over 54 hours. They were attended by ministers and senior departmental officers, and the committee also received answers to departmental questionnaires and other information provided by government departments. I wish to thank all those involved, particularly my fellow committee members. I am pleased to say that this report was adopted unanimously by the committee.

Hon. M. P. PAKULA (Western Metropolitan) — In the 2 minutes I have, I want to make a couple of points. I will pick up the last point made by the chair of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee first: he is correct to say that this report was adopted unanimously by the committee. I thank the chair for his preparedness to be cooperative and consultative in the way in which both the recommendations and commentary in the report were presented. All members of the committee were given an opportunity to express a view about the recommendations and the findings of the report, and alterations to early drafts were made in a proper, cooperative fashion. It is my fervent hope that the committee continues to work in that way over the next three years.

I also want to add my thanks to those of the chair for the work of all the members of the committee secretariat, led by Valerie Cheong. Rather than naming them all, because I have only a minute, I point out that they are all listed on page xi of the report.

I want to make reference to one other matter that is in chapter 1. It is the fact that no minister responded to any of the unasked questions which were taken by the committee. On page 2 of the report it is outlined that four ministers — Dr Naphine, Ms Asher, Mr David Davis and Mr Guy — wrote to the committee indicating that they were not prepared to answer the unasked questions. That is a regrettable response from the government ministers. The fact that every minister took the same decision indicates to me that it was a conscious cabinet decision not to answer the unasked questions posed by committee members. The response is a matter of extreme regret, and I hope the government reconsiders its position.

Mr O'BRIEN (Western Victoria) — I wish to briefly add to the remarks of both the chair and the deputy chair of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee in congratulating, firstly, the secretariat, and secondly, all the members of PAEC who constructively worked towards adopting a unanimous report. I add my congratulations on the work of the chair in particular, and also that of the deputy chair, on the constructive

way in which they were able to adopt a unanimous report.

I will be brief in my remarks on the nature of the report. It contains a number of detailed recommendations — 90 in fact — relating particularly to reporting performance measures and how these are translated from budget to budget to enable greater transparency and effective scrutiny by the Parliament of the executive through ministerial accountability, but also through departmental responses on behalf of the people of Victoria. The recommendations are worth studying for those interested in particular issues but also because in general they recognise the increasing desire of the community for greater transparency and accountability of government. These recommendations are a very important means of achieving that.

I wish to briefly touch on recommendation 10, which states:

Future budget papers provide detail about the geographic distribution of new initiatives, including:

- (a) detailing the major initiatives and total funding for each specific region of Victoria (including metropolitan Melbourne);
- (b) linking those initiatives to the key issues affecting each region; and
- (c) differentiating funding for regional cities from funding for rural Victoria.

This is an important measure that will help many of my constituents in Western Victoria Region, the region I represent, who desire accountability to be delivered on the whole funding relationship of government as it delivers for all citizens, particularly those in regional Victoria.

Motion agreed to.

Report 2010–11

Mr P. DAVIS (Eastern Victoria) presented report.

Laid on table.

Ordered to be printed.

Mr P. DAVIS (Eastern Victoria) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

I wish to make some remarks on the annual report of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee for 2010–11. Because in effect it is an annual report which straddles two Parliaments the remarks will touch briefly on some of the matters relating to the 56th Parliament.

It is useful to note before proceeding that three of the members of the previous committee of the 56th Parliament are now ministers, including Mr Dalla-Riva in this house and the Treasurer and Minister for Finance in the other house.

Mr Lenders — There is still hope for you, Mr Davis.

Mr P. DAVIS — As the Leader of the Opposition interjected, there is still hope for me. I think he is referring to Gladstone having served 60 years in the United Kingdom Parliament. He had three cycles as Prime Minister, as I recall.

Mr Lenders interjected.

Mr P. DAVIS — I would like to focus on this report rather than Mr Lenders's interjections. The report that we have before us is made up of some 50 pages. It comprehensively outlines both the statutory duties of the committee and the reference function relating to particular inquiries. In the four months before the 56th Parliament was prorogued the committee tabled six reports. Obviously it is an onerous workload for the committee, which in my view is significantly underresourced. I note that the Clerk is interested in this observation. I can assure the house that it will be something we will hear a great deal more about, because when you look at the workload that is imposed on the secretariat of this committee you realise that it dwarfs by comparison the efforts of many other parts of the Parliament. It concerns me that the statutory obligations of this committee relating to accountability and its oversight role are not sufficiently recognised and supported.

In any event one of the important reports tabled during the 56th Parliament was on the inquiry into Victoria's Audit Act 1994, and I am looking forward with great anticipation to the government's initiatives in response to that report. The committee has approved a work program for the 2011 year, which includes the budget estimates inquiry, to which I have spoken earlier in this place. Today we tabled part 3. In the first half of this year we tabled the first two parts of the report on that inquiry. Those reports address better practice and performance measurement, highlighting the various aspects of the budget.

I am not wishing to dwell on this, but I am looking forward with great anticipation to the inquiry on the reference given to the committee by the Assembly on 5 May relating to effective decision making for the successful delivery of significant infrastructure projects. That inquiry will proceed somewhat restricted by the

resources available for the remainder of this financial year.

After having read this annual report and having looked at the detail of the work undertaken by the committee, I again with great passion thank very much the secretariat staff, led by Valerie Cheong. There is absolutely no doubt that this is an extraordinarily professional team. It works as a team with the committee, and I thank the members of the committee for the cooperation we have within the committee generally. From time to time there are some differences in our views. In a previous remark the Deputy Chair made reference to the absence of a response to unasked questions submitted in writing during the estimates process. My response to that publicly would be that given that the opposition members tabled 300 unasked questions compared to the previous estimates period when none were tabled, I am not surprised that ministers found the workload to be too onerous to respond.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT — Order! I draw the attention of the house to two people in the gallery in appreciation of their attendance and presentations this morning at the men's health breakfast that was organised by the Speaker and his staff with my patronage as well. Sally Coates from beyondblue and Nathan Thompson, who played with a couple of football teams but not the best one, provided advice this morning to members who attended the breakfast. It was valuable, and we appreciate their making themselves available. I would invite members who were not able to attend the breakfast this morning to talk to members who were there and discuss some of the resources and so forth that were pointed to by both Nathan Thompson and Sally Coates. As a mark of appreciation, I thank you for joining us this morning.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Report 2010–11

Debate resumed.

Hon. M. P. PAKULA (Western Metropolitan) — President, let me say in regard to your view of what is the best football team: Tom Scully did not think so!

I rise to speak also on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee annual report of 2011 and to concur in large part with the comments of Mr Davis. I think this report demonstrates the enormous work done by the secretariat, led by Valerie Cheong. It also demonstrates without any question the volume and complexity of the work carried out by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, whether it is in the budget estimates process, the review of the Auditor-General's reports or, indeed, a reference of the sort that has been picked up by the committee as a result of the resolution of the Legislative Assembly.

Without wanting in any way to derogate from the work other parliamentary committees do, I think any fair person would suggest that the work done by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, given its statutory responsibilities, is above and beyond the work done by other committees in terms of time and complexity. It is a long-held view of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, of which I was a member previously, that it is underresourced for the work it needs to do. It was certainly the view of the previous government that additional resources should be applied to that committee, but unfortunately when those resources were provided they were applied by the Parliament in a way other than in accordance with the intention of the government.

I believe that still to be the case. I agree with the committee chair when he says that it needs to be rectified. He has talked about a reference from the Assembly, and it is my view that, whilst that reference is important, if the committee is underresourced it is completely inappropriate for the other important work of the committee to fall by the wayside because of that underresourcing. Whether or not the committee is going to be able to carry out that reference will, in large part, depend on whether those resources are provided.

Mr O'BRIEN (Western Victoria) — I too wish to rise to add briefly to the remarks of the chair and the deputy chair of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee in relation to the annual report, and particularly to congratulate the secretariat on the job it has done. Picking up one of the lighter points — the point about Tom Scully — I am with the President on this one. It is a loss to a great football club, and I know that I am in the appropriate colours to make that comment. It was all about resources in the end, and when you have resources you can do wonderful things in government.

The importance of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee in trying to ensure that the state has adequate resources to deliver on its commitments is

something that those wearing the red and blue are particularly attuned to. One of the important aspects of this report is that it not only refers to the work the committee has done in both the previous Parliament and the present one but also to the work that is to come. In relation to some of the work that is being done it refers to the briefings that were held by the secretariat, not at the Windsor Hotel, not at exorbitant premises as a big breakfast but rather at a more budget-aware location that offered savings to government — the Treasury building.

At that breakfast there was a very important seminar and briefing for those who had to speak on the budget, and it allowed timely accountability into that process. I also join the President in congratulating Mr Thompson and the work of beyondblue which we heard about at the breakfast we attended today. Seminar lunchtime briefings held by the Auditor-General's office are also important. They hold briefings every Wednesday. I encourage those who wish to attend those briefings to do so.

There is an important inquiry in relation to the delivery of major projects. That has been outlined by the chair of the committee. We look forward to that, because it will be a very important inquiry into how we can have greater resources for the state. I look forward to working on that with the rest of the committee.

Motion agreed to.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Review of Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) presented report, including appendices, together with transcripts of evidence.

Laid on table.

Ordered that report be printed.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

I am pleased to present the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee's review of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 pursuant to section 44 of the charter which requires the Attorney-General to order a review of the first four years of the charter's operation and for it to be tabled in

Parliament before 1 October 2011. SARC was requested to undertake the review and inquiry by a Governor-in-Council order dated 19 April 2011. In addition to the statutory reference, three other terms of reference provided to SARC form part of this report.

The meaning of human rights in a Victorian context and the most appropriate way to protect and enhance those rights are matters of significant public interest and debate. Whether or not to have a charter or bill of rights is an issue that cuts across party political lines. Former New South Wales Labor Premier Bob Carr recently gave a speech calling on the Victorian government to repeal the charter. The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association, which in its submission noted that it is the largest union affiliated with the Australian Council of Trade Unions, stated:

It is the SDA's conclusion that given the propensity for the overlay of laws and conflict between rights, serious consideration be given to scrapping the charter.

Some questioned the appropriateness of SARC undertaking this review. It is hoped that any such questions have been answered by this report responding to the terms of reference and providing the community with what I believe are detailed and constructive recommendations to improve the regime for protecting human rights in Victoria. Others asserted that the charter is beyond consideration for significant change or reform. However, the charter is an ordinary statute capable of repeal or amendment.

The charter has mandatory four-year and eight-year reviews which contemplate and would contemplate change. The charter has been in operation for over four years, which presents SARC and the community with an opportunity for a deeper and more evidence-based analysis of the question of how to best protect human rights in Victoria than was possible under the initial consultation that led to the charter.

It is also worth noting that even amongst the most learned and respected lawyers there is no agreement about the best way to protect rights. SARC was fortunate to receive a submission from the Honourable Michael Kirby, AC, CMG, who said that the charter should be retained and enhanced, and one from His Excellency the Honourable Sir James Gobbo, AC, CVO, who contended that the charter should be repealed.

In responding to the terms of reference, SARC did not find that the case for adding new categories of rights, reviews and proceedings to the existing charter had been made. In chapter 4, SARC makes wide-ranging recommendations for changes to the current charter.

We note the complexity of various provisions, including the definition of public authorities and reasonable limits. We suggest the reconsideration and revision of the interpretation provision to preserve traditional interpretation methods and the primacy of the purpose of statutory provisions, the transfer of the Supreme Court's role in making declarations of inconsistent interpretation to an independent non-judicial body reporting to a parliamentary committee and express identification of specific remedies, if any, to be made available for breaches of the provisions in relation to the obligations of public authorities.

Having made wide-ranging recommendations pursuant to the terms of reference, SARC in chapter 6 presents for consideration two options for reform and improvement of the human rights regime in Victoria. Two major court decisions on the charter were brought down in the final days of the inquiry — that is, the Court of Appeal matter of *Director of Housing v. Sudi*, and the High Court of Australia matter of *Momcilovic v. The Queen and Ors*. While there have been different views articulated about these decisions, what is clear from these and other decisions is that many charter provisions lack clarity in terms of their drafting and meaning.

Both of the options for reform recommended for consideration by SARC aim to overcome the difficulties identified in these and other judgements on the charter. Option 1 incorporates recommendations and other changes aimed at increasing the usability of the current charter model. Option 2, by removing the existing role of the courts, would remove altogether the divisions containing the above provisions of the charter and open up the possibility of having additional rights considered by Parliament and more innovative dispute resolution methods.

The committee heard much evidence regarding the siloed nature of government service delivery, with some seeing the charter as the solution to this problem. The committee also heard evidence that new policy approaches as articulated in documents such as 'One DHS' were also effective in breaking this siloed approach without the problems that the committee found exist with the existing charter.

This report and inquiry have been very challenging. I wish to thank all members of the committee for their hard work and goodwill. I am pleased that we have been able to table a unified report. I wish to thank the SARC secretariat, consisting of Andrew Homer, Helen Mason, Simon Dinsbergs, Sonya Caruana, Maria Marasco and Victoria Kalapac, and the consultants

engaged for the reference, who were Jeremy Gans, Charles Parkinson and Nicole Schlesinger. All worked very hard to meet the exacting deadline the committee had to meet. I also wish to thank all those who made submissions and presented evidence at the public hearings. Their views and evidence enabled SARC to canvass and consider a wide range of positions.

Finally, I believe both options, together with the 35 recommendations which are presented by the committee today for reform, represent an improvement on the current regime for human rights protection in Victoria, and consequently I commend the report to the house and the community. Again I wish to thank deputy chair Christine Campbell, the member for Pascoe Vale in the other place, and all members of the committee for their work. I am very pleased the committee has been able to table a unified report.

Mr O'BRIEN (Western Victoria) — I also wish to rise briefly to add my remarks on the report of the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee (SARC) titled *Review of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*. As a member of that committee I wish to endorse the chair's comments. First of all I congratulate the submitters and acknowledge the significant work that was undertaken by the Victorian community in this review. Sometimes disparate views held by eminent Victorian citizens and also those working at the coalface of Victorian public service accountability are genuinely held, but they are differing, and there are vastly different possible ways in which any state can go in relation to its human rights protection, having regard to the rule of law and its constitutional arrangements. Some of these issues were touched on and are set out in the report.

In the time I have to speak on this matter I wish to just draw the house's attention to the conclusion in the report at paragraph 692, which is:

SARC wishes to place on record that in much of its deliberation and in the vast majority of its recommendations there was much common ground. The debate remains not around the desire to protect and enhance human rights, but the meaning of these rights and the manner of their best protection under the Westminster system of government.

In that regard recommendation 35 states:

Options for reform or improvement of the regime for protecting and upholding the human rights and responsibilities of Victorians

SARC recommends that consideration be given to the following two options:

1. that all of part 3 of the charter (application of human rights ...) be retained, subject to the modifications recommended in this report.

2. that only division 1 of part 3 of the charter (scrutiny of new laws) be retained, with the modifications recommended in this report, and that division 3 (interpretation of laws) and division 4 (obligations of public authorities) be repealed.

The important things to acknowledge in those two options are that they are both being presented for executive and Parliamentary consideration, that both acknowledge that there are significant difficulties in the present charter that are capable of reform or amendment and that they should be considered in the report in full. We look forward to the government and executive's response.

Motion agreed to.

VICTORIAN COMPETITION AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

Report 2010–11

Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS (Assistant Treasurer), by leave, presented report.

Motion agreed to.

Laid on table.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Albury Wodonga Health — Report 2010–11.

Auditor-General Reports on —

Business Planning for Major Capital Works and Recurrent Services in Local Government, September 2011.

Individualised Funding for Disability Services, September 2011.

Boort District Health — Report, 2010–11.

Building Commission — Report, 2010–11.

Essential Services Commission — Report, 2010–11.

Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation Limited — Report, 2010–11.

Gippsland Southern Health Service — Report, 2010–11.

Greyhound Racing Victoria — Report, 2010–11.

Harness Racing Victoria — Report, 2010–11.

Heritage Council of Victoria — Minister's report of receipt of 2010–11 report.

Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986 — Minister's certificate of 12 September 2011 pursuant to section 7(4) of the Act.

Mansfield District Hospital — Report, 2010–11.

Northern Health — Report, 2010–11.

Northern Victoria Fresh Tomato Industry Development Committee — Minister's report of receipt of 2010–11 report.

Ombudsman — Report, 2010–11 — Part 2.

Plumbing Industry Commission — Report, 2010–11.

Primary Industries Department — Report, 2010–11.

PrimeSafe — Minister's report of receipt of 2010–11 report.

Radiation Advisory Committee — Report, 2010–11.

Roads Corporation — Report, 2010–11.

Royal Children's Hospital — Report, 2010–11.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament:

Magistrates' Court Act 1989 — No. 99.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — No. 98.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Minister's determination that specified areas are designated bushfire prone areas under regulation 810 of the Building Regulations 2006 and related documents pursuant to section 16B.

Transport Department — Report, 2010–11.

Transport Ticketing Authority — Report, 2010–11.

VicForests — Report, 2010–11.

Victorian Managed Insurance Authority — Report, 2010–11, together with 2010–11 Financial Statements for Housing Guarantee Claims Fund and Domestic Buildings (HH) Indemnity Fund.

Victorian WorkCover Authority — Report, 2010–11.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

The Clerk — I have received a letter dated 9 September from the Attorney-General headed 'Legislative Council resolution re sentencing survey'. I have also received a letter dated 12 September from the Minister for Public Transport headed 'Order for documents — network revenue protection plan'.

Letters at pages 3152–3.

Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan).

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Stephanie Raike

Mr TARLAMIS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise to congratulate Stephanie Raike, who was recently chosen as the 2012 Victorian National Youth Week Young Member. Stephanie will represent Victoria on the National Youth Week planning group and help organise the celebrations for National Youth Week, which is to be held in April 2012.

Stephanie is a 21-year-old student from Frankston who will be able to bring to the role the experience she has gained as a volunteer with the Salvation Army's youth teams. Stephanie also holds a part-time position as an L2P coordinator in a learner driver mentor program which provides opportunities for disadvantaged youth to obtain their probationary drivers licences. She is a great role model for other young people seeking to learn new skills through study, mentoring and volunteer work, and I wish her well for the future.

Dementia Awareness Week

Mr TARLAMIS — On another matter, Dementia Awareness Week begins this Friday and ends on 26 September. This year the theme is 'Worried About Your Memory?'. National statistics about dementia are quite frightening. It is the third-leading cause of death in Australia after heart disease and stroke; an estimated 269 000 Australians are currently living with dementia, including 69 000 in Victoria; one in four people over the age of 85 have it; it is fatal, and as yet there is no cure; it will become the third-greatest source of health and residential aged-care spending within two decades; and it is already the single greatest cause of disability in Australians aged 65 years or older.

In conjunction with this year's theme, Alzheimer's Australia has released a booklet which provides information about memory problems and what you should do if you think you are experiencing them. With an estimated 56 Victorians developing dementia every day, I encourage everyone to lend their support to Alzheimer's Australia by donating, fundraising or volunteering.

Parks: flood damage

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — The flood events of late last year and early this year caused significant damage to a number of parks throughout Eastern Victorian Region, with Wilsons Promontory perhaps being the most high profile of those parks. Flood damage also occurred at Lysterfield Park. In

some cases entire tracks were washed away, resulting in the closure of significant parts of the park. Major recovery works have been ongoing and will continue into the summer months with an investment of more than \$320 000 to repair the park. Recovery works will see the restoration of the popular Commonwealth Games mountain bike tracks where more than 2 kilometres of trails across 50 different locations need significant repair.

With my colleague Brad Battin, the member for Gembrook in the other place, I met with concerned users of the park and the owner of the small business contained within the park. I congratulate and thank the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Ryan Smith, for his work on this issue. I also thank users of the park for their patience while restoration works have been taking place.

Parks Victoria is hopeful that a majority of the tracks will be prepared and ready for use by the end of October. It is great to see that works are under way, and I am sure many park visitors and bike enthusiasts will be eagerly anticipating the reopening of the many tracks that are currently under repair.

Racing: jumps events

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — We are now at the end of the 2011 jumps racing season, and a total of 11 horses have been killed on the track — that is, 8 horses have been killed in races and 3 horses have been killed in trials. There have also been several falls and incidents in other races despite the so-called improvements introduced by Racing Victoria Ltd. Most recently at the Sandown Racecourse in Melbourne on 28 August, in the J. J. Houlahan Hurdle, Fergus McIver fell at the last jump and was killed. Another two horses fell in the Grand National Steeplechase.

On 3 September at Morphettville in South Australia Guara Grove Beast somersaulted over the second hurdle of the Leslie Short Grand National Steeplechase and sustained a spinal fracture and was killed shortly after. Interestingly, oblivious to the fact that she was standing right behind them, the speeches made by the winning connections made reference to South Australian Greens MLC Tammy Franks and were dismissive of her bill to ban jumps racing, which will be debated in the South Australian Parliament on 28 September, after the last jumps race of the season. Tammy has described jumps racing as being 20 times more deadly than regular racing, and in the first half of 2011 it was 74 times more likely that any given horse would fail to finish.

I direct members to the *Weekend Australian* of 10–11 September which talks about Racing Victoria's attempts to silence photographers and journalists who were reporting detrimentally on jumps racing in Victoria.

Victorian certificate of applied learning: funding

Ms TIERNEY (Western Victoria) — In what can only be described as an act of absolute insanity, the Baillieu government has now cut funding for the coordination of the Victorian certificate of applied learning (VCAL) program, which will affect 70 per cent of government secondary schools as well as TAFEs and registered training organisations. More than 12 000 Victorian students are currently enrolled in VCAL, which provides students with work-related experience and alternative pathways to prepare them for either further education or employment as they complete years 11 and 12.

It is nothing more than irrational and illogical to cut funding for such a valuable and popular program. That view is shared by the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, which said:

... notification of the withdrawal of VCAL coordination funding, reflects a very poor understanding of this very important pathway ... This decision flies directly in the face of government election commitments to support schools by cutting bureaucracy and red tape for schools and makes a mockery of commitments to 'give back to government schools the control and support they need to give every child a world-class education'.

This is sure to hit students and schools hard, particularly in rural and regional Victoria where there are low socioeconomic areas and more limited access to educational opportunities. This is a serious justice issue in that the most vulnerable students in our education system are having their only opportunities slashed by what I can only describe as an immoral and stupid decision. I call on the Minister for Education to reverse the decision to cut the VCAL coordinators now. To do otherwise is to disenfranchise thousands of needy students who just want to have a chance and who just want to have a go.

Hanging Rock Racecourse: kangaroo management

Mrs PETROVICH (Northern Victoria) — The kangaroos at Hanging Rock Racecourse managed to halt racing on Australian Day this year. The races are an important tourist attraction in Victoria and provide an excellent economic return for the Macedon Ranges.

At the start of the year I met with a working group to seek a solution to the problem of kangaroos interrupting race meetings at Hanging Rock, which creates a dangerous situation for the horses, the kangaroos and the public. Following discussion it was agreed that we engage Ian Temby, who is an expert in the behaviour of kangaroos, and seek advice on how to secure the site from the kangaroos. A fence and its height is the vital factor, as is the ability to move the kangaroos to the outside of the fence on race days. A trial run of implementing the kangaroo plan will take place in November or December.

The final kangaroo management plan was tabled, discussed and approved by all members of the working group in attendance, and the Department of Sustainability and Environment has agreed to provide the Kyneton and Hanging Rock Racing Club with a 12 or 24-month permit for construction. It is estimated that the project will cost around \$58 000. It will be funded by Country Racing Victoria, the Macedon Ranges Shire Council and the Kyneton and Hanging Rock Racing Club, with an additional \$13 000 from the state government so this project may proceed. An update has been provided to Racing Victoria, Country Racing Victoria, the jockeys association, the trainers association and local interest groups who will meet this month to discuss the project.

As a member of the working group, I found it to be a very positive experience to work with such a great group of professionals dedicated to finding a workable outcome for all parties which will enhance racing at the rock, preserve the history of racing and also protect the natural environment of this beautiful place and its native wildlife.

Shepparton: People Supporting People

Ms DARVENIZA (Northern Victoria) — One of Shepparton's local businessmen, Mr Azem Elmaz, has become the project champion for a group known as People Supporting People. The group aims to create a multifaith organisation supporting the local community. It is a dynamic community organisation run by a committee and dedicated volunteers. It raises funds for local groups, from kindergartens through to emergency services. The group provides a community bus service, which has been running for three years, to support search and rescue crews. It provides barbecues and marquees and supports search and rescue, often in times of crisis.

People Supporting People also runs a soup kitchen in Shepparton five nights a week, providing soup and barbecue meats to the homeless and local youth at no

cost. The group is staffed by volunteers and is supported in its fundraising efforts by local businesses. Recently People Supporting People donated a cheque for \$23 000 to the Rochester flood appeal. This is an amazing group of people, all volunteers, who should be acknowledged and congratulated for their hard work and dedication in supporting the community.

Jack O'Mahony

Ms DARVENIZA — On another matter, I congratulate Jack O'Mahony, an 11-year-old student at Guthrie Street Primary School in Shepparton. Jack represented Shepparton in the national Rubik's cube competition. Jack competed against 40 other contestants and ended up eighth in the competition, with an average time of 30 seconds to solve the cube. Jack's fastest time is 17.75 seconds. It is an amazing effort. Congratulations.

Bullying: multicultural storyboard

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I wish to report to the house my attendance at the launch of the 'Bullying is a crime — Brodie's law' storyboard in Brunswick on Tuesday, 6 September, with the Attorney-General, Robert Clark. The storyboard is an animation designed to communicate to all cultures and in all languages, and it clearly depicts how to both recognise and deal with bullying. The storyboard is available to all schools and community groups.

As all of us in this chamber well know from recent debate, bullying is a significant problem in our society — schools, sporting organisations, workplaces and open spaces. The measures being taken to stamp out bullying are definitely a step in the right direction. I thank the Moreland City Council, in particular mayor Oscar Yildiz and CEO Peter Brown, for hosting the event. I would also like to acknowledge the courage and openness of Brodie's parents, Rae and Damien Panlock, who give so graciously of their time and personal grief to fight against bullying in the hope that others do not have to face the same heartbreak.

I encourage all members to put the storyboard up in the front window of their electorate office, as it is in mine, and make the storyboard available to their local schools and community groups in order to deliver the message that bullying is unacceptable and, just as importantly, to honour a beautiful young woman, Brodie Panlock.

Wallan Secondary College: funding

Ms BROAD (Northern Victoria) — Last week I was pleased to again visit Wallan Secondary College

and seek an update on funding commitments from the Liberal-Nationals government to complete the school building plan. Regrettably, no commitments have been forthcoming, despite the Premier and Liberal and Nationals MPs when in opposition calling for further investment in the school to add to the new school funded and opened by Labor in 2006.

However, I can report that the first year of the VCE (Victorian certificate of education) at Wallan Secondary College is going well and that the local community and businesses are strongly supporting their school. What are not going well are the school's plans to deliver VCAL (Victorian certificate of applied learning) for the first time next year because the Liberal-Nationals government has made cuts to VCAL to fund its other priorities. Because of these cuts the school is being forced to contemplate reducing VCE subjects to pay for a diminished VCAL program. I call on members of the Liberal-Nationals government to put their funding where their mouths were in opposition and fund the school building plan and VCAL so that Wallan students can benefit from hands-on preparation for the workforce.

Sacred Heart Mission

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — The story of how Fr Ernie Smith opened his door and shared a meal with a man who was homeless which then led to the formation of the Sacred Heart Mission is well known to the St Kilda community and to many other people across Victoria. Last week I was fortunate to visit the Sacred Heart Mission, along with my colleagues in the other place, the member for Prahran, Clem Newton-Brown, and the member for Caulfield, David Southwick, to see the facilities and hear about them firsthand from CEO Michael Perusco; general manager, community services, Mary Bartlett; general manager, aged-care services, Cathy Humphrey; and manager, Journey to Social Inclusion, Sue Grigg. We heard of the tremendous work they and other staff, as well as literally dozens of volunteers, undertake each and every day to provide the most basic of needs, health services and activity programs to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Apart from the tremendous support that the various areas provide to many, I want to acknowledge those conducting research into long-term homelessness on their first evaluation report *Long-term Homelessness — Understanding the Challenge*, which has some extremely interesting findings and outcomes on the first 12 months of the Journey to Social Inclusion (J2SI) program, which is designed to break the cycle of long-term homelessness.

Most of the people involved in the research have very complex health and social needs, and many have some degree of mental illness. The increasing numbers of people who are homeless and people with mental illness is an area of great concern to the Baillieu government. Recently at the launch of the evaluation of the program Journey to Social Inclusion, the Minister for Mental Health, Mary Wooldridge, announced new funding that will assist and support some of our most vulnerable individuals and families. I commend all those involved with the J2SI program and look forward to the final findings on conclusion of the program.

Werribee Secondary College: International Baccalaureate

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — The education of children — the next generation of leaders, of doctors, of members of Parliament — is something that I believe we all hold as being of vital importance, even though we will disagree on issues along the way. But I rise this day to congratulate Mr Steve Butyn, principal of Werribee Secondary College, and his great staff on a truly amazing achievement. Werribee Secondary College will become the first Victorian government secondary college to offer the world-class International Baccalaureate to students in years 11 and 12. This means that, upon achieving their IBs, the students will have a standard of measure that will be recognised around the globe.

Werribee Secondary College has been an outstanding college for many years. Its move towards this particular achievement has been slow but steady, and it has now been successful. Fifteen other schools in Victoria offer the IB, but each and every one is independent of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Werribee Secondary College will be the first government secondary college to offer this, even ahead of a number of other schools with very positive reputations for education. The students will have their work cut out for them with six subjects, 160 hours of community work and a 4000-word research project that must be successfully completed.

Alfred Health: women's psychiatric unit

Mrs COOTE (Southern Metropolitan) — One in five — or it could be one in four; it is certainly increasing — Victorians will suffer a mental health issue at some stage in their life. It was therefore pleasing to be able to join the Minister for Mental Health, Mary Wooldridge, at the opening of the women-only psychiatric unit at the Alfred hospital last Friday. We were welcomed by the new chair of Alfred Health, Helen Shardey, who is doing an excellent job in

her position, and were given a guided tour by the staff of this excellent unit.

Women who present to the psychiatric unit in a psychotic state are particularly vulnerable. They are women from all over my electorate of Southern Metropolitan Region — from Oakleigh, Kew, Hawthorn, Malvern, Sandringham, Brighton and also more close by in Albert Park, St Kilda and Prahran. One of the things that research has shown is that women feel particularly vulnerable when they are in a psychotic state. They need the privacy, security and safety of being in a gender-specific unit so they can recover their full health in the optimum period and space. The rooms in the new unit are very secure, very homely and, most importantly, very safe. One of the presenters on the day was Sue Armstrong, who shared a poignant and eloquent firsthand experience of what it is like to be a woman in a psychiatric unit.

New South Wales: budget

Ms PULFORD (Western Victoria) — New South Wales Treasurer, Mike Baird, handed down his first state budget last week. Despite the tough talk this is a budget that projects a \$718 million deficit for 2011–12 and a budget in which 5000 New South Wales public servants will lose their jobs. Mike Baird says these 5000 redundancies will help achieve budget spending cuts and that:

It's not something that the government's taken lightly, but we, in the long-term interests of the state, believe that this is the right thing to do.

The New South Wales Liberals say jobs will be slashed in head office and back office positions in non-service delivery areas across the New South Wales public sector. Does this mean that the non-front-line work will now have to be done by the front-line people? What do the New South Wales Liberals, and indeed the Victorian Liberals, actually think public servants do?

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported:

Mr Baird said NSW was adopting a similar approach to the other states, and predicted staff reductions would occur through turnover and natural attrition.

Is this something Premier Ted Baillieu would like to see in Victoria? Just the other day the *Sunday Herald Sun* reported an exodus of almost 1500 people from Victoria's public service in just the first 90 days of the Baillieu government.

I call on the Premier to rule out further contraction — either by stealth, as has occurred in Victoria, or by blunt instrument, as in New South Wales — of the workforce

that supports essential service delivery in our schools, hospitals and emergency services agencies.

United States of America: September 11 anniversary

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The 10th anniversary of the September 11 terror attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and elsewhere in the United States is an opportunity to reflect on an event as momentous as it was tragic, with the loss of almost 3000 innocent lives from a combined 77 nations across the globe leaving behind grieving families and a scarred world. This was an attack not only on the United States but also on the freedoms and values we hold so dear: democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of movement — freedom as we know it. It has provided an opportunity for the rest of us to reaffirm and coalesce around these values.

Humanity should never forget what happened on September 11, and Australia as a multicultural nation must remember how important it is that tolerance, freedom and decency remain strong. Each September 11 anniversary is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the values we hold so dear and on which our civilisation is built.

Allan Dennis

Mrs PEULICH — Vale Victor Allan Dennis. Victor Allan Dennis was a respected member of the Cranbourne community. Sadly he passed away last week at the age of 76. Allan served in the Victorian police force for 31 years and became embedded in the local community he served. The Waverley Cricket Club awarded him a life membership in 1971 for his service. He and his family subsequently moved to Cranbourne, where Allan became involved in the Cranbourne Cricket Club both as a player and a coach, and he was awarded life membership of that club in 1984. Later Allan became involved in the running of the Cranbourne Bowling Club, and he was actively involved in the past presidents association of the Royal Victorian Bowls Association.

The Cranbourne community mourns the passing of another local icon of the community. Allan Dennis will be sadly missed by many.

Whitten Oval: sports hall

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Last Friday I had the honour of attending the opening of the Western Bulldogs community sports hall at Whitten Oval along with a good number of dignitaries from across the

western suburbs. This is no ordinary hall — it is huge. You could easily build an Airbus A380 and still have room for a game of basketball in the hall. It is also much more than just a sports facility — it completes the dream of then Western Bulldogs CEO Campbell Rose to make Whitten Oval a sporting and community icon of Melbourne's west. Campbell has now moved on to greener pastures, but I was delighted that he was there to see the culmination of his vision. I congratulate him on his wonderful personal achievement.

The hall provides children in the west with sports facilities that previously could only be accessed by travelling across town. It is another plus for the western suburbs of Melbourne and a sign that the people of the west will no longer tolerate being treated as second-class citizens. Everybody knows I am a Tiger, but I believe that what is good for the Western Bulldogs is good for the western suburbs — and this development is great for both.

It should be noted that the new Whitten Oval is an everlasting legacy of the Howard federal government, and I thank former Prime Minister Howard for his interest in and commitment to this project. I congratulate David Smorgon not only on this facility but also on his marriage just last Sunday; Simon Garlick, the current CEO; the Bulldogs board; and all associated with this exciting new beacon in the west. This development is wonderful for Melbourne's west, and it is good for football.

WATER (LONG SERVICE LEAVE) REGULATIONS 2011: DISALLOWANCE

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — I move:

That the Water (Long Service Leave) Regulations 2011 (SR No. 79/2011) be disallowed.

I rise to seek the house's support to disallow the Water (Long Service Leave) Regulations 2011. It is unusual to seek to disallow a long service leave regulation, but I do so fundamentally because there are few avenues left for scrutiny of this government.

These long service leave regulations were introduced to replace what I believe were sunseting regulations from 2001. They have made significant changes to Victorian workers' entitlements. In summary, the changes take away from employees of water authorities benefits that they have under existing law. It is important to raise this matter and seek to disallow these regulations not because it is particularly inappropriate for a water authority to seek to bargain with its workforce about converting existing conditions into a different form of

payment — that happens all the time; it is part of the legacy of the enterprise bargaining agreements under the Keating federal government whereby workers and employers can negotiate — but because of the current government.

I am pleased to see the Minister for Higher Education and Skills in the house. How can I say this charitably? He was part of the group that when in opposition promised that Victorian teachers would become the highest paid in the country under a coalition government. Now the government is saying to teachers, for example, along with employees of water authorities and other public sector workers — leaving aside Arts Victoria and a few other organisations, where workers have been told they need to bargain for even a 2.5 per cent wage increase; let us assume that that was an error on the part of a vigorous Department of Premier and Cabinet — that workers will get a 2.5 per cent wage increase and then have to bargain for real bankable productivity. I had only heard that term 'real bankable productivity' uttered by Grant Hehir and Dean Yates in Treasury before I heard the Treasurer, Mr Wells, start to use it.

There are things that workers for catchment management authorities have had that are being stripped away from them without even any bargaining. It is on the basis of the industrial relations implications of this regulation that I seek the support of the house to disallow it. In general terms we have a situation where wages can increase by 2.5 per cent plus real bankable productivity. The question is how you find that real bankable productivity. We see a number of areas in the regulations where that could be found.

I have touched on teachers and police. I am surprised this has come from the Minister for Water, Peter Walsh, who is the only minister in this government who has been a union official — he was president of the Victorian Farmers Federation. It is interesting that a former union official has signed off on regulations that take away some of the rights of union members.

As I said, part of the reason why I am raising this disallowance motion in this chamber as a last resort is because in the last sitting week of this house I specifically asked Mr Rich-Phillips, as the minister representing the minister for public sector wage negotiations, the Minister for Finance, Robert Clark, whether there was a government policy that would take away entitlements that you could otherwise bargain for without a negotiating process. Mr Rich-Phillips refused to answer. Either he did not know or he would not answer; it was one or the other.

Regardless of what his motivation was, the reality was that Mr Rich-Phillips would not answer that question in this house. I would not be surprised if we suddenly see sessional and standing orders changes being proposed by the government to shut down the ability of this house to question the government — that is the next logical step. What we have here today is a vehicle for a member of Parliament to seek redress for these things.

Part of my concern about what is happening here is what we are seeing with some of the water authorities. I refer to City West Water, which has more than 200 employees. Its new chair is Alan Stockdale. There is no question that Mr Stockdale is a competent individual who can carry out a brief; there is no question about Mr Stockdale's ability. His ability with numbers is quite remarkable: he survived the Liberal Party presidency challenge, and his ability to extract an outcome is also quite amazing. Tony Abbott showed him his ballot paper on public television, which I do not think the general secretaries of the — —

Hon. P. R. Hall — On a point of order, Acting President, Mr Lenders is embarking upon a matter now which is quite irrelevant to the issue we are debating in the chamber today. This, as Mr Lenders has said, is a motion for disallowance of regulations relating to long service leave of employees in water authorities. A disallowance motion is a narrow debate that needs to be particular to the issues to hand. Commenting on the appointments to water authorities is completely irrelevant to this particular debate, and I suggest that the Chair call Mr Lenders back to order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Tarlamis) — Order! Mr Lenders is the lead speaker, and the lead speaker is usually afforded some latitude. I remind Mr Lenders to return to the matter before him.

Mr LENDERS — In deference to Mr Hall I will confine my remarks to what I think Mr Stockdale would do as chair of a water authority rather than what he did to get elected as president of the Liberal Party. It is a serious point, though, and relates to my seeking to disallow these regulations. These regulations give a lot more authority to the boards of water authorities. The fact that Mr Stockdale has been appointed the chair of City West Water and Mr Geoff Coleman, another former Kennett government minister, has been appointed chair of Westernport Water creates a sense of foreboding and poses challenges for the Australian Services Union, the Australian Workers Union or any of the other industrial organisations that represent workers — and I put on the record that I am a proud member of the Australian Services Union — in their dealings with authorities that now have chairs with a

track record of cutting workers' entitlements. I raise that matter for the record.

Getting down to the specifics of the regulations, I will go through the regulations and draw out the ones where entitlements are being stripped away. There are two general issues. One is that entitlements under the previous regulations, particularly regulation 16 and regulation 20, have completely disappeared from the regulations. They may appear technical and complex, but for the benefit of the house, subregulations 16(2) to 16(4) were provisions that clarified the computation of hours of employees' entitlements when changing jobs. In the old regulation 20 there was provision for an exchange of information between authorities. This has gone.

In the scheme of things these are not earth-shattering things that have gone, but they are things that clarified the rights of employees of water authorities. So if an employee does move from City West Water, of which Mr Stockdale is the chair, to Westernport Water, of which Mr Coleman is the chair — two former Kennett government ministers chairing these authorities — the worker would previously have been entitled to a clarification of what their entitlements were, but that entitlement has gone. That is not implying malice; it is a fact: those clarifications have gone. If there was a particular reason for them to go — because it was reducing administrative burden or whatever else — then the least you would have hoped for was some statement of explanation.

The more significant things I raise are changes to the existing regulations. There are 21 regulations and I will not go through all of them, but I will go through the pertinent ones. Regulation 1 talks about the objective of these regulations: to provide long service leave for employees of water corporations. Regulation 4 revokes the long service leave regulations of 2001. My argument is that the house should disallow this regulation so that the revocation is effectively overturned and the old regulations are put back in place.

I will not go through regulations 5, 6 or 7, which deal with definitions. Regulation 8 is the one where I have an issue. To paint the picture again, under the previous regulations if an employee of City West Water wished to take long service leave, that employee could seek to take long service leave at a time that suited them. If they had a dispute with the authority about whether they could take the long service leave — and Mr Stockdale as chair would not have been handling this; it would have been the general manager — they could appeal to the Minister for Water, Mr Walsh, that former union official, to seek redress. Under this

change to the regulations that provision has gone. You could easily mount a case on why that change is appropriate between the employee and effectively the employer, the CEO of the water authority. I am not arguing the logic of that case. What I am saying is: an entitlement of the worker has been withdrawn.

If the government's wages policy is that you need real bankable productivity to get a wage increase of above 2.5 per cent, this is one of those issues where from the point of view of City West Water and Mr Stockdale this is a benefit to the employer because it has better control of when its workforce takes long service leave. I am not arguing the toss as to whether it is appropriate or not appropriate for that authority to be taken away from the minister; what I am arguing is that this regulation should be disallowed because the workers' entitlement to appeal will be gone, and it will be gone without being on the table as part of an enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) negotiation.

This is a government that is saying the wage increase will be 2.5 per cent unless it can be shown that there is real, bankable productivity that is worth something to City West Water. It is being written out of an EBA. How is the Australian Services Union or the Australian Workers Union or anybody else negotiating on behalf of the 200-odd employees of City West Water meant to find real, bankable productivity when in the dead of night the Minister for Water has put in regulation 8, which takes away that right?

I will not spend time on regulations 9 or 10 because they are fairly perfunctory. I turn now to regulation 11. It is interesting. It is headed 'Period of service must not contain leave already taken or in respect of which employee paid'. The old regulations stipulated that when computing long service leave entitlements employers had to take into account long service leave or pay in lieu of leave already granted to an employee.

Under the new regulations they must not count leave already taken in respect of which an employee has been paid. I am not arguing the toss as to whether it is appropriate or not appropriate, but there is clearly a benefit for City West Water, using that as my example, being the one Mr Stockdale chairs. It is a clear benefit City West Water has accrued under regulation 11 in relation to the period of service. It has been done unilaterally by a minister without any sense of negotiation. The cruel hoax from the workforce's point of view is that in terms of arguing real, bankable productivity — and this will be a saving for City West Water — the rug has been pulled out from under its feet and the ability to do that has been taken away.

My objection to regulation 11 changing is not the merit or demerit of it. That is an appropriate thing for the water authority to do, and if Mr Stockdale wants to sit down with Mr Russell Atwood, the president of the Australian Services Union, and bargain, so be it. However, this means that in the enterprise bargaining agreement process the workers are meant to bargain on the basis of productivity improvements when the matters on which they can bargain have been taken away. That is not good faith enterprising bargaining; it is back to the mantra of the Kennett government in just ripping away rights without raising any particular issue.

The most significant of the regulations that I take issue with is regulation 13, which is headed 'Computing period of service — service not to be included'. I will go back to City West Water and paint the picture. As I read this regulation, if I am an employee of City West Water and am about to take parental leave, the parental leave will be taken into account when computing my long service leave. Under my reading of this regulation, if I have 10 years service and two months of that has been taken for parental leave, that will now be taken into account when counting my time. It will apply whatever you measure: 10 years long service or in calculating the pay for an early retiree or someone else who falls within that category.

I turn to regulation 13(1), which states:

In computing the period of service in respect of which an employee of the water corporation is entitled to be granted long service leave or pay instead of that leave, the water corporation must not include —

...

- (d) any period during which the employee was absent from duty on maternity, paternity, partner or adoption leave without pay ...

We are talking about social policy, and we suddenly have appearing in a regulation a requirement that those periods of leave may not be taken into account. I am not enough of an expert to know whether that applies at all of the catchment management authorities and water authorities at the moment. I do not know that, but what I do know is that this minister has put in place a regulation that states you are not to take into account these matters when calculating long service leave.

Let us go back to the bargaining table where the Australian Services Union and City West Water — Mr Stockdale's company — are sitting and negotiating wage increases above 2.5 per cent with real, bankable productivity. In the dead of night the Minister for Water has said that you cannot take that leave into account. Suddenly something is being taken away from

employees. It is arguable that has happened at City West Water; I do not know. In government we try to have some scrutiny, and I will say in fairness to Mr Walsh that in some areas he is willing to brief the opposition. On deadly pests and a range of other things he is willing — —

Ms Pulford — On scorpions.

Mr LENDERS — Yes, on scorpions and those sorts of things. But in other areas, such as actually setting foot into a water authority, you need the permission of the minister, so it is bit hard to have scrutiny. I ask Minister Hall to focus on regulation 13(1)(d), which was not in the 2001 regulations, and explain to me why we are excluding any period during which an employee was absent from duty on maternity, paternity, partner or adoption leave without pay so I will be enlightened. I also ask him to go to the next paragraph. It states that you are not to include:

- (e) except to the extent (if any) authorised by the employer, any other period during which the employer was absent on leave without pay;

I am genuinely not trying to put words into the mouth of the minister, but does that include leave as a Country Fire Authority volunteer? Does that include leave in the Army Reserve? I do not know the answer to that. What we have is a regulation that the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee will not report on until after the disallowable period, so SARC is of no assistance to this house in that respect. I cannot get advice from the authority because the minister will not let me go into the authority without his express permission. Again I will give the minister credit: when I sought permission to speak to Goulburn-Murray Water the minister gave me permission and was very gracious. In fact an adviser even accompanied us — whether she was there to keep an eye on us or to help is not the point — but one of my requests to go into a water authority is now nearly eight months overdue: my request to visit the desalination plant.

My question to Mr Hall is: how are we in this house meant to have any confidence that paragraph (e) does not apply to the Army Reserve? It may or may not apply to it, but this is a question to which I would like an answer. I accept that from the minister's point of view he will not be able to give me an answer on this today, and it is not a trick question to him, but hopefully he can understand some of my anxiety when his regulations come through without there having been any scrutiny or reporting on them by the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — and the house is meant to accept them.

There is a series of paragraphs which I think are okay. They provide that compensation received under the Accident Compensation Act 1985 should not be taken into account, but most benefits under the Accident Compensation Act 1985 are of a lesser amount than those accrued in normal employment. I expect when we turn to paragraphs (f), (g) and (h) we will see they are a diminution of benefits. The old regulations were silent on this, and the new regulations make it clear that they are not issues.

To reiterate my point, negotiating in good faith at a bargaining table is fine. I am not defending practices that in a modern, streamlined world Mr Stockdale as the chair of City West Water might want to apply. I am not in the business of defending indefensible provisions, but the point I want to make clear in seeking to disallow these regulations is that good faith bargaining under the government's wages policy should allow them to be on the table, and an agreed value should be put on them as part of a wages negotiation.

When these things are stripped away without any discussion it effectively means that employees will get a 2.5 per cent pay rise and not the higher amount they could have received if they had been able to negotiate with their employer — City West Water or Westernport Water or any other water authority or catchment management authority — instead of those authorities being able to cut costs in negotiations with their workforce. My issue is that there appear to be a whole lot of conditions being stripped away from the bargaining agreement by these regulations, and there is no negotiation whatsoever on that. The employer will be able to say it is doing that because the Governor in Council has made regulations to that effect.

I mentioned before the new regulation 16, which deals with computation of pay. There were a whole range of things under the old regulations 16(2) to 16(4) that clarified that, and they have been taken away. It is interesting that this regulation removes those things. My example is a real one. If I, as an employee of City West Water, with Mr Stockdale as chair, move to Westernport Water, with Mr Coleman — that other former Kennett minister — as chair, I may go to my human resources department and wish to have a discussion about what my entitlements are. There might be questions that come forward regarding how to compute a time when I was working part-time rather than full-time for part of the year, when I was on parental leave — I certainly could not be on maternity leave — or when I took time off as an Army Reserve member, as a Country Fire Authority volunteer or as a seasonal Department of Sustainability and Environment

firefighter. Any of these issues, regardless of the rights or wrongs of them, require clarification.

All those requirements under the old regulations 16(2), 16(3) and 16(4) are gone, so it is now left to the discretion of boards chaired by Mr Stockdale and Mr Coleman, to use those two examples, to determine that rather than allowing regulation to govern. I would assume common sense would prevail here, but something has been taken away from the enterprise bargaining table, and therefore something of value has been taken away from the workforce that is trying to negotiate a pay rise of greater than 2.5 per cent.

I move now to regulation 18, which is on much the same theme. The regulation states:

If an employee ceases to be employed by a water corporation ... and within two months of ceasing to be so employed is employed by another water corporation ...

It goes through, essentially, the transferring of benefits, payments and the like. Of course under the old regulation this took six months. Under the new regulation it is two months. It is probably common sense and means that things are sorted out much more quickly. In probably 9 out of 10 cases it is highly logical, but in the 10th case, where someone is actually waiting for wages and entitlements that have not been paid, instead of being guaranteed them in two months they are now guaranteed them in six months. Again, the logic of finalising things and doing things quickly is probably sound, but what has been taken away from the negotiating table is an ability to get an outcome.

I will confine my comments to those particular subregulations, but in concluding and in urging the house to disallow this regulation I will make these concluding comments. Firstly, on the face of it there is nothing in these regulations that is abhorrent. These are all legitimate things that could be negotiated between an employer and employee. However, what we have here today — and it is the reason I seek the disallowance of the regulations — is the fact that under government wages policy these are matters that should be negotiated. If you look at it from Mr Stockdale's perspective as chair of City West Water, all of these are things he could use to legitimately cut costs in his workforce. The Australian Services Union or the Australian Workers Union could legitimately argue these are real, bankable productivity savings to City West Water and could therefore say, 'Let's negotiate on them, and let's get a wage increase of something north of 2.5 per cent'. That is appropriate.

This issue is not about supporting these work practices, and it is not about criticising the government for

wishing to streamline work practices. The centre of my criticism is: if you are an employee of City West Water and you are looking for real bankable productivity increases to get a pay rise above 2.5 per cent, how on earth do you do that when the government, in the dead of night, identifies the savings and takes them away from an EBA process?

That is essentially my proposition. If I were to be given any comfort, it would be that this is not the intention of the government or of Peter Walsh, the former union official who is now Minister for Water. It would have given me a lot of comfort if Mr Rich-Phillips had answered the question in the last sitting week when I specifically asked him whether it was government policy to strip benefits away from an EBA process. He would not answer. That probably sums it up for me.

The remaining thing is that at the very time this regulation is coming in the leadership of a number of these boards is changing. In two cases former Kennett government ministers are chairing boards that are about to go into EBA processes. These are former ministers with track records of cutting wages and entitlements. They have arguments for why they did so back in 1992, but they do have a track record of cutting them. At the time the regulations came through — without explanation, in the dead of night — the boards, including one of the biggest, City West Water, suddenly had a Kennett government minister appointed as chair and the government was saying, 'Find real bankable productivity, but we are taking it away from you'. That does not instil confidence in me, and so I urge the house to disallow these regulations so that common sense can prevail.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I do not believe the Leader of the Opposition has made a compelling case at all for the house to disallow these regulations. I thought Mr Lenders probably has had a bit each way in terms of the arguments he has advanced here this morning.

In responding on behalf of the government I want to take the house back to what the purpose of these regulations is. What is the purpose of formulating regulations regarding water industry long service leave and setting out some matters associated with long service leave entitlements for employees of the water authorities in this state? The purpose of these regulations is to act as a safety net, because as Mr Lenders was arguing, these are matters which should be the subject of enterprise agreements between employers and employees. The government does not disagree with that. They should be matters of agreement

as part of enterprise agreements between workers and employers.

However, if you look at the water corporations across Victoria, many of them are at different stages in terms of their enterprise agreements and some cover certain provisions that others do not, so this is virtually a default position. If there is not an enterprise agreement which covers aspects of long service leave, the regulations give a sense of security to workers and ensure that they are covered in terms of those provisions not embraced in their enterprise agreements.

It is the government's view that where those enterprise agreements, which are determined by each of the water authorities, overtake provisions in these regulations that that is good and well and should be part of an EBA process. We agree with that, and in time to come we will review these regulations. The minister has indicated to me that he is prepared to review these regulations, and if the enterprise agreements negotiated between workers and water authorities in this state are sufficient to fully resolve matters concerning long service leave, then the regulations might well be revoked as there will be no need for them.

But this is where I think Mr Lenders had a bit each way: he argued that on the one hand they should be the subject of enterprise agreements but then on the other he was not confident that enterprise agreements could be reached while certain people were at the head of those water authorities. If he argues that particular people who head water authorities are such that they will not be able to reach a reasonable enterprise agreement, then the logical extension of that argument is that we need these regulations. On the one hand he is suggesting that these entitlements should all be the subject of enterprise agreements, but on the other hand he says it is important that all of these matters should also be covered in regulations. You cannot have it both ways.

Firstly, Mr Lenders dealt with aspects of these provisions in these particular regulations and wished to point out matters of detriment or disadvantage in terms of previous regulations. But probably the most significant change in these regulations is very positive, because it enables those who are working less than 24 hours per week at water authorities to qualify for and accrue long service leave. There is a significant advantage. We are removing a disadvantage for those who are working less than full time in terms of their ability to share and accrue long service leave from water authorities across the state. It will have a very positive impact on part-time workers in this industry.

My advice from the minister's office is that there was broad consultation during the process of drawing up these regulations. The consultations included the water authorities themselves and the unions which are party to the water corporations' enterprise bargaining agreements. The unions that were consulted were the Community and Public Sector Union, the Australian Workers Union, the Australian Services Union and the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia. None of those unions responded to the government's invitation to be consulted. In terms of trying to be broad and accommodating needs and giving opportunities to all of those organisations representing employees to have an involvement, that broad invitation was not accepted.

The government has gone through a process when drawing up these regulations which has been entirely appropriate and balanced. I return to the point I made earlier and make it very clear: we do not disagree that these matters are rightfully covered by enterprise agreements. We are happy to have a look at the development of enterprise agreements. If these matters are sufficiently covered by those enterprise agreements, then perhaps there is no need for the regulations.

In relation to the motion before us that proposes the disallowance of these regulations, the government sees there is no need for it. If we were to take away this particular safety net and disallow the regulations, then some of those workers would be disadvantaged. It is a safety net for those workers who have aspects of long service leave which are not covered within their enterprise agreements, and this provides a degree of protection and security for them. That is why we will not be supporting this disallowance motion.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — The motion that Mr Lenders has proposed this morning during general business is interesting. His motion is about the new regulations that govern certain entitlements for employees of water authorities. I am not sure that I agree with Mr Lenders that these regulations were brought in during the dead of night. I understand they were required to be reissued because they were 10 years old and had expired; there is a sunset clause.

Mr Lenders spoke about significant changes to entitlements that were in the previous regulations as opposed to the present regulations. I will not go through the identity of the chairs of the new boards, but the regulations gave the boards more authority with regard to the implementation of regulations.

In terms of new regulations 21, 8, 16 and 18, employees used to be able to take long service leave at a time of their choosing. There was a dispute this week between an employee and a CEO, and there was an idea that the minister would adjudicate that, but it has been removed. It is now the case that under the regulations periods when an employee was absent or on leave without pay, such as having been on maternity or paternity leave or, as Mr Lenders said, when they were serving in the Army Reserve or Country Fire Authority, will not be included in the computation of the employee's entitlement to long service leave. That was not a feature of previous regulations.

I did have as my first question what level of consultation there had been with the unions. In his contribution Mr Hall said there was broad consultation. He mentioned the Community and Public Sector Union, the Australian Services Union, the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia and others — I cannot remember what other union I was trying to write down. Mr Hall went on to say those unions had been invited to be consulted, but actually they were not consulted or they did not respond. That made me wonder what level of consultation that was. Was that just a letter sent to them? Were they really involved in full consultation? I suspect they probably were not. I am not reassured that the unions representing the workers across the water authorities have in fact agreed to these changes.

I also make the point that Mr Lenders and Mr Hall have both said that things such as long service leave should be up for grabs under enterprise bargaining. Particularly with workers who work across the different water authorities — although they are different water authorities, really they are the state water authorities — I do not necessarily take the view that, depending on the attitude of a particular board or CEO or the make-up of unions in a particular water authority, they should be bargaining away their rights to long service leave at different levels in different water authorities.

I agree with the way Mr Hall described it — that is, as a safety net or default position. That position should be in the regulations; I do not agree that that should be revoked. People across the water authorities should be enjoying similar entitlements to long service leave, and I do not agree that those sorts of things should be bargained away for measly pay rises of 2.5 per cent or, as Mr Lenders said, just north of it, which might be 3 per cent. I think these things should remain in place. I am concerned to hear that the entitlements that existed in the original regulations have been watered down in this newly gazetted set of regulations.

Given what I heard from Mr Lenders when he went through the entitlements which employees did have but which have been removed and given that I am not necessarily reassured that there was real consultation with the unions concerned or that they have agreed to this regulation, the Greens and I are inclined to support the motion moved by Mr Lenders.

Ms PULFORD (Western Victoria) — I would like to speak in support of Mr Lenders's motion which seeks to disallow the Water (Long Service Leave) Regulations 2011. Long service leave in Victoria is governed by a number of different arrangements, depending on people's workplaces. It is of course a paid leave entitlement that is accrued by those who — as the title would indicate — have served a considerable period of time with the one employer.

I had a minute to look at the origins of long service leave and discovered they are in the Victorian and South Australian civil service acts from the 19th century. It enabled civil service officers who had completed at least 10 years service to be granted leave of absence with pay for periods of 6 or 12 months. The purpose of the leave was to reward those who had performed long and faithful service in the colonies by providing an opportunity for them to visit the United Kingdom. There you go; that is a bit of history on long service leave.

Long service leave entitlements then began to be included in federal awards during the 1940s, and then in the 1950s long service leave legislation was introduced in most states. Of course for many workers in Victoria it is the provisions of the Victorian Long Service Leave Act 1992 that determine the safety net that Mr Hall spoke about earlier.

This is not a benefit that huge numbers of people access. Indeed I would argue that a diminishing number of people are entitled to long service leave. In 1999 ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) labour mobility data indicated that just under 25 per cent of the workforce at that time would have been in employment with the one employer for long enough to be entitled to long service leave. In November 2010 ABS data indicated that the number of people with 10 years or more continuous service with the one employer was now in the order of 20 per cent. That shows there has been a massive contraction over a relatively short period of time in the number of people entitled to long service leave.

I am sure that if members think about the people they represent in this place and the people they know and interact with, they will agree that there is a far greater

mobility in people's careers and working lives. Younger employees in particular often bounce from one workplace to another at intervals of more like two or three years. It is really quite unusual now to find somebody who has been employed in their current workplace for 20, 30 or 40 years. Ten years ago it was more common, and 20 years ago it was a lot more common.

Long service leave is an important benefit for a significant but diminishing number of people who have chosen to serve continually in a workplace for a very long time. I know that many employees here in the Parliament of Victoria break that mould a little, because we have some employees in this place — not least of all the Clerk of this house — who have given considerable periods of service, but it is a declining number of people.

Long service leave is part of a suite of entitlements that is important for the work and life balance of employees. This includes laws around reasonable hours of work, such as whether people would finish work, like we do on sitting Tuesdays in the Legislative Council, at 5 o'clock in the morning or sometimes at 9 o'clock in the evening — they are sometimes very unpredictable and erratic hours around here. In workplaces in Victoria long service leave is a very important part of the mix of arrangements that govern hours of work, meal breaks and rest breaks for reasons of occupational health and safety, as well as weekends and public holidays.

As Ms Pennicuik has indicated, the regulations that we are talking about today are before the house because they have a sunset provision and they need to be reconsidered or replaced. Mr Hall said these regulations exist to provide a safety net. The safety net is an essential part of the maintenance of conditions of work for the people that we represent in this place. But a safety net is one part of the equation; the other being the opportunity to negotiate, by industry or by workplace, a better deal. The safety net is no replacement for an opportunity to negotiate a better deal, but it is just that: a safety net.

Mr Hall attempted to argue that the safety net was the end in itself, but the safety net is simply the bottom line below which conditions do not fall. In these regulations there are a number of provisions that would diminish the safety net. That does not necessarily diminish the capacity to negotiate for the maintenance of conditions in the workplace, but Mr Hall argued that the safety net and maintenance of the safety net were important. The very act of this government in opposing the motion moved by Mr Lenders contradicts Mr Hall's argument about the importance of the safety net.

This is an industry default position that is being diminished in a number of ways. Of course water authorities and their employees can negotiate, but Mr Hall indicated that he felt Mr Lenders could not have it both ways. I think Mr Hall missed the point, because the changes to these regulations diminish the safety net and make it harder for people who seek to maintain their long service leave entitlements intact; they would then have to negotiate that little bit harder. This ought to be unnecessary, and it would be unnecessary if the government were not tinkering in this underhanded way with the long service leave entitlements of water authority employees.

Labor has long supported enterprise bargaining, and it has always done so with the view that this is underpinned by a solid safety net. Mr Hall suggested that these provisions might be better for part-time workers. To that I would say there were never any prohibitions that stopped that from occurring either in the arrangements in the Long Service Leave Act 1992 or in the sunset regulations. Indeed when I was an organiser with the National Union of Workers and had responsibility for market research workers, there were people in that industry who were casual employees. While there were not many of them, there were people who were casual employees in market research for so many years that they became entitled to long service leave. I think Mr Hall was being a little cheeky in suggesting that there is some great new benefit flowing to part-time workers through these changes.

Further on that point, these workers are often women working part time while balancing the responsibilities of raising young children. They are a big proportion of the part-time workforce and a big proportion of the public sector part-time workforce. What these regulations spell out for that cohort of people is that no longer will water authorities be able to negotiate with employees arrangements for a continuous period of employment for the purposes of long service leave accrual that recognises unpaid leave such as maternity, paternity or adoption leave. The argument that this is somehow a fantastic thing for part-time workers is a false argument.

In supporting Mr Lenders's motion and in responding to Mr Hall's comments, I urge the government to support the principles of workplace bargaining by water authorities but to do so with a solid safety net that is not undermined. The government has indicated that it will oppose Mr Lenders's motion, but government members need to be aware that if they vote as indicated by Mr Hall, they will be diminishing the long service leave entitlements of the employees of our water authorities. These are people who have worked in Victorian water

authorities for many years and who do important work. We have regular debates in this place about the importance of water security and the quality of water supply, and these are the people who will be adversely affected if Mr Lenders's motion is opposed.

I urge government members to do the right thing by those people who look after our water in Victoria and who do so for long periods of time, year in and year out, while playing their part in delivering good quality water to Victorians. I urge the house to support Mr Lenders's motion.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I would also like to add to this debate in support of Mr Lenders's disallowance motion around long service regulations in the water industry. Since becoming an MP I have had involvement with a number of water companies that intersect the electorate I represent. I have been involved in advocating for a few projects. In some cases advocating for those projects was successful and in some cases it was unsuccessful, but it was a great privilege and a great opportunity to learn a lot about how water companies work and about the importance of these water companies — what they cover and what the people who work for those companies actually do.

I must say that I am surprised that the government and this particular minister would change these regulations to a point that would adversely affect entitlements, particularly around long service leave, for people working in this area. Any reduction of an entitlement of a worker is never welcomed by those people. It is never welcomed in whatever fashion it actually occurs. To lose entitlements through a change of regulation in the fashion outlined quite comprehensively by Mr Lenders would make these workers particularly angry.

When you have discussions with high-ranking people in water companies they will tell you that there is a real skills shortage in their industry. I have had a number of conversations with representatives of water companies about how they have a real problem in attracting good people into this industry. When there is such a competitive realm for certain specialised skills and when you see the number of people who are moving to the west to work in the mines and other areas, it is quite a naive and probably backward move by the government to even consider reducing any entitlements for these workers. They are in a market where their skills are clearly sought across the country. We need to keep in mind that whilst they are applying their expertise and specialised skills to keep water company assets in good shape so as to service everyone, they can obtain employment where conditions would be superior to those they are working under.

I support this motion. It is a shame and it is unfair that people could have their entitlements reduced by the stroke of a minister's pen. Considering the fact that there is a skills shortage in this area, it is also very strange.

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — My right of reply will be brief. The case I make is that these regulations should be disallowed because they are fundamentally in breach of the government's wages policy, which is that there needs to be real bankable productivity for wage rises above 2.5 per cent. These regulations, coming forward in their current form, remove the capacity for members of the water authorities to negotiate above the 2.5 per cent and they take away a series of negotiable items.

From the view of members on this side of the house, this motion reflects on the fact that there is no coherent government wages policy. The Assistant Treasurer, the representative in this place of the Minister for Finance, refused to rule out that there was such a policy when I asked him a question about it. Added to that, the appointment last week of two former Kennett ministers to chair water authorities does not instil great confidence from our side of the house.

In closing, I notice that Mr O'Donohue, who is chair of the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, is in the chamber. I genuinely say to him that it would be impressive — and this would be new so it is not a reflection on which government is in power — if SARC reported to the house on regulations away from the annual reporting period, which means that many of these regulations do not get to the house and pass the period for disallowance. I am not saying that in the sense that one side is good and the other side is bad. I am saying it in the sense that it would be very useful if, while these things were live, SARC in its *Alert Digest* reported to the house on regulations as well as on legislation. I urge the house to support my motion to disallow the Water (Long Service Leave) Regulations 2011.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 18

Barber, Mr	Pakula, Mr
Broad, Ms	Pennicuik, Ms
Darveniza, Ms	Pulford, Ms
Eideh, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Scheffer, Mr
Elasmar, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Hartland, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Tarlamis, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Tee, Mr
Leane, Mr	Tierney, Ms
Lenders, Mr	Viney, Mr

Noes, 20

Atkinson, Mr	Hall, Mr
Coote, Mrs	Koch, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Crozier, Ms	Lovell, Ms
Dalla-Riva, Mr	O'Brien, Mr
Davis, Mr D.	O'Donohue, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Davis, Mr P.	Ondarchie, Mr
Drum, Mr	Petrovich, Mrs
Elsbury, Mr	Peulich, Mrs
Finn, Mr	Ramsay, Mr
Guy, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr

Pair

Mikakos, Ms	Kronberg, Mrs
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Motion negatived.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I move:

That this house requires the Leader of the Government to table in the Legislative Council by 12 noon on Tuesday, 13 September 2011, a copy of all documents modelling the impacts of carbon pricing on employment in Victoria prepared by Deloitte for the Department of Premier and Cabinet and released to the *Herald Sun* in August 2011.

On Thursday, 18 August, the government issued a press release headed 'Gillard government carbon tax to choke Victorian economy, new modelling shows'. The first line of the press release states:

The Victorian coalition government has released new economic modelling by Deloitte Access Economics showing —

Hold it right there. In fact the government did not release the economic modelling by Deloitte; it released the results of the economic modelling by Deloitte, and it released them in a particular format. It released them to the *Herald Sun*, coinciding with the press release. One of the ministers in this place even came in here and answered a Dorothy Dixier about modelling, but the modelling itself has not been released. This is a classic tactic, which we are familiar with. It is called 'the drop', and it is the exclusive release of a piece of work by the government to one favourite media outlet which it believes will report it favourably while releasing nothing that is behind the results so that there cannot be an informed debate. What the Premier was looking for in this instance was a headline figure of 24 000 jobs that he said would be destroyed by the carbon tax.

We know the Brumby government did a good job of cleaning out Treasury Place when it left on 27 November 2010. Apparently it stripped the place bare, but I surmise that there was one document that was left behind on the desk waiting for the incoming Premier. It was a copy of the John Brumby spin

manual. On page 1 of chapter 1 of the manual it says, 'Sell the sizzle, not the sausage'. The new government picked up a copy of the spin manual, and it has been working its way through it play by play, and that is exactly what happened with the carbon tax employment modelling. It released the headline figure, which it thought people would remember, and it made damn sure that nobody ever got to taste the sausage.

This request, which I hope will have support today, calls on the government to release the Deloitte modelling. In fact in the second paragraph of its press release the government states:

This modelling was commissioned by the coalition government so Victorians will know the truth about the effect of the Gillard government's carbon tax, in comparison to the Gillard government which intends to keep Victorians in the dark.

Here is the government's opportunity. Let us have a proper and informed debate about the content of the Deloitte modelling. What was said on that day was that the modelling may not properly account for all of the factors that might be in play in the introduction of a price on pollution. Perhaps a somewhat embarrassed government then had to put out another press release on the next day which states:

Media reports today that Victorian modelling on the impact of the commonwealth clean energy future policy fails to consider commonwealth compensation measures are incorrect.

The press release includes a quote from Deloitte. The government was embarrassed enough to have to clarify at least one aspect of the economic modelling, but so far I have not been able to find or obtain a copy of the modelling itself, despite requesting it of the minister who first referred to it in this place.

We can surmise something about how this Deloitte modelling exercise may have been prepared. It is possible that it is running a proprietary black box model with assumptions going in and inputs coming out and nobody actually being able to understand how the model works. In this case the model is not very academically rigorous, because it would have to be able to be repeated and queried on its methodology for it to have any real value. But in any case we will see that when, hopefully, the government provides the document in the interests of a proper and informed debate, which it called for in the very same media release. But we can make some guesses about this model. First of all the model does not indicate the destruction of jobs; it actually talks about, based on Deloitte's estimate of what jobs may be created, the number that will not hypothetically be created in the

future as a result of this — so it is a reduction in Deloitte’s estimate of hypothetical future jobs. That is what we are talking about; a reduction in its estimate of the increased employment that would otherwise occur in the economy.

How does it arrive at such an estimate? We can guess because most economic models rely on some key assumptions, and in my view when addressing the issue of energy prices and carbon prices those key assumptions are wrong. Those models assume that if there were a profitable or easy or positive method of producing energy, business managers would already have done it. These classical models pretty much have to assume that there is no way to reduce energy profitably, otherwise somebody would have done it already. Therefore they proceed on the assumption that any increase in energy prices simply reduces overall output and therefore inevitably you get less economic growth and less employment. No wonder this model is guaranteed to spit out the exact figure that the Premier was looking for.

There are further hints in the small amount of information that was available in the table provided in the *Herald Sun*. There was a chart that helpfully showed the biggest job losses at the top and buried the job increases down at the bottom; you had to scroll down to find them. But after clicking on it a few times and downloading and installing a special piece of software and then converting the data into a table and cutting and pasting it into Excel, I was able to read the actual outputs from the model in employment terms. With his interest in economic issues, Mr Rich-Phillips would be fascinated to know that Deloitte has been able to predict these job figures all the way down to the municipal level. Not a bad trick.

I agree that Treasury’s modelling of carbon price effects is by necessity a broadbrush model. I have supported the call by Latrobe City Council to do some more detailed economic modelling on its regional area, which will require more assumptions to be introduced into the model. But Deloitte managed to make predictions all the way down to the municipal level and even informed us that due to the carbon tax in Murrindindi shire in the year 2020, there will be one less job than there otherwise would be. That is an impressive level of precision. I can see that Mr Rich-Phillips is equally impressed by the level of precision in Deloitte’s modelling in that it could predict the loss of one job.

Mrs Peulich — As opposed to no modelling, is that what you are suggesting? Do you prefer no modelling?

Mr BARBER — No, Mrs Peulich. In fact the whole premise of my motion here today is to get this modelling out and test it.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr BARBER — I want the modelling released so that I, and others with more qualifications than me, can give the modelling the appropriate level of academic scrutiny. I am not saying I am pooh-poohing it. I am just noting the stunning level of accuracy devoted to the Murrindindi Shire Council area where Deloitte can confidently say there will be one less job in 2020 but by the year 2030 there will be an additional 10 jobs in Murrindindi above and beyond those that would have been predicted.

Where then would members predict would be the biggest hypothetical loss of potential employment in this scenario of a carbon price through to the years 2015, 2020 and 2030? Which regions would members predict would be most affected by the introduction of a carbon tax? The carbon tax comes with a suite of measures which Deloitte seems to have got its head around pretty fast, given that the measures were only announced in July and Deloitte was able to churn out modelling by 18 August. With the stunning levels of local accuracy, perhaps Deloitte looked at the numbers of solar panels or wind farms that would have been constructed in each of these municipalities. If that is the case, Deloitte may have to quickly redo its modelling, because not long after Deloitte produced the report this government launched a two-pronged attack in the one week on renewable energy. Some of these assumptions, which we will get to in a minute, might have to be revisited.

I will answer my own question of which municipality in this modelling had the biggest jobs impact as a result of the introduction of a carbon tax. Was it the Latrobe Valley? Was it Geelong with its emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries? Was it Portland with its giant aluminium smelter?

Mr Drum — It would be the Goulburn Valley.

Mr BARBER — The Goulburn Valley is certainly being impacted by climate change. There is no doubt that the impacts of climate change, even by the year 2030, will be devastating on the Goulburn Valley — way more devastating than one would predict the impacts of the carbon tax to be.

I applaud the government’s efforts to try to understand the impact of all these policy matters on jobs. It is in fact a requirement of the Climate Change Act 2010 that the government produce a report by December next

year on the impacts of climate change in Victoria. An adaptation plan is required under that act. As part of that plan, I would be all for some modelling of the social, environmental and economic impacts of climate change on Victoria through to the year 2030 — and beyond if possible — so that we can understand the jobs impact and the social impact of climate change. But this is just a modelling exercise of the impact of the federal government carbon tax package on jobs. The government needs to go a bit wider.

Returning to the question of the impact on jobs in municipalities, the answer is it is none of those areas. In fact, the biggest job impact, according to this document and the output of this modelling, will be on the city of Melbourne. Why? Because the city of Melbourne has the most jobs. The second biggest impact is on the city of Port Phillip, and the third biggest impact is on the city of Monash, because when we talk about the job richness of particular municipalities these happen to be the three biggest job centres in Melbourne.

In an exercise where the modelling simply says that if you have a carbon tax, it will reduce economic growth because nobody will do anything — they will just pay more for electricity and do less — it is not surprising that the model simply slices off a certain number of jobs from each municipality. Anybody could do that. I do not know how much the government paid for this modelling — I would like to know — but the modelling uses completely unreal assumptions, if I am guessing correctly as to how Deloitte has done it. The modelling assumes that if the price of electricity goes up in the city of Melbourne, no-one will do anything to reduce their electricity bill; they will simply say, 'There goes our cost structure; we will engage in less economic activity'.

The government should go and ask its good friend Robert Doyle, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, whether he thinks the businesses in the city of Melbourne area will do nothing in response to the carbon price and do nothing in response to climate change. In fact Mr Doyle is now championing a program built up by Melbourne City Council Greens councillors Risstrom, Brindley and Oke over a long period, with CBD businesses taking action to make deep cuts to their energy costs. That is just sensible and rational. If it is easy and profitable to make cuts to your energy bills, why would you not do it? Why do businesses not do it? It is often because in their mind they have bigger business issues to deal with, and they do not see their electricity bill as being that big. But if you can make money by cutting your bill, you should do it; otherwise it is like leaving \$50 bills lying in the gutter. You should just pick them up if they are there to be picked up.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr BARBER — Mr Ramsay brings smart meters into it; I am sure he will be proffering a solution on smart meters when he gets up to speak in a minute. I am looking forward to hearing it, because government members had a lot to say about smart meters in opposition, and now I want to hear what they have to say about them in government.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr BARBER — There has been very little said about smart meters since they were elected. We are waiting eagerly.

As I have said, the assumptions of most economic models are that there is no profitable way to reduce your energy use. But as anybody who has been involved in these matters knows — it could be by people in local government and community organisations, for example, and increasingly householders — there are many ways to cut your emissions. Generally speaking those investments exceed the hurdle rate, or the borrowing cost, for a local government, and they save the planet at the same time.

Even the limited amount of information that is out there has not stopped the Baillieu government's spin machine from beating it up as much as it can. Mr Weller, the member for Rodney in the lower house, said:

'Most of the lost jobs will be in regional Victoria'.

That is demonstrably false, going by the government's modelling. Based on its modelling, which assumes a certain level of employment growth and then assumes that some of it will not happen because of the carbon tax, the vast majority of the government's figure appears to relate to metropolitan municipalities. In fact only 6 per cent of the purported job losses would occur in regional areas. All of the assumptions are in relation to the municipal areas.

According to this modelling by the time we get to 2020 and 2030 we will see employment growth in regional areas. In fact 343 jobs that otherwise would not have existed will exist in places like the municipalities of Moyne, Moira, Loddon, Corangamite, Ararat, Pyrenees, Towong and Wangaratta, and by 2030 there will be an additional 762 jobs as a result of the federal government's clean energy future package.

Mr Ramsay — It might have something to do with population.

Mr BARBER — Mr Ramsay says, ‘It might have something to do with population’. I would be fascinated to know what the population effects are in this modelling as opposed to the carbon tax effects. You cannot work that out from a table dropped into the *Herald Sun* on a Wednesday night and produced without any kind of background whatsoever.

Mr Leane — At least they are giving us clues.

Mr BARBER — We are starting to get some hints. Perhaps it was also provided exclusively to Mr Ramsay and he has done an analysis of the jobs impact. Yes, there could be any of those effects. There must be a whole range of effects, which could include global economic factors. Participation rates, education rates — all of these things could prove to be vastly larger than any impact of a carbon tax measure. In fact when we get out to 2030 we see that the positives start rising.

I will take a stab and say the predictions in the Deloitte modelling of some of the job increases in these regional areas may have been made on the assumption that there would be a growth in wind farms. In areas such as Ararat, the Pyrenees, Corangamite and so forth the modelling has perhaps assumed there would be some wind farm development that would of course increase jobs. But that assumption has to be updated, because in the last week the government has destroyed any chance of that happening; we will be discussing that later today. Perhaps even the slightly optimistic part of the story has been wiped out due to the government’s capriciousness on renewable energy development, but we will see. I hope the government supports my motion and releases the report in a timely fashion, because it is a very important debate.

As was alluded to by the government in its press release on the day of the release of the results, the modelling needs to be based on facts. During the debate about the Climate Change Bill 2010, Ms Wooldridge, the then shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change and now the Minister for Mental Health, said in a press release in September 2010:

The Brumby government’s refusal to provide the coalition with genuine detail of the modelling behind the climate change bill shows that this legislation is more show than substance.

That was a timely warning. Ms Wooldridge certainly wanted to see the modelling last year. I want to see the modelling this year. I hope the government will be supporting my motion and responding in a timely fashion.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Health: government advertising

Hon. M. P. PAKULA (Western Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the government’s commitment to establish an independent government advertising review panel to oversee, scrutinise and approve government advertising before taxpayer dollars are spent, and I note that it is a promise that has not at this stage been delivered. My question to the minister is: how many taxpayer dollars have been spent on government advertising in the health portfolio since the election without review panel oversight?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I thank the member for his question. As I have said to the chamber, the government will honour its commitment to introduce that panel. Without knowing the full details of this, because it is the Premier’s responsibility, I will indicate that some work has occurred on that and work is proceeding.

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I am just giving Mr Pakula some background. In terms of the health portfolio, I can find a figure for him. I do know that we have certainly been very determined to ensure that there is no unreasonable expenditure.

Supplementary question

Hon. M. P. PAKULA (Western Metropolitan) — I take it from the minister’s answer that he has taken the detail of the question on notice. If the minister cannot tell me about the cost of advertising in his entire portfolio now, can he at least advise the house of the cost of the radio campaign that has been running on the wireless along the lines of, ‘Thanks to the Victorian government your ambulance bills have just been halved’? Can the minister tell me the cost of that campaign, which is also occurring without review panel oversight?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I will also come back to the member with a precise figure on that campaign so that it is entirely accurate. But I will say something about the importance of that campaign to let Victorians know about the fact that they can access ambulance membership at half cost — that means half cost for families, it means half cost for individuals.

Hon. M. P. Pakula — The cost of the campaign?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I have told you I will come back to you with a precise figure and ensure that it is absolutely accurate.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — Let me be very clear on this: Victorians are responding to the campaign to ensure that more Victorian families and individuals take out ambulance membership. I have to say it is very popular with Victorians, and we want more Victorians to take up ambulance membership. It is an important election commitment, and it is also very important to ease the pressure on families.

Industrial relations: minimum hours

Mr KOCH (Western Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, the Honourable Richard Dalla-Riva, and I ask: can the minister update the house on today's decision of the full bench of Fair Work Australia on minimum hours in the retail sector?

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations) — The Baillieu government welcomes today's decision by the full bench of Fair Work Australia to reaffirm a key principle for which we have fought — that is, the importance of flexible working hours in our retail industry. I am pleased to inform the house that the full bench has today supported a decision to vary the general retail industry award 2010 to allow for greater flexibility in minimum shifts for student casuals. The Fair Work Australia ruling will allow for a 1½-hour minimum engagement for student casuals. This represents a victory for common sense. The variation will promote greater employment opportunities for students, particularly in regional Victoria.

The Victorian government was the only state to intervene in the case. We did so because we felt it was important to support calls by national retailers for greater flexibility in the approach to after-school work by students. The Victorian coalition government does not believe commonwealth laws should be making it harder for small business to hire students, especially in regional Victoria, and harder for students to get after-school work.

Today's confirmation of the ruling should mean Australian teenagers will continue to get their first opportunity in the workplace by taking up a job after school. This is something Labor had opposed. While Fair Work Australia did not grant in full the National Retail Association's application to vary the modern

award, the practical effect of the draft determination will deliver all or most of the flexibility sought in the application.

As I have said before, under Labor Victoria had been underperforming on the key measure of productivity. We need to reverse that position if this state and its people are to have the economic opportunities they will need to extend our prosperity into the future. It is crucial that we strengthen Victoria's industrial relations reputation to secure future investment and sustained economic growth for all Victorians.

Ambulance Victoria: administration

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Health. During the last sitting week I asked the minister a series of questions about the deterioration of the performance of Ambulance Victoria. He acknowledged those questions at the time and within a week he had replaced the board of Ambulance Victoria. Can the minister outline to the house what, if any, directions had been given by him to the outgoing board members that they failed to meet before he sacked them?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — The position of Ambulance Victoria is well known by the community and not least in this chamber going back to June last year, when a motion was moved to ask the Auditor-General to examine Ambulance Victoria and its performance. That motion was successfully carried, and indeed the chamber as a whole welcomed the Auditor-General's report, which was brought down in October last year.

Mr Lenders interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — No, I am giving some useful background, and I think that is very relevant.

It is also important to understand that Victoria has faced a number of significant financial difficulties over the recent period. I met with Ambulance Victoria board members, the CEO and others on a number of occasions. It was very clear that a new start was needed for Ambulance Victoria.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I am sure you heard just as I did, President, that the minister did not take the opportunity to tell us what directions he had given the board prior to its members being sacked. I ask as a supplementary question: can the minister outline to the house what directions and, very importantly, what resources he has provided the

new board in terms of encouraging it to improve the performance of Ambulance Victoria?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — The importance of this matter is that the government made a number of election commitments, as the member would be aware, including the provision of an ambulance package, which was brought forward in the recent budget — and that ambulance package begins to flow from 1 July. There are a number of key matters that will work through the system over the next period to provide more paramedics, additional resources for Ambulance Victoria and a whole series of — —

Mr Jennings interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I can certainly make some broader comments about the failure of the previous government to manage Ambulance Victoria.

Mr Jennings interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I am making the point that over 11 years your government in a way failed to run Ambulance Victoria and there was a massive decline in its performance and financial position.

Bendigo hospital: construction

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Health, David Davis, and I ask: can the minister inform the house of progress on the coalition's election commitment to build a new hospital in Bendigo?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I thank the member for his question and for his longstanding advocacy for hospitals in northern Victoria and in particular for the Bendigo hospital.

Mr Lenders interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — You wanted to build a small hospital in Bendigo, a \$473 million hospital; we are building a \$630 million hospital. You need to change your tune and get in behind the new, big, \$630 million hospital. You had 11 years to build at Swan Hill, and you did nothing. You wanted to build a small hospital in Bendigo, and it is about time that your side of politics, including Jacinta Allan — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! The minister, through the Chair.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I thank you for your guidance, President. I will revert to a direct response to the sensible question from Mr Drum.

The \$630 million new Bendigo hospital — the big hospital — is the one that was opposed by Labor. It still hates the extra \$102 million put into the hospital. It still wants to go back and build a small hospital; it wants to shrink the Bendigo hospital and go back to the John Brumby small model.

Let me be clear: the expression of interest process has now begun, and that will be closed by 29 September. The government is determined to push forward with the process of building this important new hospital — the biggest hospital that will have been built in country Victoria in its history. It will be a significant response. There will be an integrated cancer centre on the one site. There will be a mother-and-baby unit as part of this package. There will be 735 construction jobs and supply chain jobs provided as the hospital is built, and at least 500 of these jobs will be maintained over three years. This will be a massive jobs boost for central Victoria and a massive jobs boost for Victoria in general.

This hospital will be a world-class hospital. It will be a hospital that provides not only for Bendigo but for northern Victoria and the surrounding area. The additional \$102 million the state government has put in over and above Labor's smaller project — its inadequate project — will make a very big difference in the quality of the project.

I pay tribute to Bendigo Health's work, including its announcement in the last 24 hours of accommodation for students in the town. It is important that accommodation be there for students, who will need to be attracted to the town and brought through as that education precinct in and around the new hospital expands in the forthcoming period.

In conclusion, very strong interest has been shown in the expression of interest process. There were about 150 people at the industry briefing, and there was real interest from the construction sector across Victoria, including in central Victoria. We look forward to the expression of interest process proceeding. We look forward to formal tender processes moving beyond that, and we look forward to a bigger, better Bendigo hospital — \$102 million bigger than the one proposed by Mr Jennings's government, \$102 million bigger than the one proposed by Jacinta Allan, the member for Bendigo East in the Assembly, and \$102 million bigger than the one proposed by former Premier John Brumby.

Mobile intensive care ambulance: regional coverage

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Health. Yesterday the minister referred to the great contribution of MICA (mobile intensive care ambulance) paramedics within Ambulance Victoria. Can the minister explain to the house why MICA paramedics have not been able to practise outside their home base, as has been reported in Ballarat during the past week?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — MICA is a very important contribution to the safety of Victorians, and we welcome the bipartisan support for the 10 new MICA single-responder units. After we announced that during the election campaign we noticed within 2 hours the then government, the Brumby government, copied the announcement of 10 MICA single-responder units. I had been on the air with Jon Faine, and we had a great discussion about the regional cities that would see MICA single-responder units put in place. Within an hour and a half former Premier John Brumby had recut his whole policy, and he had put in some MICA single-responder units. That is what he did — he copied the then opposition. It was remarkable to watch the copying of the single-responder units.

We stand by that promise to put 10 MICA single-responder units in major regional cities across country Victoria. The services in Shepparton, Warrnambool and Mildura have already opened. The others will follow over the next few years, one by one, as the additional resources come through. What I am saying is that MICA coverage will provide a stronger base for safety for Victorians. The 24-hour coverage that will eventually be provided by those 10 MICA single-responder units will provide Victorians in the major regional cities and in the hinterlands with strong MICA coverage into the future. This is a very important step in providing the MICA coverage.

Mr Jennings might want to oppose wider MICA coverage. He might want to advocate for incomplete MICA coverage. He might want to advocate for short-changing people in country Victoria. I detect that he is backing off from the commitment that came from John Brumby when he copied the policy for 10 MICA single-responder units. I detect that Mr Jennings is now backing off from his support for our policy to have those 10 MICA single-responder units, which was copied from the then opposition.

Victorians want a strong MICA system. They want a coordinated MICA system. They want a MICA system

that provides 24-hour coverage, and they want it around regional cities like Mildura and Shepparton. The very first day I went to Shepparton to announce the opening of the MICA single-responder unit and the 24-hour coverage of Shepparton and the 80 kilometres around Shepparton, I was very heartened to hear that at Nagambie the night before, a MICA unit — the new MICA single-responder unit — had got to a man who was in some significant trouble, and it made a significant impact in saving his life. On the very first day of that Shepparton MICA single-responder unit being in operation it got as far down as Nagambie and made a difference.

However, Mr Jennings is clearly backing off from his commitment to copy us. He is backing off and backing away from the 10 MICA units, and I reckon each one of those towns will want to come after him and say, ‘We want our MICA units, and it is Mr Jennings who is going to pull them out’.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — A supplementary question provides me with the opportunity to say that if I had a commission from the Premier, I would deliver those 10 MICA units and more. The minister does not have to worry about my commitment to them. What I am interested in from the minister’s answer — his non-answer — is whether he has a commitment to allow MICA paramedics to be able to practise their skills and use their medication and equipment away from their home base. That is my question to him.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — Ambulance Victoria and the skilled MICA — —

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I actually do know. The skilled MICA paramedics need to be deployed by Ambulance Victoria in a coordinated way that gets the best result for Victorians. I am not going to outline the day-to-day management of each and every MICA unit across the state, but what I am going to say is that the government is putting in the resources to allow the 10 single-responder MICA units to be delivered. Four have been delivered to date, and there are six more to go. We are doing the work to get to that figure of 10.

I have to say that if Mr Jennings is going to intervene and try to prevent Ambulance Victoria allocating those MICA units to the single responders, I think people are going to judge him very harshly. We know where Mr Jennings is going: he is trying to pull the rug — —

The PRESIDENT — Minister, time!

Adult and community education: initiatives

Mrs PETROVICH (Northern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, who is also the Minister responsible for the Teaching Profession, Mr Hall. Can the minister advise the house on recent events that will strengthen the delivery of adult education in Victoria?

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I thank Mrs Petrovich for her interest in this matter. It was at this hour exactly one week ago that I had the pleasure of attending an event at the Centre for Adult Education in Flinders Lane, where we saw the significant announcement of a partnership arrangement between Box Hill Institute of TAFE and the Centre for Adult Education. This is a very significant partnership arrangement, because what it does is bring together two of Victoria's finest providers of post-secondary education.

The Centre for Adult Education is well known for the quality and breadth of its adult education programs and the duration for which it has been delivering those programs in Victoria. Box Hill TAFE is one of our exemplary TAFE institutes, delivering vocational education as well as higher education in this state. This partnership will mean that students attending either of those two institutions will now have a much broader curriculum offering available — from senior secondary study areas to vocational classes, right through to the delivery of higher education programs. It fits neatly with the government's agenda of providing better means of articulating pathways between sectors of education.

This is something that will stand both institutions in good stead into the future. Each institution will continue to operate in its own right. The Centre for Adult Education will continue to operate from its facilities in the central business district of Melbourne, and Box Hill TAFE will continue to operate from a number of campuses around the state, but particularly in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

I congratulate the respective organisations on this partnership agreement, in particular Mr Frank King, who chairs the board of the Centre for Adult Education, and Elizabeth White, who chairs the equivalent board at Box Hill TAFE, and the CEOs, Denise O'Brien from the Centre for Adult Education and John Maddock from Box Hill TAFE. From both an administrative and a governance point of view, these people have led their organisations well. I look forward to their continuing

involvement with this partnership arrangement between these two fine institutions, which will further strengthen the delivery of all forms of education in Victoria.

Hospitals: bed numbers

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Health. Yesterday, President, you reinstated to the notice paper question on notice no. 621 asked by my colleague Ms Pulford, as the Minister for Health had tried to suggest that the number of acute and subacute beds would be found within the Ballarat Health Services annual report. Can the minister guarantee that health services will list the number of subacute and acute beds in their annual reports this year?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — My understanding is that most health services do.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I appreciate that. It is the most fulsome, responsive answer I have ever had from the minister.

Hon. D. M. Davis — That is not true!

Mr JENNINGS — Maybe not the most fulsome, but perhaps it satisfied the other criteria. My question is: can the minister guarantee that in future all annual reports will contain that information?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I will seek to do so.

Aviation industry: achievements

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry, Mr Rich-Phillips, and I ask: can the minister inform the house of any recent events which highlight the diversity of the Victorian aviation industry?

Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS (Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry) — I thank Ms Crozier for her question and her interest in the diversity of the Victorian aviation and aerospace sectors. Victoria enjoys a diverse aviation sector. We have high-profile assets that many people are aware of. Victoria is home to airlines like Jetstar Airways and Tiger Airways. It is home to maintenance repair and overhaul operations like John Holland, Qantas Maintenance and LTQ Engineering. We are home to significant manufacturers like GippsAero in the Latrobe Valley, which has been a major success story for Victoria, and companies like Boeing Aerostructures

Australia at Port Melbourne as well as Lockheed Martin.

We have a significant flying training sector, with Oxford Aviation Academy, the largest flying training provider in the world, being based here in Victoria. Of course we enjoy in Victoria two, 24-hour curfew-free airports at Melbourne and Avalon, so we have a large number of high-profile assets in the aviation-aerospace sector.

We also enjoy in Victoria a lower profile sector within the aviation-aerospace sector. Last week I had the pleasure of opening the Airport Operations 2011 conference here in Melbourne, which was a great opportunity to bring together professional service providers in the aviation-aerospace sector. The conference was addressed by important speakers from the sector, coming from the Australian Productivity Commission, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Melbourne Airport, Avalon Airport, Jetstar Airways and Virgin Australia, among others, as well as representatives from other airports in Victoria.

Importantly, it brought together a significant number of professional service firms providing services in the aviation-aerospace sector — firms operating in the planning area, in general consultancy in aviation, in management, in environmental management and in air traffic management. These are areas which are low profile in terms of the overall scope of aviation and aerospace in this state but which make an important contribution to driving growth in this sector, particularly in our airport infrastructure here in Victoria, and they are also important as export opportunities.

Many of these firms have grown out of the opportunities which were created by the commonwealth privatisation of major airports in the late 1990s. They have since gone on to create major export businesses, consulting to airports around the world. They are a great success story for this state. They are not as high profile as many of the major aviation operations, which we associate with lots of moving aircraft, but they are significant to our export performance in this state and a vital part of the aviation, airport and aerospace sector.

Hospitals: funding

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Health.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JENNINGS — How supportive of the minister's backbench to urge me on!

Last sitting week the minister failed to give a guarantee that no hospital would receive less money in 2011–12 than it did in 2010–11. In light of this, what is his response to 37 jobs having been lost at the Austin Hospital in the last fortnight, and can we expect this to be the start of major job losses within Victorian public hospitals?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — Firstly, I do not accept being verbally by the member. Secondly, the Austin, like other health services, is responsible for its own staff and management. Health services across the state have a significant role in managing complex organisations, and the Austin, like other health services, will manage its activities.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — It is my intention to use this supplementary to give the minister an opportunity to demonstrate that he has not been verbally. If he can give the Victorian community a guarantee that not one hospital received less money in 2011–12 than it did last year, then let him take that opportunity and give it now.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — As the member knows, individual hospital budgets are now being negotiated through the statement of priorities process. I would be surprised to see any hospital receive less than it received last year. Most health services are doing better. The result from the budget process is that key areas like the acute health services group have had significant increases in spending. I make the point strongly that the commonwealth government ripped out \$2.5 billion during the process of the state government framing the budget. That certainly would have enabled us to spend much more at each health service around the state, but we have not heard a word from the opposition about that. It clearly supports the cuts by the commonwealth government. It clearly supports pulling out \$2.5 billion and the extra \$1.6 billion, making a total of \$4.1 billion.

Archicentre: home inspection service

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Housing, who is also the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development, the Honourable Wendy Lovell. I ask the minister to inform the house of the initiatives to support elderly Victorians to live longer and more safely within their homes?

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Housing) — I thank the member for his question and for his ongoing interest in the safety of older Victorians. The Victorian government offers a free home inspection service for aged pensioners, disabled people and their carers. This service assists people to live independently in their homes for longer by identifying potential hazards in the home. The inspections are undertaken by Archicentre, and this service is well respected by all those who use it, including the elderly, occupational therapists and local councils, which refer people to the service.

As Victorians age the ability to remain in the family home for longer is of increasing importance, and services such as this act as a preventive strategy as well as to assist people to return to their homes after a fall or stroke. Last week I had the pleasure of launching Archicentre's *Safe and Sound* report. The report marks the 30th anniversary of the home inspection service, which has been running continuously since 1981. Falls by older people account for the majority of home injuries, including 19 per cent of all deaths and 41 per cent of hospital admissions. The general manager of Archicentre, David Hallett, said that a quarter of all the homes visited by Archicentre had safety hazards in them. I was joined at the launch of the report by two special guests, Isabelle and Amy, who have both used the service to upgrade and to increase the safety of their homes so they can continue to live in them.

I would also like to thank Mark Stewart, the CEO of Archicentre, and all the staff of Archicentre, who do a wonderful job assisting our older Victorians to safely stay in their own homes. The Victorian government also provides low-interest renovation loans to assist eligible older Victorians to undertake the necessary renovations to make their homes safer so they can remain in them longer.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I have answers to the following questions on notice: 4456–98.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I am seeking an explanation from the Minister for Planning in relation to answers to my questions on notice 747, 752, 755, 757, 791 and 2741, all of which are months overdue.

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — I apologise to Mr Barber for the answers being overdue,

and I will endeavour to chase them up as soon as I can for him.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I also seek an explanation from the Assistant Treasurer in relation to an answer to my question without notice 741.

Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS (Assistant Treasurer) — I am not sure to which question Mr Barber is referring. There are some for other ministers, which I have pursued with the other ministers. I assume it is one of those questions, and I will continue to pursue it for Mr Barber.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — If I can be of assistance to the minister, it is question 741 with his name next to it on the unanswered questions paper. He is the relevant minister for the purpose of this standing order.

The PRESIDENT — Order! As the minister has indicated, he will follow it up for Mr Barber.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I also seek from the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations an explanation as to why an answer to my question 761 is so overdue, as it has been for many months now.

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations) — I thank the member. I will follow that up for him today.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I am seeking an explanation from the Minister for Health in relation to answers to my questions 718, 731, 733 and 734, which have been on the notice paper for months but remain unanswered.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I will take those on further notice and follow them up for Mr Barber.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I am also seeking from the Minister for Higher Education an explanation as to the fate of the answers to my questions 728, 729, 735, 853 and 2742.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I will follow those up for Mr Barber. I point out that I am endeavouring to keep track of the many hundreds of questions asked of me and to supply answers in a timely way. I make the suggestion that a member who is particularly keen on getting an answer to a question follow what has been the custom and practice of this chamber, and that is to advise the

minister in writing prior to coming into the chamber so the minister is able to provide a more definitive answer. Nevertheless, I will take the particular queries Mr Barber has put to me today and follow up on the answers.

Mr VINEY (Eastern Victoria) — I am seeking an explanation in relation to answers to questions on notice 762, 763, 764, 765 and 766, which were directed via the Minister for Higher Education and Skills to the Minister for Energy and Resources, all of which I received yesterday; however, they are dated 17 August and signed by the Honourable Michael O'Brian, MP. I am seeking an explanation as to why it took a month for those answers to questions on notice to come to me after the minister answered them.

The PRESIDENT — Order! As I understand it, Mr Viney, those questions have been answered.

Mr VINEY — President, I was seeking an explanation as to why it took a month from the date of the minister's responses to those questions for them to come to me. I received them yesterday. In the intervening period there was a sitting week of the Parliament, and I am seeking an explanation of why there has been a delay in receiving answers to questions which the minister has clearly answered.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — This is the chance to ask about unanswered questions rather than answered questions.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Debate resumed.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — The government will not oppose Mr Barber's motion, although I note the date listed in the motion requires the Leader of the Government to table in the Legislative Council by 12 noon yesterday a copy of all documents modelling the impact of carbon pricing. I invite Mr Barber, perhaps in his summing up, to indicate a more realistic timetable for the production of any documents that the government may have in its possession. The government will not oppose Mr Barber's motion, subject to the usual caveats around these matters such as cabinet in confidence and the like.

In his contribution Mr Barber made the unspoken assertion that the Deloitte consulting report commissioned by the government is in effect the Liberal-Nationals coalition state government having a go at the Gillard Labor federal government and that it was cheap political point-scoring. That was the essence

of much of Mr Barber's contribution. Of course I note that the Queensland Labor government, the Bligh government, has commissioned economic modelling by Deloitte in relation to the impacts of a carbon tax on Queensland. Like the modelling that was done in Victoria, there is a significant discrepancy between the federal Treasury modelling and the Deloitte modelling. To quote the *Australian* from 23 August:

The Gillard government's carbon tax will hit Queensland the hardest, costing an estimated 21 000 in forecasted new jobs and slashing state growth by 2.76 per cent to 2020, according to economic modelling commissioned by the Bligh government.

On 24 August another article on the same topic and also in the *Australian* stated:

The Queensland economy could be hit harder and for longer by the carbon tax than forecasted by federal Treasury, with new modelling predicting a huge drop-off in investment, cuts in new jobs and a drag on state growth for at least four decades.

A Bligh government-commissioned report will ramp up pressure on the Gillard government in the electoral battleground of Queensland, with the modelling showing state growth will be cut by 2.76 per cent to 2020 under a carbon tax, compared to federal Treasury's initial estimate of a reduction of just 0.3 per cent.

The government rejects the assertion implicit in Mr Barber's contribution that this is somehow —

Mr Barber — It was explicit.

Mr O'DONOHUE — Implicit or explicit?

Mr Barber — I can be more explicit in reply.

Mr O'DONOHUE — Thank you, Mr Barber. The point is the same — that is, the government rejects the assertion that this is somehow a cheap political point-scoring exercise on the part of the Baillieu government. Rather it is putting facts on the table in relation to the impact the carbon tax will have on Victoria. The fact that the Queensland Bligh Labor government has also commissioned similar modelling backs up our contention that this is reasonable modelling from a reputable firm that shows just what a significant impact the carbon tax will have on Victoria.

I am particularly concerned as a representative of Eastern Victoria Region, because the impacts of the carbon tax on that region will be significant. Mr Barber has referred to the breakdown by local government area that Deloitte prepared, but I also want to go to an article that appeared in the *Herald Sun* of 18 August and which is titled 'Carbon tax set to smash Victoria — carbon tax to cost 23 000 jobs'. That article says:

According to separate modelling by the Department of Primary Industries, Victorian dairy farms are expected to experience an average \$5700 rise in processing costs and a 25 per cent cut in profits.

Separate to the modelling done by Deloitte there is other modelling that shows the significant impact the carbon tax will have on the dairy industry. I represent Eastern Victoria Region, and the dairy industry is a very important industry for my electorate, particularly throughout southern and central Gippsland. The carbon tax will have a significant impact on that industry.

I go back to the modelling prepared by Deloitte that Mr Barber referred to. According to the Deloitte modelling the carbon tax will mean a reduction of jobs by 2015: 106 jobs in the Bass Coast shire, 112 jobs in Baw Baw shire, 175 jobs in the Cardinia shire, 148 jobs in East Gippsland, most significantly a reduction of 606 jobs in the Latrobe City Council area, 515 jobs in the Mornington Peninsula shire, 44 jobs in South Gippsland shire, 134 jobs in the Wellington shire and, significantly, 412 jobs in the Yarra Ranges shire. This modelling demonstrates that the carbon tax will have a significant impact on Victoria as a whole.

As a representative of the Eastern Victoria Region I can say that the carbon tax will have a significant impact throughout my region. This is a significant issue. It is worth noting again that the Bligh Queensland Labor government also commissioned Deloitte to do modelling in relation to the carbon tax, which has shown that significant jobs will be lost in Queensland as a result. The government does not oppose Mr Barber's motion.

The PRESIDENT — Order! It has been brought to my attention that this motion contains a fatal flaw. The motion before the house requires the information to be provided yesterday. That is fairly difficult to do. After Mr Leane has spoken Ms Pennicuik intends to move an amendment which could effectively change the date in the motion, I understand, from 13 September to 11 October. Mr Leane might bear that in mind as he makes his remarks. We will then proceed with the amendment process.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am happy to speak on Mr Barber's motion, and I foreshadow that the opposition is more than happy to support it and the foreshadowed amendment that will be moved by Ms Pennicuik.

It was interesting to listen to Mr O'Donohue's contribution. He said the commissioning of this report was about putting the facts on the table for the benefit of the people of Victoria. I pose the question, and I am

happy for the next government speaker to respond: why would Mr Barber have to go through this process in this chamber when the government has stated that the commissioning of these reports was about putting the facts on the table for the Victorian people? Why would Mr Barber have to come to this chamber and use one of his few chances to move a general business motion to call on this government to table a document when government members have previously stated that these reports were all about getting the facts on the table? We have to go through a process where a member of the Greens in this chamber has put a motion on the table. Members should forget the date in the motion. The documents should have been tabled and delivered to the Victorian people without Mr Barber having to move a motion to require it to be done.

Let us try to guess why we are going through a process whereby there is a call for this report to be tabled. We have just heard from the previous government speaker that this report is important to the people of Victoria. Let us try to guess why Mr Barber has had to go through this process. Some of my assumptions would be about what happened before the election when the then opposition, the present government, promised the world to the Victorian people. It proposed to throw in train lines here and there and said, 'We will even throw one into Avalon'. The government was throwing in all sorts of promises. It was going to eliminate graffiti, and it was going to have two policemen on every train station. There were lots of promises that were made. I am not too sure if the former opposition actually believed when it made these commitments that it was going to be successful in achieving government. Therefore the former opposition felt it was quite easy to make these commitments, but the reality is — —

Mr Finn — A bit like Bracksy in 1999!

Mr LEANE — A bit like Bracksy in 1999! Mr Finn is actually saying the government was surprised by the outcome, and now — god damn it! — it has to try in some way to find some means to actually deliver these commitments or alternatively find excuses not to deliver them and then blame other people.

I can just imagine there being one of those spinning wheels in the Premier's office. One of the first thing he would have spun up was the issue of the black holes. But they would not have been spun up straightaway, because very shortly after Mr Baillieu became the new Premier he got a report from Treasury and he said, 'I have received a report from Treasury. Everything is fine; there are no black holes'. Then all of a sudden in the cold light of day and after thinking about it and stopping celebrating he actually realised, 'We're not

going to be able to achieve all of these commitments. We have to blame something’.

A couple of weeks after receiving the Treasury report that said there were no black holes out there, the Premier then said, ‘There are black holes everywhere, and we will not be able to achieve our commitments’. I do not think the media and the Victorian public actually accepted that. Then he backed off that, so he said, ‘Let’s spin the wheel again and go for GST revenue’. The wheel was spun, and it landed on GST revenue. Then the government said, ‘It can’t be GST revenue’.

People did not buy that then either. Now the government has spun the wheel again, and it has come up with the excuse that it will not be able to fulfil its commitments because of this carbon tax — which does not even exist at the moment.

Hon. R. A. Dalla-Riva interjected.

Mr LEANE — I will get to that in a moment. This is what it is all about: this is the new excuse for the new government not delivering on the unreasonable commitments it made to the electorate to achieve government. We are never going to see those four train lines. I am looking forward to seeing them; I am looking forward to catching a train out to Doncaster, but we are never going to see it. I would be surprised if they ever materialised. I know one of the ministers responsible for this is in the chamber and he would probably rightly refute this, but I would be very surprised if there were going to be two protective services officers from the evening until whatever time the last train goes at some of these stations that have never had an incident. But I will give the government the benefit of the doubt; we will wait and see. The new government is looking for excuses not to deliver on these commitments, and this is the new one. The wheel has been spun in the Premier’s office and this is the new excuse that has come up: it is actually the carbon tax.

I appreciate the government saying it is supporting this motion. It will table the documents that the motion seeks. They would never, ever have had to be called for via this process if the government actually believed in the line it is taking. The government commissioned these reports. If it believed what the reports say and if the driving force behind them was not to find an excuse not to deliver on the promises it made to the electorate, why would it not give access to the reports on a website straightaway for all Victorians to make up their minds? Why would it not also indicate, ‘This is where you look. This is where you need to look to back up our

premise’? But, no, Mr Barber had to come to this chamber and move a motion to obtain the documents.

I respect that the government has said it will deliver them on the changed date. We will wait and see, but it is saying it will deliver on that date. I mean, there are no ramifications for not doing so — and it has happened before where paperwork has not been delivered through this process — but let us wait and see where it gets to. We are in a position where suddenly the carbon tax and action on climate change has been demonised by people in this chamber as a terrible thing. It has actually got to the point where some people, like fly-over boffins from Britain, go on speaking tours on the premise that pollution is good, that emitting carbon into the atmosphere is good. Where it has been lost —

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr LEANE — I will get to that, Mr Finn. Where it has been lost is that people have twisted this argument around carbon emissions and they have not centred on talking about pollution. When we see vision on the television of a cloud of smog enveloping Mexico City, that is created by pollution — by people polluting the air — and we should be aware that there are days in that particular city when people are advised not to go outdoors. That is because of what is being chuffed into the air by major polluters.

Mr Finn — What about the air at Copenhagen?

Mr LEANE — I am waiting for one of the two old blokes from the *Muppet Show* — Mr Finn and Mr Ramsay — to get up and support pollution and say he thinks pollution is a good thing. I would not be surprised if Mr Finn does!

I want to carry on after lunch, so I will keep going. Let me be absolutely clear on what I think about people taking responsibility and paying for the pollution they create. Let me make my position absolutely clear. I will keep it very simple. I honestly believe in taking responsibility for the outcomes of my actions. I honestly abhor the thought that I will leave the adverse consequences of those actions to be dealt with by my kids and my grandkids. Members should not be naive in thinking it cannot happen here or anywhere: we are building up our industry and our cities are getting bigger.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr LEANE — I know, it is terrible to be sitting there, watching that vision of Mexico City, thinking, ‘Wouldn’t it be terrible to live there? There are days when you cannot even go outside, when you cannot

even breathe the air because of the amount of pollution in the sky'. Do not believe it will not happen here.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LEANE — Mrs Petrovich and Ms Crozier are saying it is bizarre. They do not acknowledge that that happens. I say to them: hide your heads in the sand. Do not take responsibility for your actions. Consume, consume, consume, and you leave it for the next generations. My position is that people should pay. They should take responsibility for the actions they take and the consequences of those actions.

Mrs Petrovich interjected.

Mr LEANE — I know it is all terrible. Members opposite are thinking, 'We wouldn't do that. We wouldn't leave something like that for our grandkids. We're not polluting the sky, are we?'. The carbon tax is centred on big polluters to pay for putting pollution in the sky. If you take a big load of rubbish to the tip and pollute the ground — each and every one of us has probably done that — we pay to pollute the ground. But when it comes to big polluters polluting the sky, the reaction is, 'What a terrible thing. We can't have that. The poor big polluters — we don't want them to pay a premium on polluting the sky'. Unlike the case when we as individuals pay when we are polluting the ground with rubbish when we empty our trailers into a big hole, those opposite are saying, 'No, we do not want the big polluters to pay'. But the reason that there are big polluters is the demand from us. We cannot buy ourselves out in any way because it is a demand from us. The reason the power generators are going so hard is the demand from us. We have to accept that; we are all part of it. It is all part of our actions, and therefore we should take responsibility.

We should take responsibility for our actions instead of this cop-out greedy attitude that people are adopting to excuse other things. The government is using the carbon tax issue to excuse itself from building the railway lines it promised. I have paperwork in my drawer here containing a list of commitments made by local Liberal candidates. One of the things the coalition said it would do was to eliminate graffiti. That is a magic act I am waiting for! It did not say it would reduce it — it was going to eliminate graffiti.

Sitting suspended at 1.00 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.

Mr LEANE — In fairness, because of the lunch break, I should recap some of my comments. Mr Barber's motion calls for the production of a document which the government had talked up as proving that it would not be able to afford to reach its

outrageous election commitments because of the carbon tax. Mr Barber has moved a motion asking the government to release the document.

I return now to the discussion around pollution and being big enough to take responsibility for the causes and effects of that pollution. I know some people are deniers in this area, but it is hard to deny when you drive past big factories and see plumes of pollution coming out.

Mr Finn — It is called steam; steam is not pollution.

Mr LEANE — It is the blackest steam I have ever seen. When you see these emissions surely you have to think that there is a cause and an effect. Scientists from around the world who work in this area say that the carbon which is put into the atmosphere but which cannot be seen is causing the planet to warm up — it is causing global warming. The effects can be seen — for example, there are islands in the Pacific Ocean that are actually disappearing. The occupants of those islands have had to move out of their homes.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LEANE — I cannot believe that government members think this is funny and ironic; it is true. The cause of global warming is — —

Mr Finn — It is not true!

Mr LEANE — Mr Finn should tell the people who have been relocated off Pacific islands that it is not true.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LEANE — Acting President, they wonder why I yell. Hundreds of scientists have confirmed the science that indicates the planet is warming because of the causes and effects of pollution, but the conservatives do not want to accept that. In combating that view, the conservatives trot out people like Lord Harry Highpants from London to tell us all that polluting the air is good.

I am surprised that the members on the other side of the chamber are so animated when it comes to taking action on emissions. This is obviously an argument in the federal realm, but we are not that far apart. When you look at our parties federally, you see there is a commitment to reduce emissions. The policies are not that far apart. There is a target to reduce emissions by a certain percentage, and both parties have agreed to that. Even in Victoria there is a target; the coalition government has agreed on a target to reduce emissions.

Federally the two major parties are not that far apart; they just disagree about the vehicle to reduce emissions.

The position of the leader of the Tony Abbott fan club is that forcing this reduction in emissions should be a top-down, Big Brother thing. It is not a cheap mechanism. The current federal government's position is that it is a market-based solution: you introduce a price on the target, then you introduce an emissions trading scheme and the market will take over. I am surprised that the conservatives have gone more for a top-down, Big Brother position than for letting the market find its place, because the conservatives are the champions of the free market and the market is sorting itself out. I do not know why the members opposite are so animated when the parties are not that far apart. There will be a cost.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr LEANE — I am more than happy to take responsibility for my actions and the results of those actions. To address the interjections, as far as my position on a carbon tax and an emissions trading scheme is concerned, I support them 100 per cent.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr LEANE — Mr Ondarchie put a motion on the basis — —

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr LEANE — Actually he does not have to, because I will do that for him. This motion is based on what I said on my Twitter page — that I do not support — —

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr LEANE — It always has spelling errors; sorry about that.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr LEANE — Hang on. This is what this motion is based on, Mr Ondarchie — on my Twitter page. I wrote:

Jammed my fingers in the door of my car ... carbon tax!

He is calling on the Leader of the Opposition to state whether he supports that position that it is the fault of the carbon tax that I jammed my finger in the door!

Let us go to another one. I wrote:

I reckon I might have put on a couple of kilos over winter ... carbon tax!

It is the carbon tax! I do not think the Leader of the Opposition would agree with that.

Here is another one. I wrote:

Chicken and risotto for dinner — I've eaten too much and now very bloated ... carbon tax!

It was channelling the government's moronic attitude of trying to blame anything it can on a tax that does not even exist yet.

Let us go to another one. I wrote:

Looks like a beautiful day outside, but I have no time available to enjoy it ... carbon tax.

When Suzanne Carbone from the *Age* rang me — and she got that it was a bit of a laugh; she has some form of intelligence in comparison to those opposite — she said, 'I think your irony about people blaming everything on the carbon tax is funny, and I might do something in the paper'. I said, 'If that's your position, I'm going to tweet now that the *Age* is hassling me over me blaming everything on the carbon tax, and I'm going to blame it on the carbon tax' — and she actually asked me to do that.

I say to Mr Ondarchie, 'Move your motion and make a fool of yourself. Deny responsibility for any of your actions. Leave it for the next generation of people; they will deal with it. Just keep consuming and leave it for them'. I heartily support Mr Barber's motion.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — I would like to move an amendment to Mr Barber's motion seeking the tabling of carbon pricing documents prepared by Deloitte for the Department of Premier and Cabinet and released to the *Herald Sun* in August. My amendment is to admit the inadvertent mistake whereby the motion that has been on the notice paper for a while has not been updated. Therefore, I move:

That the expression '13 September 2011' be omitted and '11 October 2011' be inserted in its place.

That would mean that the documents would be due to be tabled in the chamber on 11 October 2011, which I note is two months after they were released to the *Herald Sun*. Given developments this week, the government has some form in releasing things to the media.

I agree with Mr Leane that it is not appropriate that we have to be calling for these documents when they have already been released to the media and when the Premier said before and just after he was elected that openness and transparency were going to be the hallmarks of the government. If this study and report

commissioned by the government is so important, it should be on the website of the Department of Premier and Cabinet for all the citizens of Victoria to see.

Mr Barber interjected.

Ms PENNICUIK — Indeed, as Mr Barber says, it was paid for by the taxpayers. This is an issue about which both this coalition government and the opposition at the federal level are making some fuss.

I have just attended the Presiding Officers science briefing on what is new in solar photovoltaics, which was presented by Associate Professor Udo Bach and Dr Gerry Wilson from the department of chemistry at Monash University and CSIRO flexible electronics respectively. With other members, including Ms Crozier, I have visited the CSIRO to look at its work on photovoltaics. It was an excellent presentation.

One of the key messages delivered to us was that we have more solar energy than we know what to do with, and certainly we are not doing much with it. We have some innovative research going on through the CSIRO and through Monash University; in fact it is world-leading research which is and was being supported by both this government and the previous government, and that is a good thing. It is where we need to be moving in the 21st century, and it is really heartening to see the developments in organic photovoltaics in particular that were spoken about today and that we saw when we visited the CSIRO facility in Clayton earlier this year.

In talking about scientists, I also wish to take this opportunity to express my concern about the recent reports of scientists, and climate scientists in particular, being subjected to threats, intimidation and bullying by people who have been whipped into some sort of frenzy by members of the Liberal Party, particularly at the federal level. They have been running round and whipping up hysteria about climate change and claiming that there is no such thing. There are people in this chamber today who have been trying to suggest that carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. I would agree that carbon dioxide at its natural level of 0.03 per cent of the atmosphere is not a pollutant, but once it rises above that level it becomes a very problematic gas in the atmosphere.

For those opposite to continue with this irresponsible behaviour, because it is not responsible to be a member of Parliament — —

Mr Ramsay — On a point of order, Acting President, I am having some difficulty understanding whether Ms Pennicuik is speaking to her proposed

amendment in relation to omitting the words ‘13 September 2011’ and inserting the words ‘11 October 2011’ or providing us with her philosophy on climate change and all of the impacts, both real and unreal, around it. Is she speaking about the amendment, or is she giving us a dissertation on the Greens policy?

Ms PENNICUIK — I am speaking on both.

Mr Ramsay — I suggest that she is not speaking to the amendment; she is giving us a dissertation on the Greens policy on climate change — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr O’Brien) — Order! Mr Ramsay has raised his point of order, and I am happy to rule on it. I am happy to hear Ms Pennicuik on the point of order if she wishes; otherwise I would say that I am advised that under the standing orders she is entitled to speak on both the amendment and on the substantive motion, which, as I understand it, she is doing. There is no point of order.

Ms PENNICUIK — Thank you for your ruling, Acting President. I noticed when I took a peek at the speaking list that there are quite a number of members from the government who wish to speak on the motion.

Mr Ramsay — Let’s put the amendment.

Ms PENNICUIK — I say to Mr Ramsay that I think the Acting President has ruled correctly that his point of order was not a point of order. I can speak on the motion and on the amendment, and that is what I am doing.

Going back to what I was saying, I find it irresponsible that members of Parliament have not familiarised themselves with the science on climate change and that they persist in perpetrating untruths. If members opposite are not able to avail themselves of the science provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, I recommend they spend some time reading the CSIRO publication which was released in April this year entitled *Climate Change — Science and Solutions for Australia*. Every member of this Parliament should read that document, which explains the challenges that Australia faces in relation to climate change and puts forward some solutions. I say again that it is irresponsible; the science is very clear. Every other country in the world is taking a bipartisan attitude to this — —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms PENNICUIK — In the 21st century we need to move towards renewable energy and energy efficiency. I think the young people in our schools, universities and

workplaces now understand that. They want leadership from their members of Parliament. They do not want people denying the science, which is very clear. They do not want people spreading untruths and fears about what we need to do in terms of climate change.

The document called for in the motion was released to the *Herald Sun* last month; it should have been released to the people of Victoria. We should not have to ask for it in the Legislative Council. We only get so many chances to move motions in the Council. There are other motions we have moved for documents, and sometimes the government has supplied them and at other times it has not, most of the time with spurious reasons for not doing so, which directly contradicts the Premier's announcements that openness and transparency were going to be the hallmarks of his government. Mr Barber has moved this motion because the document should be tabled and made public, but I think it is a shame that we have had to go through this process to do it rather than the government just releasing it as it should. I commend my amendment to change the date in the motion to allow the government until 11 October to table the document in this house.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to speak in what I think it would be safe to say has been and continues to be a wide-ranging and very lively debate. Mr Leane has to take a good deal of credit for that because his contribution was up to his usual standard, and he can take that whichever way he likes. Certainly lively is one description I would use.

Before mentioning what Mr Leane had say, I have to make mention of Ms Pennicuik's comment about those of us who might not necessarily go with the idea of man-made global warming and indeed that the federal Liberal Party is whipping up fears. There is no group of people in this country or on the face of this earth that has whipped up fears as much as the Greens. Whether it is in Australia, in Europe or in the Americas, it is the Greens that live on fear. Without the fear the Greens do not exist. Fear is their oxygen. Fear is to them what carbon dioxide is to trees. That is the bottom line. I have raised it in this house before, and I have not yet been able to work out why the extreme left, whether it is in Australia or wherever it may be, always has to have something to be scared of.

You will remember, Acting President, that some years ago Ronald Reagan was going to blow up the world; that is what the left told us. They were terrified. I was 16 or 17 years of age, and I woke up every morning with this image of a mushroom cloud over Sunbury. The extreme left was running around saying, 'Ronald

Reagan is going to blow up the world. He is going to destroy the world'. What did he do? He ended the Cold War. He brought on a period of peace in the world the likes of which we have not seen in the last century. It is extraordinary that we are now seeing history repeat itself with global warming.

It is not global warming anymore. We heard about global warming some years ago, but then somebody worked out that there had not actually been any global warming for about a decade. We cannot call it global warming anymore, so we will call it climate change. What is climate change? Climate change can be anything you want it to be. If it is cold, if it is hot, if it does not rain, if it does rain or if it is windy, that is climate change. Climate change is anything you want it to be. We heard from Ms Pennicuik and Mr Barber earlier. I say to Ms Pennicuik that when she gets up and lectures the Liberal Party and conservatives about causing fear she might like to go into the room of mirrors and have a good hard look at herself and her colleagues, because that is what they live on.

Getting back to Mr Leane's contribution a little bit earlier, it was fascinating to hear a man who has his political genesis in the Electrical Trades Union getting up here and promoting something which is going to put his fellow members out of jobs. I assume Mr Leane is still a member of the ETU?

Mr Leane — Yes.

Mr FINN — He indicates that he is. I am fascinated that he gets up here and advocates a tax which will put his fellow members out of work. Mr Leane would be far better served if he listened to his comrade in arms, Dean Mighell. I am not sure whether Dean Mighell is the president or the secretary of the ETU; he could be both. He has quite openly come out and pretty much supported what the government has said in these figures from this particular model. He said that he cannot support the carbon tax because it will put his members out of work. Here is a bloke, Dean Mighell, who actually cares about his members. Mr Leane shakes his head. I know Mr Leane and Dean Mighell go back a long way. I know Mr Leane may not even have been elected to this chamber if it were not for the support of Dean Mighell some years ago. But things may have changed since then. Far be it for me to judge what is happening on that score.

With regard to the current ETU leadership, at least Dean Mighell has shown the concern that he should for his members. Would it not be wonderful if other trade union officials showed the same concern for their members that Dean Mighell has, instead of putting their

own personal political ambitions ahead of what is good for their members — and I am talking of Paul Howes and a couple of others here. They are saying to their members, ‘You are not important. What is important is me getting a seat in Canberra’. Unfortunately that is something we have come to expect from trade union officials in this country. They tell us that they care about their members and that they are going to fight for their members, and then the minute they get there it is out with the credit card. I gather they go to all sorts of places; I am told a trade union credit card can take you anywhere.

At least there is one trade union official in this country who supports and backs up his members by opposing the carbon tax. He is opposing it on basically the same foundation as we do here in Victoria. We have a shared concern about the impact that this carbon tax will have on ordinary Victorians — families, battlers and people who are struggling to pay their bills and keep their homes and families together. That is not something that worries the ALP, and it is certainly not something that worries the Greens, as they have made very clear time and again.

Mr Leane told us that he looks at the smokestacks — I am not sure which smokestacks he looks at — and he sees smoke billowing out. I would have thought that somebody with his background would know that this so-called smoke that billows out is in fact steam. If Mr Leane is in any doubt, he should go to his office, fill his jug full of water, turn it on and wait. In a few minutes it will start to gurgle, the water will bubble up and the steam will come. That is what is coming out of the smokestacks. The steam that comes out of the smokestacks will cause exactly the same degree of damage as it will in his office — none. What is he getting carried away about? Is the federal Gillard government putting a big new tax on everything to stop steam? There is no logic to the arguments of those opposite.

Hon. M. J. Guy — No wonder Puffing Billy is in trouble.

Mr FINN — Mr Guy makes an extremely good point.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr FINN — It is a fair point. As Mr Barber points out, Puffing Billy will cop a carbon tax. If Puffing Billy is not in trouble now, this time next year watch out.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — We will have to run up, and I think Tony Abbott raced Puffing Billy and beat it a couple of years ago.

Mr Leane — In his Speedos?

Mr FINN — I do not think so, Mr Leane. It is interesting. As I said, Mr Leane has had a good number of interesting things to say this afternoon.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr FINN — My word he has. I do not know whether he had a credit card when he was with the union, but he has had a number of interesting things to say. The most interesting, the most illuminating — —

Mr Leane — On a point of order, Acting President, there was reference to a union credit card and I am not too sure what else towards myself. I would like to put on record that I never had a union credit card. I will not call for a withdrawal; it is just a point of clarification.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr O’Brien) — Order! There is no point of order. I call on Mr Finn to continue.

Mr FINN — I would not suggest that Mr Leane had one; I just inquired, that is all. I have an inquiring mind; it is something that has dogged me all my life. The most illuminating point that Mr Leane made in his contribution was that we would all pay this tax — all. What have we been hearing from Canberra? What have we been hearing in the millions and millions and millions of dollars worth of advertising from the Prime Minister and the federal government? They have been saying, ‘Only a small number of big polluters will be paying this tax’. Mr Leane has let the cat out of the bag in this chamber today. He has told us all exactly what will be going on under this carbon tax. He has told us, ‘We are all going to be paying this carbon tax’.

Mr Leane — That is not what I said.

Mr FINN — ‘We are all going to be paying this carbon tax’.

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr FINN — No, Mr Leane, do not feel guilty. It is not something that comes as any surprise to us at all, because we have known from day one that this tax will filter through to every component of the Australian economy: to every family, to every individual, to every business, to every employer — to everybody. This tax will hit every Australian. Wherever they are, whoever they are, this tax will hit them. That is what this

modelling is about. That is what this debate is about. It is about finding out the degree to which this carbon tax will rip the guts out of Australia. That is what it is about.

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr FINN — I do not know why Mr Leane, or indeed Mr Barber for that matter, would get so excited about it.

Putting that aside, I refer to the — I suppose there is only one word to use to describe it — ‘lie’ that was told just before the federal election last year. Unfortunately I cannot do that flat, nasally voice, but members will remember the comment, ‘There will be no carbon tax under the government that I lead’. That was Prime Minister Julia Gillard in August, I think about three or four days before the federal election last year. I do not think there is any doubt in anybody’s mind that if she had come out and said, ‘There will be a carbon tax under the government that I lead’, there would not have been a government for her to lead because she would have gotten done like a dinner. As it turns out, she did not even get any sort of mandate from the people at the subsequent election. In fact the Liberal-Nationals coalition outpolled the ALP in that election, and it was only the shonky deals done with a couple of shonks in Canberra, a couple of Independent shysters, that kept her in the job. That is extraordinarily important.

But what I think is even more important is that — and this is where this modelling comes in, and I am really glad this motion has come up today because it is important that we focus on the modelling — we focus on how we find out the impact of the carbon tax. Because clearly that initial lie from Canberra from our Prime Minister has not been the last one. There have been many since, and they are continuing to this very day. It is important that we find out, and it is important that Premier Barry O’Farrell in New South Wales finds out, that Premier Anna Bligh in Queensland finds out and that Campbell Newman, the incoming Premier of Queensland, finds out. It is important that right around Australia we find out exactly what the impact of this carbon tax will be. That is what this sort of modelling is all about. It is a pretty reasonable sort of proposition. It is extraordinarily important that we know as a government and as a community.

It is extremely important that we know as a government and as a community what impact this tax will have on, for example, hospitals. As we know, certainly in my situation in the western suburbs, hospitals are up against the wall. They are scraping around for every dollar they can get. They are begging for money. Just a

couple of weeks ago I visited the Footscray hospital and was appalled at the physical condition of the hospital. I had to salute the doctors and nurses there, who are obviously very caring and committed people to work in the conditions they are forced to put up with. How is that hospital — which is already up against it, already in a physical condition which I would describe as disgraceful — possibly going to put up with the added costs of a carbon tax? There is no talk about compensation from Canberra for hospitals; no, not on your nelly. How is the Western Hospital in Footscray going to cope with the carbon tax? Clearly it is going to have to cut staff, it is going to have to cut services, and any maintenance that is going on will be cut as well.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr FINN — When will we hear? That is what I want to know, Mr Barber: when will we hear about it? Because the Prime Minister will not tell us. The Prime Minister will not tell us, and nor will the Greens leader, Senator Brown. Senator Brown has been very quiet. Bob Brown is an interesting character because some days he is everywhere and other days you just cannot find him anywhere. He just disappears — into the ether he goes — and it is impossible to get any comment out of him at all. It is only the mention of two magic words that will bring him out again: Lee Rhiannon. Mention Lee Rhiannon and out he scurries to hold a press conference, because he is a bit toey about the prospect that he might be about to lose his job. Lee Rhiannon has got that idea too; she would like to be leader of the Greens, and I understand that is on the cards. How entertaining that will be when it happens — God help Australia.

As I have said, hospitals are going to be severely affected.

Mr Barber — How much?

Mr FINN — Extraordinarily severely affected by this carbon tax. Then of course there are the schools. We all have schools in our regions, and I am sure we all have hospitals for that matter. Every time I go to a school, without exception, they ask me for money, usually sizeable amounts. And now the new government has arrived and we have a new sense of priorities in this state I am sure I will be able to deliver that money to a good number of them to provide the sorts of services our children need and deserve. They do need that money.

How will they put up with a brand-new tax on everything that will achieve nothing? How will they cope with the added financial pressures of this carbon

tax? There is no word from Julia Gillard on that, there is no word from Canberra on that. There is no compensation for schools. There is no compensation for those schools that are struggling now. I know that right throughout the western suburbs there are a number of schools that are in dire need.

It is interesting. I talked firstly about the hospitals and now about the schools in the western suburbs that have been struggling. Yet this is what the Labor Party describes as 'Labor heartland'. This is the part of Melbourne that the Labor Party likes to think is its own. It did not look after its own very well for 11 years, did it?

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr FINN — When you talk about Labor in the western suburbs you cannot help but be confronted with the word 'neglect' in big capital letters. You have to wonder how these schools, which are already struggling — they are up against it — are going to cope with a carbon tax.

If you go to various municipal councils and speak to any mayor or CEO — or administrator in the case of Brimbank City Council — they will tell you that they are hard up for cash. I do not know what it is about councils, but no matter how high the rates are or how little they spend, they always seem to be hard up for cash. How are these councils going to get by when the carbon tax hits, whether they be small rural councils which are struggling to look after their ratepayers and get by as it is, or big city councils with hundreds of staff — thousands in certain instances — which spend money on this, that and everything else? It will be like a financial tsunami for councils. I have spoken to mayors — and I am talking about Labor mayors — who have told me quite frankly that they do not know how they will get by once the carbon tax takes effect. That is something they are extraordinarily unhappy about.

What we are talking about are the effects of a big new tax on everything that will achieve absolutely nothing. I heard somebody say before by way of interjection — it might have been Mr Ondarchie, although he does not interject all that often because interjections are disorderly, and he would not be involved in such —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr FINN — Unruly behaviour, indeed, Mr Ramsay —

Mr Viney interjected.

Mr FINN — Far be it from me to suggest that you, Mr Viney, might from time to time indulge in that practice!

I think it was Mr Ondarchie who suggested to me that taxes do not change behaviour, but in this instance I think they will. If the Gillard-Brown government has set out to change people's behaviour, I think it will achieve that. For starters, thousands of people will not have to get up and go to work in the morning because they will be out of a job. More than anything else this tax will hit jobs. It will hit employment. It will hit small business for sure, but it will also hit those big industrial companies, in particular those in the south-eastern suburbs and — the ones I am particularly concerned about — the western suburbs that employ thousands of people. They are the ones who will pack up and leave. They do not need to be in Australia. They could be in India or China — and incidentally there is no carbon tax over there — so they will just pack up and leave. This will be devastating on jobs.

As I have mentioned in the house before, I have spoken to CEOs of businesses in the western suburbs who have told me that they are preparing to do just that —

Mr Barber — Name one!

Mr FINN — I will not name anybody, Mr Barber — I will not have your Greens mates harassing them out the front of their businesses. When I speak to my constituents in confidence, that is exactly what it is — it is absolutely in confidence.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr FINN — You might think it is highly amusing, Mr Barber, but when those companies close down or shift offshore, when thousands and thousands of people lose their jobs and cannot pay their mortgages, so they lose their homes and their families break up, will you still be laughing? You will know that it is your party's responsibility. You will know that you, the Greens, are responsible. It is the Greens who will be responsible because this is a devastating tax on jobs, and it is all part of the modelling that has been put together for us.

I can understand the Greens supporting this tax. Let us be generous towards the Greens — they are just a little bit out there, a little bit off with the fairies and not on the same planet as the rest of us. They are nuts — not all of them, but quite often — so it is not surprising that they would support a tax of this nature, which will hit education, health, business and councils. In particular it will hit jobs, family life and all those other things that the Greens do not really care about. I am not sure what the Greens do care about, but they certainly do not care

about people. That is fair enough; that is their prerogative. People vote for them on the basis that they live in or around North Fitzroy. On election day they get up, put their T-shirts and thongs on and go down to the polling booth on a Saturday morning. If they want to do that, that is their democratic right — good on them.

Having said that I can understand the Greens doing that, I cannot understand why the Australian Labor Party is doing this to the working families that it said it cares so much about. Do members remember the 2007 election campaign? Kevin Rudd, then Prime Minister and now the federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Julia Gillard, now Prime Minister, were constantly talking about working families. Fair dinkum, if I heard it once more I was going to put my foot through the television! Every minute of the day we heard them talking about how much they cared about working families. Everywhere they went, from one end of Australia to the other, it was working families this and working families that. They said that working families were the basis of Australia. They said they were going to look after working families and that they loved working families. What went wrong? They do not love working families any more — and guess what?— working families do not love them back.

If anybody has seen the polls lately, they would know that bunions are more popular than Julia Gillard. I could run off a number of diseases that are more popular than her, but I will not because it could get a bit depressing, and that is not something I want to do.

The Labor Party was supposedly founded by the trade unions to look after the workers, because the ALP is the political wing of the trade union movement in this country. When you look and see just how far down the tube trade unions have gone, that perhaps explains where the Labor Party is. It explains why the ALP has deserted working families and the working people of this country. It explains a great deal.

We have heard a great deal of debate, not just today — —

Mr Viney — Yes, too much.

Mr FINN — I can assure Mr Viney that I have much more to say. We have heard a great deal about the carbon tax in this debate over the last six months, not just today, and what impact it will have on people, families, businesses and jobs. I have spent some time today outlining some of those impacts, but there is one very interesting component of this debate that seems to have been forgotten, and I do not know why because it

is a very important component. What impact will this tax have on climate change? What impact will this tax have on temperature? What impact will this tax have on what was formally known as global warming? They are fascinating questions.

Mr Ramsay — We won't be alive.

Mr FINN — Mr Ramsay is absolutely spot-on: we will not be alive.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr FINN — Indeed, Mr Ondarchie, the artist formerly known as global warming. What benefit will this bring? I was never a brilliant mathematician at school, but over the years I have come to master a practical form of mathematics to get by.

Mr Ondarchie — Elementary.

Mr FINN — Elementary is a very good word. Let me think about this. We understand and we know that Australia is responsible for about 1 per cent of the world's emissions. Some people say it is 0.5 per cent, some say it is 1.5 per cent, so, as everybody knows that I am a middle-of-the-road person, I will go to the middle of the road on this occasion and say that Australia is responsible for 1 per cent of the world's emissions. Fair enough. You would have to agree that 1 per cent does not appear to be all that much. If 1 per cent of the world's emissions stopped tomorrow, it would not mean a thing; it would have no impact on anything. But what impact will this carbon tax, the modelling of which we are discussing today, have on that 1 per cent of the world's emissions?

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr FINN — You are absolutely right. This tax aims to stop 5 per cent of Australia's emissions, and I am afraid, Mr Ondarchie, that this is where my mathematics fails me: what is 5 per cent of 1 per cent? Off the top of my head, precious little: it will have absolutely no impact at all. I was somewhere one night and I turned the television on.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr FINN — No, I did not have a credit card! I turned the television on. From memory I was in Brisbane after speaking at a conference — for some reason they like me a lot up there.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — It is God's own country. I turned on my television and, for reasons that are absolutely

beyond me, I turned to the Foxtel channel which gave me one of the news channels — and there was a forum on climate change, from Geelong. It was compered by Rob Gell, who no doubt was well paid to do so by the Australian taxpayer, as is everything in this case it would seem. On the panel of that forum was a chap called Professor Tim Flannery. Members will recall that Professor Tim Flannery is the man who told us it would never rain again. That was before the floods. He is the man who has absolutely no reputation left, but who, again for reasons that totally escape me, is on about \$180 000 a year, again funded by the Australian taxpayer, to advise the federal government on climate change.

What did Professor Flannery say when asked the same question that the Prime Minister refuses to answer? The question was: what is the impact, and when will we start to see a lowering of temperatures with this carbon tax? Do you know what Professor Flannery said? When I heard his answer I had to sit down, because he said, 'If we stop' — we are not talking about 5 per cent of 1 per cent — 'all emissions in the world today, now, we will start to see a change in temperatures in about 1000 years'.

Mrs Peulich — May see.

Mr FINN — That is right, Mrs Peulich: we may see a change in about 1000 years. I have absolutely no idea how he would know that. This is what the federal government has built its case on. This is the bloke who advises the Prime Minister on climate change. This is why we are risking our economy, our jobs and our families, because we might see a change in the climate in 1000 years. Actually, 5 per cent of 1 per cent — it would probably be about 50 000 years, if you follow Professor Flannery's take on things. It is just staggering. It is nonsensical in the extreme.

It absolutely staggers me that we would have a government which is pandering to people who are clearly making a lot of money out of this. Make no mistake, there are a lot of people making a lot of money out of climate change; it is a sizeable industry. One of those chaps is a bloke called Al Gore, who has never looked more hale and hearty. In fact he has almost doubled in size since he started talking about climate change.

It was interesting to hear Mr Leane talking about the sea levels rising because of climate change. The sea levels are rising so much that Al Gore bought a mansion on Miami Beach. That is how much he worried about rising sea levels. Kevin Rudd has just bought a beach house. He does not seem to be all that

concerned about rising sea levels. Who else has bought property right on the beach? Greg Combet, the federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. Can you believe it? Do as we say, not as we do — that is Labor policy. Labor members will lecture us about climate change, and they will lecture us about emissions and tell us that the sea levels are rising, and then they will go and buy mansions by the sea, right on the beach. It is staggering.

The Australian people deserve every bit of information on this subject that we can possibly get. It is a great pity that the data that is hoarded in Canberra by the current federal government is just that: it has been locked away and kept from the Australian people. As Australians, as taxpayers, as people who are paying for these surveys and the data to be collected, we deserve to know what is going on.

If Mr Barber wants to move a motion and if Mr Leane and Mr Viney want to support it, I suggest they get on the dog and bone and ring Canberra and ask the Prime Minister to release the many vaults of information she has, the surveys and data, on the impact of a carbon tax. While they are at it they might like to ask her why she advised Kevin Rudd against a carbon tax last year and why she is so keen about having one this year. Why has there been the big turnaround? Last year it was a no-no, but that might have been in the process of knifing him, of course, so that might be out of the equation.

Mrs Peulich — Bob is hanging around.

Mr FINN — Bob, yes.

Mr Ondarchie — He is coming back, though.

Mr FINN — He might be coming back, which I am sure gives a great deal of joy to every member of the Labor Party! Simon has the numbers, from what I am hearing. The Australian people have already made up their minds on this. They do not want a carbon tax. They are looking at what is happening in Canberra, the 18 bills that are being put up for debate this week, the closing down of the Parliament and the — I was going to say the prostitution — debasing of the democratic process by this federal government.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — No, the word 'prostitution' is a little close to home for at least one member. The Australian people are seeing what is happening in Canberra this week, and they are absolutely sickened by it. They have already made up their minds; they do not want a carbon tax, and the anger in the electorate is absolutely palpable. We have all heard the expression 'the

electorate is sitting on their verandas with baseball bats'. I reckon the next time they might have canons with which they will blow away the federal government. I have never seen people as angry as they are at the moment over the carbon tax that is being debated in the federal Parliament, probably as we speak.

This motion seeks information, but it does not go anywhere near far enough and is probably directed to the wrong place, because, as I said before, if members really want to know what is going on, there is a lot of information in Canberra that we would all love to see. That is being kept well hidden, well out of sight, by the Prime Minister and her deputy, Senator Brown, as they push ahead with this extraordinarily unpopular tax on everything, which will achieve absolutely nothing except a major recession in this country. This is a debate that will continue and should continue. I sincerely hope that as this week continues, the voice of every Australian is heard in the national capital.

Mr VINEY (Eastern Victoria) — Whenever Mr Finn speaks you do not quite know where to begin, but when he speaks for 40 minutes you have a lot of material. In many ways Mr Finn's contribution is indicative of a number of views held by the conservatives in this debate, which many of them are not prepared to express. What Mr Finn did was talk about the fact that he fundamentally does not believe that climate change is happening. That is the fundamental position from which Mr Finn operates. The fundamental flaw that was exposed in Mr Finn's contribution was his suggestion that carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere is what he called 'steam'. He said we should not be afraid of a little bit of steam going into the atmosphere. The staggering thing about Mr Finn's contribution is that he does not understand chemistry, just as Mr Ondarchie does not understand basic economics.

Mrs Petrovich — Would love to be educated!

Mr Ondarchie — This will fascinate me.

Mr VINEY — What are you suggesting, that I have no knowledge of economics? I am happy to have an economic debate with you any day. I am happy to put my credentials in terms of understanding the way the Australian economy works against yours, given what you exposed just a short while ago by way of interjection, suggesting that price has no effect on human behaviour.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuk) — Order! Through the Chair!

Mr VINEY — Thank you, Acting President, I should know better. Mr Ondarchie, by way of interjection, made a comment that the carbon tax will have no effect on behaviour, which was repeated by Mr Finn. You can only adopt that position — —

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr VINEY — I interjected on Mr Finn only once, so he might like to just listen to my response. Mr Ondarchie's position is that the carbon tax will not affect human behaviour. You can only adopt that position if you believe that price does not have an impact on demand. It is a clear nonsense.

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, Acting President, I ask that the member be asked not to verbal me, because that was an inaccurate representation of what I said. I have come to expect better from Mr Viney. That is not what I said by interjection at all.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuk) — Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr VINEY — Mr Ondarchie, by way of interjection, made the comment that a carbon tax will not affect human behaviour in relation to climate change. Mr Finn repeated that interjection in his contribution. You can only have that view if you do not believe there is a relationship between price and demand, which I find very strange because after all Adam Smith first documented the impact of price on demand in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* in 1776. It has been repeated by many economic theorists since then, not the least of whom was John Maynard Keynes.

If Mr Keynes were alive these days, Mr Ondarchie might like to have a debate with him on this matter, but if Mr Ondarchie does not want to read the *Wealth of Nations*, Keynes's theories of supply and demand, or any of the numerous economic texts that document and explain the relationship between supply and demand, he need only go back to his office or to one of the computers here in this chamber and type 'supply and demand' into Google and he will find Wikipedia will have an article on supply and demand. In that article will be a graph that will show price on the Y axis and quantity on the X axis. There will be a clear relationship on that graph between supply and demand — that is, between the price of a commodity and the quantity that will be demanded. That is the fundamental principle of supply and demand, and our economies in the Western world have been operating on this principle of supply and demand for centuries. The position of the Labor Party — —

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, President, I would not want Mr Viney to be inadvertently misleading the house this afternoon. By paraphrasing my interjection he completely missed out a part of it, and I would not want him to be misleading the house this afternoon.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! As I said before, Mr Ondarchie, that is not a point of order.

Mr VINEY — I will be very happy to listen to Mr Ondarchie's response if he wants to put his name down on the speaking list, but I would appreciate it if he would stop interrupting my contribution. We know that all Mr Ondarchie has to do is to look up Wikipedia and type in 'supply and demand' or 'price impacts on supply and demand', and he will get a very simply written article that explains it. He does not have to read the *Wealth of Nations*, which is not particularly complex; it is more of a paper than a book. He does not have to read the heavy tomes of John Maynard Keynes. He does not even have to read Karl Marx, who agreed with the principles of —

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr VINEY — Mrs Peulich clearly does not understand the whole history of economics, economic theory and philosophy and the importance of reading the full range of texts to be fully and thoroughly informed about how our market economies work. What I think Mr Ondarchie and Mr Finn have exposed more than anything in their contributions is the strange warp that has occurred in this debate. It appears to me that, despite the deniers on the other side, overall on the other side of politics there has been some kind of acceptance that there needs to be some action on climate change —

Mrs Peulich — Direct action.

Mr VINEY — Thank you, Mrs Peulich. The principle that the conservatives are arguing in this debate on climate change demonstrates the very strange warp that has occurred. The Labor Party policy on dealing with climate change is to do so through market economics.

Hon. W. A. Lovell — And job losses.

Mr VINEY — Ms Lovell, you do not know what you are talking about, so I would suggest you be quiet.

Mrs Peulich — That sounded like a very misogynist tone, didn't it?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! Interjections are unparliamentary, and I ask the speaker to address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr VINEY — The strange warp that has occurred in this debate has been a shift so that we now find that the Labor Party policy, supported by the Greens, is actually a market response to dealing with climate change. It works on the principle that the best and most effective way to deal with climate change — and this is outlined fairly comprehensively in Professor Garnaut's work — is to, at an early opportunity, give some price signals and costs to those who are emitting carbon into the atmosphere. Those price signals and costs will change behaviour. They will change behaviour in a number of ways. They will not only change behaviour in terms of consumer decision making based on the principles of supply and demand and the principles of Adam Smith, John Maynard Keynes and many others who have considered economic theory in some detail, but they will change the investment decisions of corporate Australia.

Those investment decisions will be based on where the capital that companies have to invest can be placed for maximum profitability. This policy will shift those investment decisions from high-polluting decisions to lower polluting decisions or non-polluting decisions. In areas like energy production decisions will be made about where the investment can be maximised by the price decisions that are, in part, influenced by the tax or pricing regimes that exist and by the cost of carbon that we as a community set through the actions of government.

We make decisions all the time in government about what we are going to offer in terms of discounts for investment and what we are going to increase in terms of costs of those investment decisions. Those decisions are made by governments every day, whether it be taxes on wage earners, corporate taxes, payroll taxes, goods and services taxes. There is a whole raft of things as a result of decisions the government makes in order to extract the best social benefit for the community. This is just a part of that array of decision making. Decision making will be influenced by the price of carbon, and that in turn will also influence the supply and demand for a raft of products and commodities in the marketplace.

Let me contrast that with the Liberal Party position. That is where the warp has really occurred, because the Liberal Party position is one of a command economy, one in which it will provide instructions to the markets as to what they can and cannot invest in and produce. This is the Soviet-style command economy. This is the

path the Liberal Party is going down. If you are not going to use the market mechanism, then you are left with what the government is calling direct action, but it is in actual fact a command decision where the government of the day makes determinations and decisions about what investors and decision-makers in corporate Australia can and cannot do.

The Labor Party is proposing a market response and the Liberal Party is proposing a Soviet-style command authority, which is an economic system that failed universally across the world. A really strange warp has occurred in this debate. When thinking about why this has occurred all one is left with is the thought that it is simply for a political, opportunistic reason. To me that is similar to the debate we had yesterday on home detention, which is an area where a policy decision is made not because it is going to change, alter or determine particular outcomes but to make a political point and take a political opportunity. That is what is happening with the Liberal Party's position in relation to climate change.

There are members of the far right of the Liberal Party who do not believe in climate change. I understand that, and some of them, such as Mr Finn, have the courage to stand up and say so. But for those of us who have followed this issue for some time — and some people have followed it in more detail than others; I have followed it fairly closely over the years — this is not something that is subject to controversy or debate any more.

In the 1970s Professor Ehrlich talked about his concerns on these matters. Some research done way before that in the 1960s, I believe, demonstrated there was a greenhouse effect caused by carbon pollution. The Club of Rome had a series of meetings of very senior researchers and academics who got together and expressed concerns about the levels of development across the world and the impacts it was going to have on the environment, particularly on the climate. These are things that have been debated for a long time. There is a universally accepted position that the climate is changing because of global warming, that that is clearly a direct result of human activity and that carbon is one of the most significant contributors to that human activity that is causing climate change.

For the sake of our children and grandchildren, we must act. Mr Finn talked about various costs; Ms Lovell interjected and talked about the costs of a carbon tax regime and an emissions trading scheme as we make the transition to that process. They talked about job losses and so on. This is nothing compared to the impact on this country and around the world if we do

not tackle climate change and start this process. This country absolutely has an obligation to be at the forefront of the process.

We cannot argue that countries like China and India should reduce their carbon emissions if we do not act. We cannot argue that countries of the developing world, starting from a lower base than western countries, should be expected to cut their emissions if western countries are not prepared to do so. It would be morally bankrupt to argue such a case. Yes, it has to be done globally and it has to be tackled in China, India and many countries, but we have an obligation to act, given our level of development, our level of opportunity and our level of advantage, which have all developed and occurred on the back of carbon emissions in this country. We are absolutely morally obligated to assist by leading the world on these matters.

Many other countries are joining in that process in Europe. In China there have been actions responding to climate change. For the Liberal Party to be suggesting that the solution is the Soviet-style command economy, where it gives instruction to corporate Australia as to what it can and cannot do in relation to carbon emissions, is a very strange economic warp that has occurred in politics.

In this debate all that is being asked is that the government release the information that it selectively released to the *Herald Sun*. Mr Finn talked about the Australian and Victorian people needing to know everything there was to know about climate change. We agree. That is why we are supporting Mr Barber's call for those documents to be released.

Let us put an end to this nonsense in this debate about the Labor and Greens position, which in the broader context of climate change and carbon emissions policy is attempting to bring a market-based approach to effect change. That is what it is trying to do: bring in a market-based approach to effect change. I would have thought people like Mr Finn and Mr Ondarchie, who would be strong advocates for market economies and capitalism, would be much more receptive to that kind of approach than they would be to the position that the Liberal Party has got itself in, where for political advantage it is effectively proposing a Soviet-style command-driven response to the issues of climate change.

The opposition is pleased to be supporting Mr Barber and the Greens in proposing that this information be released. We believe, of course, that over time there will be significant impacts of carbon pricing policies on

our economy. Of course there will be; that is the intent. The intent is to create a change where there are fewer carbon emissions and where we can effectively deal with climate change and its cause, which undeniably is human activity.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I am very pleased to rise to speak to Mr Barber's motion. I do so because, as other speakers in this chamber have said this afternoon, the carbon tax is an issue that is concerning many people not only here in Victoria but right around the country and in the wider Australian community. It is Mr Barber's federal leader, Senator Bob Brown, who has had a major input into the federal government's carbon tax policy. I thank Mr Barber for raising this issue and giving us the opportunity to debate the motion. This issue will have a very large impact on Victorian consumers, families and businesses and their employees.

I want to make just one point. I want to come back to Mr Leane's contribution, but before I do so I want to talk about some of Mr Viney's comments in his contribution. He talked about the most efficient use of capital to invest in relation to some renewable energy projects — that is what I think he was referring to — and about the market economy. I just wanted to draw the attention of the chamber to *Victorian Government Response to ENRC Final Report — Approval Processes for Renewable Energy Projects in Victoria*. It states under the heading 'Emerging renewable energy technologies' on page 26:

There are many emerging technologies in Australia showing long-term technical and commercial promise. At this point in time the short-term technology risk and relatively high costs of such technologies pose insurmountable barriers to most private investment.

That is quite a pertinent comment in this response document, and it is pertinent to Mr Viney's comments, because governments do have a responsibility to provide grants and to help various projects, but when they are insurmountable or high risk, then governments should act with caution. That response document also notes:

To accelerate market uptake of such technologies, the government is supporting projects through direct injections of project capital (grants).

Even though that is absolutely pertinent for a government to do at times, I think we need to be very cautious about the uptake of renewable energy and the impact that carbon pricing and other aspects will have on various industries.

I want to make a point in relation to what will be affected in Victoria. As Mr O'Donohue said, it is not only Victoria that has sought modelling but other states have as well — Queensland was one of the states — to see what the impacts will be. The Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources, Michael O'Brien, has warned that the speeding up of the closure of the Hazelwood power station and the introduction of a carbon price scheme will have a direct effect on our energy security, and ultimately that will have a direct effect on our manufacturing base and our businesses right across the board. It is not taking a practical and responsible approach to the whole question of what this carbon tax policy is about or how it will affect people, businesses and employees.

I also raise a point in response to Mr Leane's contribution. I have to agree with his comments about the pollution in Mexico City. He is absolutely right; that is real pollution. It is present in big cities like Beijing also. I have seen it firsthand, and it is extraordinary. That is genuine pollution. In fact it is the sulphur dioxide in that pollution that produces acid rain, as compared with carbon dioxide, which is a greenhouse gas, but it is an odourless and colourless atmospheric trace gas without which there would be no life on this planet.

I do not want to get lost in the science. I am no scientist in relation to this, but I think you have to go back to some basics. I know Ms Pennicuik said there are many scientists who support her argument, and I concur with that — there are many scientists who support her argument — but there are also many scientists who do not support that argument. To say carbon dioxide is a real pollutant is a gross distortion of the definition of what pollution is. I do not think carbon dioxide can be described as a pollutant. It is those anthropogenic or man-made emissions of carbon dioxide that constitute, I believe, less than 4 per cent of the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Again I have to go back to the point that there are real pollutants out there, but, as I think Mr Finn would agree, there are Al Gore's pollutants too.

Mr Barber interjected.

Ms CROZIER — As I said, I am no scientist, but these are some of the facts, Mr Barber. The other fact is that there will be job losses — no question — in relation to an increase in pricing and the effects on businesses and households. Those are the real people who will be hurt by the impost of a carbon price.

I will refer to the figures that were released through the Deloitte Access Economics modelling. I thank

Mr Barber for raising it, and I take this opportunity to go to that. An assessment by the local government area of the damaging effects of the carbon tax on Victoria shows that the carbon tax will reduce Victorian job growth by 24 311 jobs in 2015 and reduce Victorian output by \$2.8 million in 2015. In my area of Southern Metropolitan Region in the bayside local government area there will be a loss of 334 jobs by 2015. In Boroondara, job losses will be 926 by 2015; in Glen Eira, 420 job losses by 2015; in the city of Monash, 1034 jobs lost by 2015; in Port Phillip, 1083 job losses by 2015; and in the city of Stonnington, 695 job losses by 2015.

That is the modelling that has been put out there. That is what has been released, and they are the facts. We have been asked for the data, and quite rightly on this side the government is absolutely — —

Mr Barber — On a point of order, Acting President, Ms Crozier appears to be quoting from a document that may very well be the document that is the subject of this motion. If so, it would be a courtesy to the house if she were to table it.

Mrs Peulich — On the point of order, Acting President, I have been very closely observing Ms Crozier speak, and I have observed only a cursory reference to copious notes.

Ms CROZIER — I am happy to table the document from which I am reading, Acting President.

Mrs Petrovich — It is a press release from the Premier.

Ms CROZIER — I am happy to table it for Mr Barber. That is what I am quoting from, and that is page 26.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! On the point of order, there is no requirement, and there is no ability, for the member to table the document, but given that the member has indicated that she will tell us what document she has been quoting from, I think she should do so. I do not agree with Mrs Peulich; I saw Ms Crozier quoting quite extensively from the document.

Ms CROZIER — I am happy to say that my notes are here, and that I am also reading from a media release from the Premier's office dated Thursday, 18 August 2011. Just to return to what I was saying — —

Mr Barber — The member has not read the modelling.

Mrs Coote — It was very interesting, please keep going.

Ms CROZIER — I thank Mrs Coote. In response to Mr Barber, I think this information is showing the impact on constituents in my region who are going to be affected by this carbon tax policy. As a government we have a responsibility to give those constituents some form of information about impacts. We have heard what the health dollar impact is going to be on the major hospitals in our regions, and it was some weeks ago that I quoted that the Monash Medical Centre, Clayton, would have to pay an amount of \$660 000 per annum. That is what the figuring shows, and they are real costs to its bottom line that it somehow will have to find. That will have an impact on the delivery of services to the people that attend that hospital and that health service. So I think that in relation to what the government is doing we have put that modelling out there or, I should say to Mr Barber, we have released that data in relation to some of those figures. As Mr Finn has said, if the Prime Minister did the same, then we would have a truer insight into what the facts are going to be for the overall economy and for all Victorian and Australian families.

In conclusion, can I just say again, Acting President, that I would support Mr O'Donohue's response in relation to this, and I would not oppose either your amendment or Mr Barber's motion. But I also want to say that it will have a cost on jobs and should this policy be taken through the federal Parliament it will put more pressure on families and households.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — Thank you for the call, Acting President, and I apologise for the fact that you are going to have to do some penance in that chair as I make a very brief contribution in response to Mr Barber's motion. I have sat here for nearly 2½ hours now listening to contributions from both sides of the house, and I find it interesting that on the opposition side what we say is considered nonsense and yet, particularly in reference to Mr Viney, what he says has some economic credibility because of his long experience with and knowledge of economics — which apparently no members have on this side of the chamber. In fact I think it was suggested that it was 'all nonsense' from this side, but we will take that reference as we see fit.

In my contribution to the debate I want to get back to where it all started. In a previous role I have long been involved in discussions about a proposed emissions trading scheme at a national level — if people can remember back that far. We went to and fro for nearly one and a half years on an appropriate model for a

national standard of trading carbon between industries. Sadly, no-one else wanted to trade with us; we were going to do it all by ourselves. In Australia we were going to put a carbon tax on, and see who would trade with us.

Mr Barber — The VFF signed on to it.

Mr RAMSAY — No, the Victorian Farmers Federation does not sign on to any national framework, the National Farmers Federation would do that. Sadly, like many of the other failures of the federal government it went into the trash bin, but up popped a carbon pollution reduction scheme, the CPRS. Initially I thought this was a medical term for something that runs around the back of an ambulance that keeps us all alive. But no, it was a carbon pollution reduction scheme.

Again the federal government could not get bipartisan support or industry support and could not even get union support. So where did the CPRS end up? It ended with Kevin Rudd and a knife in his back, and of course the new prime minister was trotted out. Ms Julia Gillard said there would be no carbon tax for Australia. She wanted to confer, so what did she do? She set up a citizen's assembly — can you remember that? She said, 'We will ask the Australian community what it thinks about reducing greenhouse gas emissions in this country'. The fact is it never got off the ground. It was about as successful as the 2020 Summit that Kevin Rudd convened to confer with the Australian community, and of course absolutely nothing came out of that sham.

I am also reminded that we had the green loans scheme, which was scrapped. We had the cash for clunkers scheme, which was scrapped. We had the solar rebate scheme, which was reduced. We had the pink batts scheme to help us reduce our energy needs.

Mr Scheffer — And it did so!

Mr RAMSAY — It created more fires than it put out, Mr Scheffer. Sadly many small businesses all over Australia went broke and people became unemployed because of that sham.

The point I am making is that we cannot trust the federal government to provide us with a policy that helps reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. I am not getting into a philosophical argument about climate change; we all have a view about that. It is sad that members on the opposition side of the house think that whatever views we on this side of the chamber might have are nonsense, yet whatever views they might have

have some economic and scientific credibility. That is about where the argument is placed.

Mr Scheffer interjected.

Mr RAMSAY — What is important, Mr Scheffer, at this point of time is that we have the federal government now discussing 18 bills in relation to a carbon tax rolled up into one. Can anyone tell me where is the fair and democratic process in having 18 bills wrapped up into one to try to stifle debate in relation to what is probably the most critical and costly piece of legislation we are likely to have in this country?

The other important thing to note is that if the bill is passed, or the group of 18 bills is passed, and the legislation goes through, we will have it forever. The minor Greens will have the balance of power in the Senate and any change of government opposed to the bill will not be able to make any legislative changes. That will be a fact of life of politics in Canberra if this legislation is passed.

I have to say that this is not Labor government policy, this is Greens policy in relation to the carbon tax, because we had the Prime Minister saying that there would be no carbon tax and what she was doing was foreshadowing Labor Party policy. But the Greens obviously used their influence in relation to the new policy set by the new Prime Minister after the election to say that we will now have a carbon tax. Modelling by Deloitte Access Economics shows that the carbon tax will 'damage the Victorian economy' — I am quoting from a press release, just in case there is any further inquiry in relation to documentation that might well have not been given to this Parliament — and 'hurt Victorian jobs'. I am particularly concerned about that because there are three significant regional cities in my region: Ballarat, Geelong and Warrnambool.

I also in my past life have represented farmers. They are not squatters, as Mr Lenders for some reason always seems to refer to them. I am not quite sure whether it is a slight against food producers across Victoria or merely just a smart, snide comment that he feels will denigrate me or anyone else who tries to make a living off the land. But he is enjoying the terminology, so be it, and I am sure that at some point someone will take the opportunity to challenge him on it. There is no doubt that we will be impacted by a carbon tax, and I say 'we' as a food producer in Victoria. The impact might not be direct, but it will be through the inputs we use in our farming businesses, whether that be fertiliser, fuel or electricity, as it will be for all other families across Victoria. This will happen

nationally as well. This is not a state issue; it is a national issue.

I particularly refer to Geelong, which is in my electorate of Western Victoria Region, and the impact that a carbon tax will have on the city of Greater Geelong and more particularly on the employment and manufacturing industries. I am surprised that Richard Marles, the federal member for Corio; Darren Cheeseman, the federal member for Corangamite; Ian Trezise, the state member for Geelong in the Legislative Assembly; and John Eren, the state member for Lara in the Legislative Assembly, were all happy to sit by and not say a word about what impact this carbon tax will have on Geelong and Geelong manufacturing. Information tells us that the cost and impact of a carbon tax on manufacturing in Geelong will be over \$100 million.

Mr Scheffer — Have you assessed the benefits?

Mr RAMSAY — Over \$100 million, Mr Scheffer, will be the cost of outputs to manufacturing in the city of Greater Geelong with the impost of a carbon tax. I have to say that most of the modelling has been done on the basis of \$20 a tonne, which, as I understand it, is conservative in case there is a price greater than \$20 a tonne, which has been foreshadowed already. The modelling is very understated in relation to the impact the carbon tax could have, so I cannot understand and I ask why communities, particularly in the city of Greater Geelong, are not holding those sitting Labor members to account in relation to what is and will be a huge and significant impact on the manufacturing cities of Geelong.

Likewise I ask why the communities of Ballarat are not putting the sitting Labor members for Ballarat East and Ballarat West in the Legislative Assembly — and I refer to Sharon Knight and Geoff Howard, on notice for allowing their federal party to introduce a carbon tax that will have a significant impact on jobs and manufacturing industries in Ballarat, which are desperately needed to generate the wealth and prosperity of that region.

I promised the Acting President I would be brief, and I will try my very best to do that. We are holistically taking the approach that we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and I do not think it could be argued that any party, whether it be in federal or state politics, would not agree that we should make some effort to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, but it has been said by previous contributors to the debate that our greenhouse gas output, whether it is 1 per cent or 1.5 per cent, is a very small percentage on a global

scale. Australia has approximately 22 million people, and we rely on our export markets for our wealth. If we, as proposed, introduce a carbon tax, even if it is on the 500 heaviest identified polluters, this will have a significant impact on our ability to compete in a global market.

Iceland is the only country with greenhouse gas emissions that are less than Australia's, so what are we trying to do and what are we trying to prove? A greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 5 per cent less by 2020. Mr Viney talked about a market-driven exercise to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but that is not quite true. We are actually creating a market cost to drive different behaviours as against the coalition's model of direct action where incentives are applied right across the spectrum to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions without the cost to industry, without the cost to jobs, without the cost to families and without the impact, while being able to achieve a similar result.

We have heard from Mr Finn about what impact a carbon tax would have globally on greenhouse gas emissions, sea levels, temperature and the environment. Even Mr Scheffer will not be alive to see what impact if any — up or down, whether it is a carbon tax or direct action — there will be on greenhouse gas emissions or on temperature or sea level rises. Do members know what the prediction is? It is 50 years, 100 years or 1000 years. Even Mr Scheffer, with the elixir of youth, will not live to see any impact of what we might do in relation to reducing greenhouse gas emissions —

Mr Scheffer interjected.

Mr RAMSAY — You might feel better, but the fact is you will not see any significant impact.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! Through the Chair, please.

Mr RAMSAY — I am sorry?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! Speak through the Chair and not directly to Mr Scheffer.

Mr RAMSAY — We are at a point where I believe we need further information on what impact a carbon tax will have. I agree with Mr Barber, and my understanding is that the coalition encourages more data in relation to the impact of a carbon tax on jobs and employment. What I do not agree with is the dismissive nature of those people who oppose a carbon tax, and we have seen evidence of that in this chamber today. There has been a total dismissal of the impact of a carbon tax on Australian communities, Australian

families, Australian food producers and Australian farm businesses. It is that dismissive-type of reflection of the impact of the coalition's policy that is of great concern to me.

While speaking of Geelong, I record that I am reading this from the internet. It states:

The Geelong Manufacturing Council has called for urgent action to boost confidence and investment in the sector as the federal government pushes ahead with its carbon tax legislation.

I guess it is on the basis that there is a fear and a lack of confidence that this federal government has the capacity to provide a policy to the Australian people that will not reflect badly on their families and communities. You could cite any sorts of examples, and I went through a few just prior to making my contribution, of policies that have failed in trying to introduce a model, a structure, a tax or a piece of legislation that will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. It is no wonder businesses do not have confidence in a Gillard-Brown Labor government that is trying to introduce a carbon tax on the basis that it will drive the behaviour of heavy polluters but will not represent an inherent cost to families right across this nation. It is just a nonsense — I am using the tone of Mr Viney, and I should stand accountable for that as well. Everyone is entitled to a view, whether it is right or wrong.

Mr Barber — You were reading off the internet?

Mr RAMSAY — No, I was not reading off the internet. I do not have a laptop here, Mr Barber. It is a piece of paper.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr RAMSAY — I am reading it. I photocopied it from the internet.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr RAMSAY — Do you want me to repeat it? It states:

The Geelong Manufacturing Council has called for urgent action to boost confidence and investment in the sector as the federal government pushes ahead with its carbon tax legislation.

That is what I said, Mr Barber. I cannot believe that there are sitting Labor members in Geelong, including two federal members, in Darren Cheeseman and Richard Marles, who are laughing and saying, 'All will be right. We will put wind farms all across Australia. That will fix it — —

Mr Finn — What sort of farms?

Mr RAMSAY — Wind farms — turbines. Mr Tee laughs and says, 'I'm all right in suburban Melbourne. I won't have a turbine in my backyard, but you can all have turbines in your backyards — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! I know people have ranged far and wide during this debate, which is a simple documents motion, but I think Mr Ramsay is straying into and foreshadowing another motion on the notice paper, and I suggest he not do that. He should stick to the current motion.

Mr RAMSAY — Acting President, I was actually warming up for the next session, but I take on board your direction. The irony is that we have a carbon tax being delivered to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on what is supposed to be 500 of the heaviest polluters in Australia when, as I understand it, we are the only country in the world that is introducing such a tax on a population of 22 million people who produce 1 per cent or 1.5 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. Our senior trading partners in the United States of America, China and India do not have any tax that would provide an uncompetitive advantage in the marketplace. Why on earth are we doing it to ourselves?

On the other hand, we have the only renewable energy policy that the Labor Party and the Greens have given any credibility to, which is wind generation. I take the Acting President's point; we are going to come to that discussion, and I cannot wait. I am looking forward to that discussion on the next item. The laughable thing is that the turbines are built in China and Korea, which are the very countries that the Labor Party has identified as being the heaviest polluters. Those countries use their own workers but use the argument that they provide jobs in regional Australia when in fact most of the components are made by our heaviest polluters that do not have a carbon tax. Can members make sense of that?

The only renewable energy policy that has any sort of credibility in the Labor Party, as I understand, is on wind generation, which is heavily subsidised and requires significant Australian tax dollars to support what is an unviable industry and is likely to be so for the next 20 years against a tax that is going to create a heavy financial burden for every man, woman and child in Australia. That does not make sense to me, and it does not make sense to many Australians. That is why we do not have confidence in the federal Labor government at this time.

In closing, my summary remarks would be that I agree we need modelling and information. We need to be very clear what the impost of a carbon tax will be. I represent Western Victoria Region, which includes three major regional cities that are all dependent on a solid and growing manufacturing industry that creates jobs for families who live in those regions.

Mrs PETROVICH (Northern Victoria) — I am really pleased to speak on the motion today. From the outset I should say that we are not opposing it and we are not opposing the amendment. I am pleased to speak on the motion moved by the Greens on the basis that I think we have had a wide-ranging and enlightening discussion today. I think it has really set the tone for where we are, and it has perhaps shown how a misconstrued idea can lead people a very long way from where they need to be in looking at the issue at hand, which is climate change and reduction of carbon dioxide (CO₂). A tax does nothing to reduce CO₂ emissions. A tax is just a cheap grab for cash.

It is very good that the Greens have today requested this information, because it is probably the very first time they have acknowledged the costs and impacts of carbon pricing on employment in Victoria, and it may be the first time they have acknowledged it nationally as well. This is in spite of the fact that they requested this matter be listed and the information presented yesterday and that they make so much of the fact that information has been passed on to the media, which in my view is called 'news'. Governments have a responsibility to inform communities, particularly of things that directly impact on their lives and livelihoods.

Mr Barber — Shout it from the rooftops. Where is the report?

Mrs PETROVICH — Mr Barber, I will be shouting it from the rooftops. Another very good reason why Mr Barber's motion today is useful for the community that I represent is that those people have every right to know the impact of this ill-conceived carbon tax. They have every right to understand how this tax has been supported by the Labor-Greens coalition in a cobbled-together format and how it provides very little benefit in terms of its purported aims. It is very important to highlight that the report that Mr Barber is so intent on getting his mitts on found that the carbon price could cost 2300 jobs in Victoria. It also found that the economic output would be reduced by \$2.8 billion in 2015 and \$3.7 billion in 2030.

Victorians and Australians are very concerned about this carbon tax. They have been speaking out publicly

very loudly. The concern is reflected in the Labor-Greens coalition's polling. The carbon tax is something that will impact on all Victorians and all Australians. It will have an economic impact and ripple effect on the lives of all Australians. This discussion has been all about this must-have carbon tax — the tax that the Prime Minister said we were not going to have. I believe it has switched the conversation of Australians away from the real issue at hand. It is an agenda that will cost the environment dearly. We should be talking about reducing our carbon footprint.

Mr Barber — We should be.

Mrs PETROVICH — We should be, Mr Barber, but unfortunately we have been dragged into a conversation which has taken over. It is a conversation about a carbon tax that is going to cost people jobs, which Mr Barber obviously does not care about. It will be very damaging to the Australian community and economy.

I would like to highlight some issues around Julia Gillard's carbon tax, which is supported and fostered by the Labor-Greens coalition — the alliance. It has switched people off the environment and reducing CO₂. It has become unpalatable to talk about those issues because of people's fear of what it is going to cost and mean to their families. The public knows this is a cheap grab for cash, and it could not happen at a worse time, with a rebound from the global financial crisis and a global economic perspective that has probably never been worse.

As I go on with my contribution I would like to highlight some of the issues being faced by industries and reflect on a document that was tabled in the last Parliament, which was a report on an inquiry by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee (ENRC) into soil carbon sequestration in Victoria. There has been a lot of chat around steam, smoke plumes, people's views and how wrong you can be, but there has been very little science put forward today. ENRC is an all-party committee. I thought Mr Viney was on the previous committee. Unfortunately he did not stay for the duration of debate — in fairness, I think he had other commitments — but after listening to his contribution today it would probably have been good if he had stayed on.

ENRC's report highlighted some of the issues around carbon sequestration from the perspective of agriculture. Soil carbon sequestration is being advocated by some policy-makers and scientists as an important strategy to mitigate climate change. The sequestration of carbon in soil also has a range of

potential environmental and agricultural benefits. We had a parliamentary briefing on this topic a couple of sitting weeks ago which highlighted a report that was brought to that committee. Things have not changed in the 14 months since that report was first issued, and we have not advanced on some of the key points. There are still no answers for or responses to people in agriculture, who are expected to shoulder much of this burden by sequestering carbon.

The Environment and Natural Resources Committee's report, which was interesting to trot around, highlights where we have now come to. We have had this push for carbon sequestration. We looked at the work that was being done by the scientific community, both in Victoria and Australia wide. There was lots of good work going on in pockets, but none of it had ever been brought together. The federal government does not seem to have advanced that cause very much since then.

The report talks about the significant challenges associated with measuring soil carbon sequestration. It talks about the claims being made about the ability of some management practices to sequester soil carbon. It talks about potential conflicts between soil carbon sequestration and agricultural productivity, and it also talks, importantly, about the risk faced by land managers and farmers of participating in a carbon trading scheme or alternative incentive mechanisms established to encourage soil carbon sequestration and about the economic cost of adopting land uses and management practices to sequester soil carbon. I think the public needs to know this, and this government was very right to make sure that that report was released to the community.

The recommendations in the report are also interesting, if anyone cares to look at them. They talk about the various types of sequestration and the impact on farmers and what they need to do to take the burden off many of us who do not live in rural communities and who are producing the rump of CO₂. Some really interesting points are made, highlighting the difficulties of measuring soil carbon sequestration. Technologies exist to accurately measure the amount of soil carbon in a soil sample, and there is direct measurement of soil carbon. The report also talks about differences in soils and about naturally occurring CO₂.

We seem to have lost our way on the real issues and where we should be — which is going back to the science and not rushing headlong into a carbon tax. We should be looking at practical ways that both industry and communities can reduce their CO₂ emissions without cost implications and without creating an

uneven economic playing field for Victorians and Australians.

I would like to talk about some of the statistics around the impacts of a carbon tax and what it will actually mean to my electorate of Northern Victoria Region. In 2015 in Benalla there would be a deficit of \$5 367 629 and in Gannawarra there would be an economic impact of \$2 660 891. In 2015 in the city of Greater Bendigo there would be an impact of \$54 653 304 and a loss of 489 jobs. In 2015 in the city of Hume there would be a \$77 585 860 cost impact and the loss of 494 jobs. In 2015 in the Macedon Ranges it would be \$13 049 462 and 115 jobs. In a small community like Mansfield the impact would be \$3 721 270 and the loss of 33 jobs. In Mildura it would be \$20 245 027 and the loss of 154 jobs. In Mitchell shire it would be \$11 656 373 and the loss of 104 jobs. In Mount Alexander shire there would be a dollar value loss of \$4 586 691 and the loss of 30 jobs. In Strathbogie it would be \$1 213 660, and in Swan Hill it would be \$7 290 979 with the loss of 46 jobs. In little Towong it would be \$1 118 717 with the loss of 3 jobs — which does not sound like much, but Towong is a very small community. In West Wimmera it would be \$77 696 and the loss of 9 jobs. In Wodonga it would be \$20 883 034 and 175 jobs. I have to say those figures resonate with me and with those communities.

I am pleased that we have had this discussion today. It is an important thing to have done. It is clear there are different philosophical reasons why people want a carbon tax. For many people in the chamber it has become, I suppose, more about them than about what their community really needs and about solving the issues of global warming, or CO₂ emissions. Yes, the Liberal Party does have a variance of views on these issues. We listen to each other, and we develop policy around what is best and what best represents our community, but we certainly do not have the view that because we have a different opinion we are wrong. I have to say that was something that was clear today, particularly in Mr Viney's contribution — that if you have a different view, you are wrong. I thought that was an interesting contribution. I also thought Mr Leane's contribution was quite extraordinary, but not for all the right reasons.

I hope these figures are enlightening. It is a good thing for this chamber to explore them. I think the community is very switched on to the effects of a carbon tax and to the fact that there has been very little consideration of where Victoria sits in the global economy, of where Australia sits in the global economy or of how such a tax is going to impact on all of us.

I will finish there. I am sure there are other speakers who would like to make some contributions. It is important to know that there is much work to be done before we jump headlong into a situation that cannot be unwound. In my opinion there are many questions which remain unanswered. In many ways, the setting of a carbon price is not sufficient and we need to look at what farmers in particular would need to do to make the sorts of changes that are being proposed. At this stage are there any answers on what impact a carbon tax will have on world food security and where we sit as a food-producing country? There are many issues that we need to look at, including how the impact of a lack of viable alternative energy solutions will pan out. The work needs to continue for that to evolve. If we rush into this, we will certainly repent at leisure.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I will make some fairly brief remarks, I hope, because I think most of the arguments against the carbon tax and in particular against its implementation at this point in time have been well canvassed. All I can do is perhaps bring a little bit of grassroots reality to the debate — that is, that in our context a carbon tax is seen to be toxic to voters, toxic to the economy and certainly toxic to the ALP, and it will kill off the Greens. The debate today has been very useful in that it has allowed the relative sides to air their opinions and engage in the debate.

Basically I think people understand it. They do not trust modelling. It does not matter who has prepared it; all they know is that, unfortunately, as things work, especially under Labor governments, things cost them more and they get less for it. They are very circumspect and very suspicious of anything that is cloaked or veiled as anything else but what it is. People understand that the carbon tax may have questionable environmental benefits — I am not talking about the science, but the carbon tax — and that there are myriad other ways of looking after our environment. I am certainly a great proponent of that. They understand that a carbon tax will have a punishing effect on household budgets, and they cannot afford it.

Mr Viney went to great lengths to explain to Mr Ondarchie the laws of demand and supply, and in doing so he admitted that a carbon tax is going to hurt. It will hurt householders, because the most important way they can save money is by keeping air conditioners and heaters turned off when they need them to be on. We can imagine how many pensioners and self-funded retirees, who may be asset rich but money poor, will be spending their time in shopping centres where it is warmer in winter and cooler in summer. They are very critical of the carbon tax. If they have the opportunity to

vote on it, the Gillard federal Labor government and the Greens will be out the door. Labor members will be trying desperately to save the rump of their political party.

People understand a carbon tax will have a huge impact on industry and in particular on small business. Small business is the driver of the economy. It provides 52 per cent of employment in Australia, and it provides employment in Victoria, but it will get no compensation whatsoever. Under Labor more and more small businesses will hit the wall and go down the gurgler. That is exactly what small business has learnt to expect under Labor governments. Many businesses will become extinct. This is of particular concern in my electorate of South Eastern Metropolitan Region. I declare a conflict of interest: my husband has a small manufacturing business. He has said he doubts there will be a future in it if the carbon tax is introduced as things stand.

In the south-east people are horrified at the prospect of a carbon tax. Labor members of Parliament, especially federal ones, are as welcome in workplaces and places like the Dandenong headquarters of the South East Melbourne Manufacturers Alliance (SEMMA) as flies at a barbecue. I attended the organisation's recent eighth annual general meeting with Victorian Liberal Senator Mitch Fifield; the member for Warrandyte in the Assembly, Ryan Smith; and the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Richard Dalla-Riva. I understand the federal member for Isaacs, Mark Dreyfus, attended part of the meeting as well, but he took the first opportunity to leave.

I have flicked through SEMMA's report on that meeting. I note that in part of that report, the executive officer's report 2010–11, the executive officer, Paul Dowling, said at page 1:

Various meetings were conducted with state and federal government and opposition representatives to provide feedback as well as identify opportunities for SEMMA to contribute further to the future direction of manufacturing. I have been disappointed in my ability to engage with some federal government representatives over the past 12 months but will continue in my endeavours in this regard.

Federal Labor politicians are not doing what they need to — that is, talking to industry, small business and workers whose jobs will be sacrificed on the altar of the carbon tax.

In addition to the huge additional cost of the carbon tax to the budget, it would place enormous budgetary pressure on various state services including education, transport and health services, so Victorians will get a double whammy. This is not to mention the

compounding impact it will have on various local government services. Most importantly, the carbon tax will destroy jobs. Unemployment is probably the single most important factor in causing a community or a family to become impoverished. No other factor is as important as having a job. I am concerned at the number of jobs that will be lost in South Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Because we were entering into another Labor spin cycle federally, with Julia Gillard telling us before she was elected that there was not going to be a carbon tax under any government she led — and we are now all looking down the barrel of a carbon tax — the Victorian coalition government felt compelled to consider the interests of Victorians through the commissioning of economic modelling by Deloitte Access Economics. The resultant document, which has in part been released by the government, shows that the Gillard government's carbon tax will damage the Victorian economy and hurt Victorian jobs.

In a press release dated 18 August the Premier, who has been leading the debate at the Council of Australian Governments, referred to the figures released in part of that report of an assessment by local government area of the damaging effect the carbon tax would have in Victoria. Those figures show that the carbon tax will reduce Victorian job growth by 24 311 jobs in 2015 and reduce Victorian output by \$2.8 billion in 2015. The press release quotes the Premier as saying:

The Gillard government's carbon tax will hit Victoria hard, damaging jobs, increasing the cost of living, undermining the reliability of power supplies and hurting our state's economy.

In the current uncertain climate, when the retailing sector is anxious and the entire economy is nervous — not to mention the international uncertainty — it is not the time to proceed with a carbon tax. If Julia Gillard and her government proceed with this, they will be left a rump. I make this forecast: no Labor-held seat with a margin of under 13 per cent will survive — —

Mr Barber — In Victoria?

Mrs PEULICH — In Victoria. This means that Mark Dreyfus, the federal Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, whose responsibility it is to sell a carbon tax to the community and whose electorate of Isaacs covers the most industrialised part of Victoria and the second-most industrialised part of Australia, will be a cooked goose. It does not matter to him, because he is a wealthy lawyer who lives in Malvern, nowhere near his electorate, and he has little empathy for the workers of Isaacs, who live in Carrum Downs and in the Assembly

electorates of Carrum, Mordialloc and Cranbourne and rarely see him. Just recently he announced he would conduct mobile meetings with constituents. After getting two boos from the first two constituents, one on the carbon tax and the other on the ban on live exports, he packed up and did not even turn up at the next destination, so he is not particularly welcome at the moment.

Mr Barber — That's the advantage of being mobile.

Mrs PEULICH — It is very much that. Unfortunately if you advertise that you are going to be somewhere, guess what? They expect you to front up. More specifically, on behalf of the electorate I represent, I am interested in and concerned about the modelling by Deloitte Access Economics showing that over 3100 jobs in the South Eastern Metropolitan Region will be lost by 2015. Specifically in the city of Casey, which covers the Assembly seats of Narre Warren North, Narre Warren South and Cranbourne, the modelling shows there will be a loss of 600 jobs.

That area is represented by Luke Donnellan, Judith Graley and Jude Perera, the members for Narre Warren North, Narre Warren South and Cranbourne respectively in the Assembly. What have we heard from those members on the issue of the carbon tax and the loss of 600 jobs in the city of Casey? Zilch — not a word. For 11 years, or however long they were in government, they sat quietly on a range of issues affecting those electorates. It has only been since the change of government that they have rediscovered their voices, and now they are busy activating petitions. They are suddenly trying to tune in with a community from which they have been disconnected for some time, but do they want to talk about the carbon tax and the loss of jobs? Not on your nelly! There will be 600 jobs lost in the city of Casey. This community in particular is highly mortgaged, so household budgets are very tight. Money may not be an object to people like Mr Donnellan, who lives in East Melbourne, or Ms Graley, who lives in Mornington, but it is very important to the constituents they represent in the Assembly of this Parliament, and every dollar counts.

According to this modelling there will be a loss of 446 jobs in the city of Frankston. The people of Frankston cannot afford a loss of jobs and a loss of industry — in fact they are trying to attract some, so this is not good news for them. I know Geoff Shaw, the member for Frankston in the Assembly, is certainly raising lots of concerns and has been meeting with community members and listening to their concerns and fears.

The city of Greater Dandenong is going to be very heavily hit, with a loss of 498 jobs by 2015, not to mention the significant decline in output that has also been forecast. What do we hear from those members of Parliament, in particular the federal member for Bruce? Not a word. All I have heard is that he is planning to retire, and that is probably a very good idea because at the moment he is sitting on 3 per cent and based on my forecast of a hit of up to 13 per cent, he will be gone. If the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and the Labor government implement a carbon tax, the member for Bruce can kiss his political career goodbye.

The same would apply in the city of Kingston, where Mark Dreyfus is sitting on 13 per cent. It might sound like a big margin, but as he is the parliamentary secretary tasked with selling the carbon tax, let me say that his political future is going to be cut short. The forecast net loss of jobs in the city of Kingston by 2015 is 524 jobs. That is a loss of jobs that we cannot endure. We ought to be looking at growing jobs, not destroying them.

The city of Monash, as was mentioned by Mr Barber — I must thank Mr Barber for the opportunity to lay out and focus on some of these figures in this debate — is going to be very dramatically impacted upon. It will suffer the third-highest impact of all local government areas with a loss of 1034 jobs. The city of Monash in the federal Parliament is largely represented by Anna Burke, the member for Chisholm. With such a huge and dramatic impact of the carbon tax and the toxic nature of the carbon tax on voter sentiment as reflected in the polls, Anna Burke — who has serviced the electorate quite well — will be obliterated politically. I am not surprised that Anna Burke is now contemplating retirement and that the young guns, both male and female, especially in and around the Monash council, are gearing up trying to find a successor, because she knows that her political — —

Mr Barber interjected.

Mrs PEULICH — It is an opportunity, isn't it?

Mr Barber interjected.

Mrs PEULICH — They will lose it. If they go to the election with a carbon tax, those seats will most definitely be lost.

Mr Scheffer interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Crozier) — Order! Mr Scheffer! Through the Chair!

Mrs PEULICH — The immediate problem is that when you are talking about compensation you are actually admitting there will be hurt which needs to be remedied. The one assumption and faith that one must have when talking about compensation packages is the belief that, as untruthful as the Gillard government has been, the Gillard government will somehow continue with compensation packages in the future. The Prime Minister obviously cannot lie straight in bed; she cannot be believed for a moment when it comes to the carbon tax. Whether or not the compensation will continue in the future is certainly very questionable.

Most of all, those who will not be compensated are those in small business, and by its voting for the carbon tax and being silent on the carbon tax, we know the Labor Party does not like small business. If small business goes to the wall, the Labor Party will probably be secretly applauding, because those in small business — the independent-minded owners and operators who typically work in small business — are generally not those who the Labor Party can easily unionise. That is why it has never really had much empathy for small business, and it will certainly not be sorry to see it fall to its knees, which is what the carbon tax will certainly do to small business.

There will be a dramatic impact on the city of Monash, with over 1034 jobs lost. By 2015 there will be a total loss of in excess of 3100 jobs in South Eastern Metropolitan Region and a diminution and decline of over \$389 million in output. It is a travesty and certainly not something that Victoria and Australia need, not at this point in time — and in my view, not ever. The Labor Party will hurtle towards passing legislation to implement a carbon tax and hurtle toward its own political oblivion. I support any other revelation or release of documents which supports this case and which gives voters a greater voice, because the Gillard government has lied to voters. The state Labor Party is aiding and abetting that lie, and the sooner it has the opportunity to make its views known, the better. May democracy prevail.

Mr ELSBURY (Western Metropolitan) — I rise this afternoon as a member of Parliament for the western suburbs concerned about what the future holds for the western suburbs should a carbon tax be implemented. I have no problem with the information which is sought by this motion being made available. It should be made available to everyone so they can see the impact of the carbon tax on their community.

I also put it out there that I am not a climate change denier. I say to people who claim I deny climate change that I do not deny climate change one little bit. In fact

the climate has been changing for billions of years. If we want to get into human history, Greenland was named Greenland for a reason — it was green and you could crop the place two times a year; you could grow wheat. The Thames River was recorded as freezing over in 1683 and 1684. During that time there was a massive famine right across Europe, which was caused by cold weather patterns. This happens. It gets cold, it gets hot and it gets cold again. We experience it here in Australia, just a little bit more acutely. We have droughts and then we have floods, droughts and then floods. It is constant and always changing; it is organic.

Moving on to the debate on the motion about the impact of the introduction of a carbon tax, as my fellow contributors have pointed out, we are talking about Australia's contribution to what are called greenhouse gases as being 1 per cent of the global output. We are talking about reducing 5 per cent of that 1 per cent, which seems to be a very small amount considering the events that are going on around the world and the growing economies of China and India, which are pumping out billions of tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere. Australia, with a relatively clean economy, is going to stymie itself in favour of other global economies that are not going to do anything about their carbon emissions. We are going to nobble ourselves and allow other economies to take over the production that we ourselves will not be able to sustain because the jobs will not be there; the jobs will dry up and disappear.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ELSBURY — I thank members for the interjections that are now coming my way. It seems that in this day and age if you question anything to do with a carbon tax, you are burnt at the stake — although that would release carbon, so I gather that would not be allowed to happen. I would have to be sequestered in the ground in some way or another.

Hysteria is being pushed around the world by those on the left side of politics. Hollywood is even getting on the bandwagon with *The Day After Tomorrow*, which is a film about a massive climate disaster caused by our horrible western decadent society. It is complete bunkum. More carbon is being released by China and India than has ever been released by the West.

I took up Mr Viney's offer to Mr Finn earlier on, in that I did go and have a look at *Wikipedia*. Carbon is a colourless and odourless gas, which is exactly the point that Mr Finn was trying to make earlier with his analogy about turning on the kettle and watching the steam. We can see steam and water vapour; they are

called clouds and they happen all the time.

Condensation of water in its gaseous state is a cloud. That is what happens. We see horrible pictures of the Latrobe Valley with massive plumes going up into the air, but 9 times out of 10 it is not carbon dioxide but steam from the cooling towers of the power stations. If you look at a nuclear power station, which last time I checked does not put out any carbon dioxide, you see the same steam coming off similarly designed cooling towers. Emotive images of steam coming off cooling towers from power stations are being used as part of a complete fallacy put out there by the left and by certain people who want to promote this dream that we are currently dealing with a crisis that we are going to solve with a tax.

There is also the issue of global temperatures. I have seen information in the past from a gentleman by the name of Ray Evans, a geologist who decided to study core samples taken from the Arctic and the Antarctic which have been used to demonstrate the amount of damage that is being caused to the environment. Mr Evans points out that in the last 25 years terrestrial temperature measurements have gone up by 0.5 of a degree. Yet if we look at the satellite information from 1979 until 2000 — a relatively similar period — we see that the temperature has actually gone down or remained constant, depending on which set of data you look at. Who do we believe? Is the temperature going up, are we all going to boil or is it relatively stable?

We have established that the climate changes, it is dynamic and it is not stable, and it is not as if we can turn the dial down and suddenly we will cool down or we can turn it up to heat the climate up. It is a dynamic environment; it changes all the time. If we asked a dinosaur what it thought about the weather in Melbourne, it would say, 'It's a bit nippy, actually'. We had great chunks of France under water for thousands of millions of years, then all of sudden we had lush, green forests and then the temperature dropped down again and it turned into a coalfield. These things happen; the climate changes. The planet is always changing, and the climate is always changing.

The issue we now have before us is about jobs and the impact that a carbon tax would have on the livelihoods of many thousands of people right across Victoria. Of deep concern to me is the jobs that will be lost in the western suburbs. My friends, family members and neighbours will lose their jobs because of a carbon tax that will achieve nothing. Some 5 per cent of 1 per cent of the global carbon emissions are basically what I would call nothing. We are looking at a loss of 1753 jobs across the western suburbs until 2015, should this carbon tax be introduced — that is, 1753 jobs will

be lost if a carbon tax is introduced by the Gillard-Brown federal government. That will mean people will not be able to provide for their families. They will not be able to give their kids the education they want to give them. They will not be able to take on the extra shifts that they currently work to be able to get their son or daughter through a private school. They will not be able to do those extra hours to pay for their kids to do sport on the weekends. They will not be able to do the extra hours to get the tutoring for their kids so they can enter university. None of that will be able to happen because they will not have a job.

As for the bunkum about compensation for these people, if they do not have a job, it is not going to matter; you cannot compensate someone for not having a job unless you give them another job. In any case, we will end up with the government supporting people through the social security system right across the board. We are talking about the carbon tax affecting 1753 people in the west alone up to 2015.

I will bring this a little bit closer to home. We are talking about 432 jobs lost in the city of Brimbank, 304 jobs lost in the city of Hobsons Bay, 180 jobs lost in the shire of Melton, 422 jobs lost in the city of Moonee Valley — jobs lost, gone, caput — and 415 jobs lost in the city of Wyndham. I am sure people will get a warm and fuzzy feeling when they come home at night and say, 'I lost my job to try to help with Julia Gillard's carbon tax'. I am sure they will be thrilled to be playing their part in attempting to save the planet from something that generally happens anyway.

I would also like to quote a gentleman by the name of Dr Phillip Stott, a professor of biogeography at the University of London. He has made comment on the futility of many of the initiatives that are being put forward by different countries around the world to curb the impact of climate change. He said:

The terrible experience of the Kyoto summit on 'greenhouse warming' was surely warning enough. As I watched the debate unfold, I increasingly felt like Heraclites himself, observing the folly of the Ephesians from his hermit home high in the mountains. To hear ecologists talking about 'halting' or 'curbing' climate change was deeply disturbing, but for them to try to make the world believe that this 'stability' might be achieved through manipulating just a few variables out of the millions of interlinked and dynamic factors which govern the world's climate is frankly sinister.

That is what it is: frankly, it is sinister that we are talking about sacrificing thousands of people's jobs just for us to feel warm and fuzzy about having done our bit for climate change — 'We're paying our carbon tax. Aren't we good little boys and girls for paying a carbon tax?'. Part of the problem with paying taxes is that

sometimes your money gets spent on things you are not all that thrilled about, and I have to say I am not overly thrilled about the federal government using my taxpayer dollars on its clean energy future advertising and website. It is all very whiz-bang and wonderful. Within the federal government's propaganda that it is putting out there to the Australian people is some commentary by a gentleman by the name of David McInnes, group manager of sustainability at Linfox. In the advertisement he says:

We did a review of our carbon footprint and we set a target of a 15 per cent reduction by 2010, in our rate of carbon emissions. We achieved that rate — in fact, we achieved 28 per cent reduction. We've now upped that target to 50 per cent by 2015.

This is a great thing; the company is reducing its carbon output. It has made a decision as a company to reduce the amount of carbon it is putting into the atmosphere, and it has done this by renewing its fleet and buying more efficient trucks with better diesel engines that burn more efficiently. It might have even — and I do not know this for a fact — taken up the idea of using liquefied natural gas to be able to reduce the amount of carbon that it is pumping out into the atmosphere, but it did this off its own bat; it did not need a carbon tax to force it into it. It did not need someone in Canberra to say, 'You know what? You are putting too much carbon into the atmosphere for our liking; we want you to reduce it. Here you go, have a couple of million dollars of taxpayers dollars to reduce it'. It did it off its own bat because it saw value in it; it saw an opportunity to be a good corporate citizen in this world of carbon being bad — and if we did not have carbon, we would all be in a bit of trouble because we would not be physically here — and it decided as a good corporate citizen to spend its own coin to reduce its carbon emissions. It not only reduced its emissions but did better than it intended.

Why is it that we want to nobble businesses like Linfox, which want to reduce their carbon emissions? Why is that we want to take away money from companies that are well capable of making their own decisions to reduce emissions for whatever reasons they may have? Why are we doing this if they are already doing it and if companies already have it in their minds that they can do this?

Linfox, being a rather large company, is able to withstand the impact of a move like this. It is able to reinvest in infrastructure, but if we bring in a carbon tax, we will cop it. Linfox will not be able to employ any extra staff to move freight around, which will mean that productivity across the board will go down as transport costs go through the roof with the limited

number of trucks then on the road. You will then have the problem of people not being able to get the goods that they want, and prices will go up. It is the big companies that will be able to get compensation or weather the problems. It is the small businesses — the mums and dads out there who are trying to make a living — that are going to cop it in the neck. They are going to suffer the most, and it will be the small businesses that close down well before any of the so-called big polluters even start to feel the impact of the carbon tax.

I was going to go on for a little bit longer, but I feel I may have overstayed my welcome, in a way.

Mr Finn — No, keep going. You are doing a good job.

Mr ELSBURY — I shall do that. I thank Mr Finn for the invitation. I would like to highlight an article which I had the pleasure of reading just last week in the *Australian Financial Review* of 8 September. It was by a gentleman by the name of Alan Moran, and it stated:

In a leaked briefing UK Prime Minister David Cameron's energy adviser warned him that British carbon abatement policies would raise electricity prices by 30 per cent —

that is, 30 per cent, Mr Ondarchie!

We received our power bill just the other day, and my wife almost freaked. She is an accountant by trade, and if there is any increase in our power bills she cannot understand how it is possible. In fact I cannot understand how it is possible, considering we live in a house which tends to have only two lights on of a night, one in the lounge room where my wife and I sit and watch a bit of the giggle box and another down the other end of the house so that my daughters are not afraid of the dark. Both those globes are energy savers. We copped quite a significant increase in our power bills, which caused my wife to freak out. If it were to go up by 30 per cent, I hate to think what she would do. She would probably say words I have never heard pass her lips. She is a very quiet person, but I feel she may lose it completely if our power bills go up by 30 per cent, the same increase the UK Prime Minister, Mr David Cameron, was advised about.

Mr Moran's article goes on to say:

Inauspiciously this week US solar power industry poster child Solyndra went bankrupt, shedding 1000 jobs. Even though it received US\$535 million in low-interest government loans — half a million dollars per job ...

That is a pretty good wage for someone working in the solar industry, I would say — half a million dollars per job!

Mr Finn — That's where Kevin Rudd got the idea.

Mr ELSBURY — It must have been, Mr Finn. The article goes on to say:

Australia's experiences with subsidies for turbine blade facilities in Victoria have similarly failed.

This explains why we have got turbines being built in China and Germany and then having to be shipped over here, which last time I checked would have involved very large ships bringing them over, which burn crude oil or diesel.

Mr Leane — It's steam that comes out of their funnels.

Mr ELSBURY — I am sorry, Mr Leane, I spoke about steam earlier on. I gave the science lesson which Mr Viney failed. In any case, we have now got this massive problem of the failure of the very industry we are supposed to rely upon for our future energy supply, and that is under a system where there is not a carbon tax in place.

When you introduce a tax it is supposed to hit everyone; it is supposed to impact across the board. Would solar panel and wind energy companies here in Victoria not also suffer from the impact of the carbon tax? When they are trying to build one of their towers for a wind turbine they are going to have to pay more for the concrete, the steel and the carbon fibres — there is that word again, 'carbon' — that are used in the turbine. They are going to have to pay more for the maintenance and the oil put into the turbine for lubrication. The carbon tax is going to work against the very industry that it is supposed to support. It is going to make being environmentally friendly even more difficult, so why would you have it? Why would you go off and say that we need a carbon tax to be able to support an industry that is going to suffer from the carbon tax that we are going to implement? To me it is almost looking like the 'noodle nation' — we might remember that fantastic federal government policy.

I highlight this especially at the moment, when just today we had a briefing in the Legislative Council committee room by people from the Australian Academy of Technological Science and Engineering that pointed out the difficulties they are currently facing with new types of solar collectors in solar photovoltaics. They currently have an issue in that they can produce these things and they work quite well, but

they wear out rather quickly. They could make a solar panel the size of the MCG playing surface if they really wanted to, but unfortunately it would break down in ultraviolet light, which seems to me a little bit of a problem if it is a solar cell.

The federal government is going to bring in a tax which will actually make it more difficult for industry to be able to invest in finding a solution to this ultraviolet problem. We are going to tax the bejesus out of anyone who wants to invest in the future of new and cheaper photovoltaic systems, and we are going to somehow expect them to still achieve their goal.

Mr Finn — They've spent too long in the sun — that is their problem.

Mr ELSBURY — They have spent too long in the sun, Mr Finn. I feel it may have actually got to them. In conclusion — —

Mr Ondarchie — Take us through to dinner!

Mr ELSBURY — I would love to take us all through to dinner, but unfortunately I have run out of material and things I wish to talk about.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the climate is changing. The political climate is changing in a big way. We look at temperature gauges to see whether the temperature is changing, but we have to look at certain other gauges in the political system to see whether other temperatures are going up and down. I support industries that work towards reducing emissions, because ultimately we are breathing in this stuff. That is why we have the Environment Protection Authority, which means we do not have the great smog banks that they have in China and other parts of the world. We have controls in place to limit the number of particles in the atmosphere and to limit issues in relation to respiratory illnesses.

Mr Finn — There is no need to tax steam.

Mr ELSBURY — There is no need to tax steam, which is quite good for your respiratory system. The only time people who live in Melbourne have to worry about particles in the atmosphere is during times of natural disasters, such as during bushfires. We might also have to worry about volcanoes emitting stuff in the atmosphere that stops our planes from flying around.

I am quite happy for the documents requested by Mr Barber to be made available. I look forward to hearing to what Mr Barber will say in his right of reply.

Mr O'BRIEN (Western Victoria) — I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate, given the extensive but profound contributions that have been made by my colleagues. I will not name them individually, but I commend them for their strenuous, passionate and articulate representations. I particularly commend Mr Barber for bringing this motion to the house, because it provides a significant opportunity for an important debate on an issue that is predominantly in the federal government's jurisdiction.

I note that the documents Mr Barber is seeking are to be tabled by an amended date in October. In that regard I have thought about relevant documents that are in my possession which provide some evidence of the impacts of carbon pricing on employment in Victoria. I have received a letter from a Victorian employer, and I will shortly read that into *Hansard*. That very concerned constituent is not from my electorate; he is based in North Melbourne. He is a manufacturer of CDs for many Australian artists all around not only Victoria but also Australia, and he is concerned about the impact of this tax on his employment of staff.

I commend Queensland Senator Barnaby Joyce, who was formerly of The Nationals but now is part of the federal Liberal-Nationals party. Senator Barnaby Joyce has been courageous in expressing his forthright opinions during the debate on the impact of a carbon tax. Without going into the whole debate around the science, the important part to pick up is the impact of this proposal on Australian and Victorian manufacturing, employment and businesses.

The letter that has been sent to me deals with the issue contained in the motion, which is an important aspect of the debate. If this tax is brought in by the federal government, it will in effect act as a reverse tariff on Australian businesses.

We have all talked about whether we should have greater protection for Australian manufacturers; there has been a whole debate on that, and I do not wish to talk about that. But this is a tax that will hit Australian and Victorian businesses. Whatever it may or may not do to the climate — and I listened to Mr Finn's scientific contribution about that — one thing is clear: bringing in this tax ahead of any world-embraced carbon-pricing modelling system without a similar tax being imposed by our significant competitors in any other international countries will impose a significant cost on our businesses. It will affect Victorian and Australian businesses.

We also have also seen the news today about the concerns regarding European countries and their debts

at a time when they may be in significant economic trouble. I do not wish to go into that debate. This government hopes we can do the best for Victoria by keeping manufacturing strong and by implementing the sensible policies we took to the election.

The letter deals with this aspect of the tax. I thank Mr Drum for providing me with a hard copy of the letter, which is headed 'The federal government's proposed price on carbon (carbon tax)'. It is dated 21 March and addressed to Doug Smith:

Further to our discussion the other day, my view is that if it goes ahead, the carbon tax will cause the closure of my and probably many other manufacturing businesses in Australia. As well, it will do little to reduce or may increase the emissions that were caused by them.

Dex has been a manufacturer of professional sound equipment, audio cassette tapes and most recently, compact discs and DVDs. The company was started by my business partner Daniel and me in the late 1970s. Our current business is production of CDs and DVDs for music and film distributors, magazine publishers for cover mount discs and newspapers for their weekend supplement promotions. One of our most recent productions was a DVD distributed by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age* in Melbourne which was a presentation of the Tropfest short film competition finalists.

Dex's factory is located in Kensington, an inner city suburb of Melbourne. We employ some 45 full-time, part-time and casual staff, most of whom live in the local area. To remain competitive and keep costs down, the business is managed on lean margins. The directors participate in day-to-day activities and there is little middle-level management.

Our main competition for business comes from south-east Asia. Their two price advantages being lower standards of labour laws and that many Asian disc manufacturers do not pay patent royalties to the owners of the CD and DVD technology. The royalties are avoided because of difficulties in patent enforcement in many of these countries.

Dex survives because clients prefer to work with an Australian manufacturer, so long as there is price parity.

The introduction of a carbon tax will cause a significant increase in operating costs for Dex. The result will be that we will need to increase selling prices. As the carbon tax will not be applied to any imports, discs manufactured in south-east Asia will then be cheaper.

The effect on employment will extend further than the jobs for our 45 employees; it will also impact our suppliers' businesses.

The intention of the federal government's carbon tax as I understand it is to collect revenue and apply it to reducing carbon emission from Australia. The effect of a carbon tax on my business will be to close it, including the subsequent loss of employment. Disc production will move from Australia to south-east Asia. south-east Asia has a higher rate of carbon emission per unit of production than Australia so the effect will be to increase it.

Doug, in essence I think accountability for the carbon emission caused by our consumption is a necessary step for Australia. However, the proposal from the federal government will not reduce emission caused by manufacturing, and may actually increase it. This together with the loss of my business, I cannot find any benefit in it.

That letter was dated March 2011. I can inform the house that I have contacted Mr Williams today to confirm that those remain his views, and he is very much of the same view and has authorised me to bring this letter to the house. In response to the Greens' motion that all documents modelling the impacts of carbon pricing on employment in Victoria be put forward, although this letter has not been prepared by Deloitte as the motion stipulates, it is substantive evidence from a manufacturer which has 45 employees who will be affected. That is the impact that is particularly concerning.

The questions that are asked about whether the world is warming and whether the climate is warming are interesting questions that will probably not be solved in our lifetime, but what we will know about are the decisions that we make in relation to Victorian and Australian manufacturing. Certainly wherever emissions can be assuaged by sensible decision making in planning — for example, and most importantly, to house more and more people in regional areas and not put strains on the infrastructure of our capital city — many of which I touched on in my maiden speech and which remain true, that should be done. But this is not one of them. I will not go any further. I thank the Greens for bringing the motion to the house, and I place that letter on record.

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations) — I do not propose to take long, and I know Mr Barber wishes to sum up. I do not want to talk about the motion per se, but I do want to talk about the amendment proposed by Ms Pennicuik to Mr Barber's motion. I just put on the record that the Greens want to change the date in the motion from 13 September 2011 to 11 October 2011. When I noticed this amendment I wondered whether we should agree to it or whether we should take a pedantic approach to it. I went back through *Hansard* and found the record of a debate that occurred on 28 July 2010, when I had a motion up that was similar to Mr Barber's and the date mentioned in it had passed.

The motion debated on 28 July 2010 required that certain materials be tabled in the Council by 12 noon on 13 April 2010. Clearly that time had passed. As is recorded at page 3335 of *Hansard* for that date, Mr Finn moved an amendment to omit the words

‘13 April 2010’ with the view of inserting in their place ‘10 August 2010’. As he said at the time:

It should be obvious to most members of the house that 13 April has passed. We need to make this amendment, as it will be clear and obvious to all.

We moved the amendment and we had the debate, and guess who opposed the change of the date?

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA — I will inform you. It was typical behaviour from the Labor Party members, as you would expect. But guess who joined them? It was a Greens-Labor alliance. Mr Barber, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Hartland opposed the amendment. What this demonstrates again is the hypocrisy and double standards of the Greens. All I am saying is that on the basis of what Mr Barber did last year, we could do the same, because the precedent has been set. But we will respect it; we will respect common sense rather than continue the sham they started last year. Given that we had the same sort of situation last year and needed to make a similar amendment, I just wanted to put on the record yet again the hypocrisy of the Greens: they oppose one thing when they are there, yet when it is their motion they want us to agree with their amendment. Hypocrites!

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — As I noted back at the beginning, the government initially released the results of this modelling to its favoured outlet, the *Herald Sun*, and on the same day Mr Dalla-Riva came into the chamber and took a Dorothy Dixier on the results of this modelling. I asked him right there and then if he could provide me with a copy of the modelling which he was quoting, and he told me he did not have a copy.

Hon. R. A. Dalla-Riva interjected.

Mr BARBER — He took a Dorothy Dixier. I bet to this day he had not seen the modelling, and I would bet to this day he still has not seen it. We would all like to see the modelling. I describe this as a classic trick out of the John Brumby spin manual: put out the headline figure you want everybody to remember, but never let anybody see the documents it is based on because that might lead to some real debate. Naturally government members have been very happy to continue this debate today without the document being in front of us, because that is what suits them. They want everybody to remember a big headline number, but they do not want anybody to actually scrutinise the modelling — that we paid for — from which it came.

At the current rate this modelling, which has been referred to by the government since August, will be available to members of the public who are interested in this issue by sometime around October. I will not deal with the majority of the bluster and bravado on climate change that was put forward; that will reduce my workload by about 90 per cent. I will simply pick up on a few issues that were raised.

Mr Ramsay described climate change as a philosophical issue on which we could all have an opinion. This is not existentialism, this is biophysical reality. The government has many responsibilities in this area now. In fact Ryan Smith, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, when making decisions under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994, the Coastal Management Act 1995, the Environment Protection Authority Act 1970 or the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 must take into account the impacts of climate change, so he must have a view on it at the time.

Likewise David Davis, as Minister for Health, when administering certain sections of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 must form a view on the impacts of climate change on Victoria and make decisions under that act accordingly. Of course Mr Walsh, the Minister for Water, being the energetic and erudite man that he is, when approving any sustainable water strategy must form a view on climate change and its likely impacts on water supply. It is not really an existential issue for those ministers.

At the same time the government has a responsibility to deliver to this house by December next year a plan for adapting to climate change, which Mr Elsbury says is just this funny fluctuation where the planet changes its mind every so often. In effect he denies — and Mr Finn backs him — the impact of humans on climate change; he is a climate change denier. Mr Elsbury also informed us that more carbon is produced by India than has ever been released by the West, or the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries.

Mr Elsbury — China!

Mr BARBER — Let us take Mr Elsbury up on that one. Mr Elsbury says that more emissions are released by India and China than have ever been released by the OECD countries. If he is referring to the West as the OECD, Mr Elsbury needs to do his homework. They do not produce as much as the OECD countries do now, and if you want to talk about ‘ever’, it is absolutely clear that the West has always been the dominant producer of emissions. It is mathematics.

When Mr Dalla-Riva answered that Dorothy Dixier he talked about the loss of jobs in the great industrial centres of Victoria, but the output of the modelling does not indicate that. It indicates that the job losses will be in the city of Port Phillip and in the city of Melbourne, which are to a great extent the great financial services centres. Until we see the modelling itself, we cannot make any assessment of the veracity of the figures claimed — and that is the way the government wants it.

Mrs Peulich incessantly talked about jobs lost, but in fact the modelling does not demonstrate jobs lost. The modelling demonstrates the difference between the Deloitte estimate of employment growth without the carbon package and what it believes it will be with the carbon package. We are not talking about jobs lost, we are talking about a reduction of employment as modelled against growth under business as usual. We are yet to see how it finds this loss of jobs occurring. After all, the money collected by the carbon tax does not just disappear. There is an assumption by certain people, and Mr Elsbury made it clear that he does not like taxes, that tax dollars disappear out of the economy. Where do they go? Do they go to the Bahamas? Tax dollars go back into the economy. They pay teachers salaries, for example, which is something that Mr Finn supports. That is where tax dollars go. They go back into the economy for goods and services.

Mr Finn posed the question: what is 5 per cent of 1 per cent? The answer to the question is: 5 per cent of 1 per cent is Mr Finn's policy; it is Tony Abbott's policy to reduce emissions in Australia by 5 per cent, which is 1.5 per cent. Today it has been like having dozens of little Tony Abbotts hopping around in the chamber. If they had not stuck the knife into Malcolm Turnbull, we can only hypothesise what the members opposite would be saying today. Mr Ramsay talked about the knife being stuck into Mr Rudd, but he forgot about how quickly the knife went into Mr Turnbull. That is when the Liberal Party shifted from supporting carbon trading to opposing it.

Mr Finn has said his policy will achieve nothing, and I agree: 5 per cent of 1 per cent is not my policy; it is not the Greens policy. Mr Finn has confirmed that the policy of the Liberal Party will achieve nothing. What we know about that policy is that it will be much more expensive than this package; you could ask anybody. The coalition has not even attempted to sustain any argument that the Greg Hunt direct action package — Stalinist central planning, as Mr Viney described it — will be more expensive and less effective in achieving it. Mr Finn, and I think somebody else, also asked the question: how much will 5 per cent reductions in Australia reduce the global temperature?

Mr Finn — And how long will it take?

Mr BARBER — And how long will it take, asks Mr Finn. Anybody who even poses that question demonstrates that they do not understand the first thing about climate science.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BARBER — That is what I mean by bravado. If you put up a fact, then a wall of sound comes back. Even on the day we reduce our emissions to zero, the climate will not go back to where it was. This is the whole point. If you put carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere, it heats up the world. If you stop putting CO₂ into the atmosphere, it takes 1000 years to recover. If we keep going under Mr Elsbury's plan — which is Linfox occasionally doing something because it feels like it — we will bust through 2 degrees, we will bust through 4 degrees, we will keep going up to a global average increase of 6 degrees, and if we then reduce our emissions to zero, that will be our new climate.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BARBER — The level of ignorance is staggering. Those members who are interjecting must work all night on being that uninformed. I do not have the energy to work so hard to misunderstand something. Mrs Petrovich is the titled individual; she is the parliamentary secretary for climate change —

Mrs Petrovich — I am the Parliamentary Secretary for Sustainability and Environment.

Mr BARBER — Mrs Petrovich is not parliamentary secretary for climate change? Mrs Petrovich is in the clear then, because Mr Finn says human-induced climate change does not exist. Mr Elsbury says climate change is just something you watch happen, so presumably that is Mr Smith's portfolio.

Mrs Petrovich raised the important issue of carbon sequestration in the report that we had from the Environment and Natural Resources Committee last year. She said, though, that the federal government had done nothing to advance that cause. Again she must have been avoiding the media fairly studiously. The federal Parliament recently passed legislation to create a framework for sequestration in farm soils. The clean energy future package announced by the Labor and Greens parties included specific quantities of money to pay farmers for sequestration — cheques, just like your wool cheque or whatever. Of course there were further measures for sequestration in biodiverse plantings around farms and so forth. Hundreds of millions of

dollars were allocated to those packages. It is easy to dismiss what you do not understand. To say that we have not advanced that cause is demonstrably wrong, and it is a shame.

Mr Elsbury also taught us that he had learnt from watching the federal government's paid advertisements that Linfox had set out to reduce its emissions by 20 per cent and in fact had achieved 28 per cent. I would have thought that was a good news story. He also brought Mr David Cameron, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, into the argument. Mr Cameron announced when he became Prime Minister that he would cut his government's emissions by 10 per cent within a year; he achieved 14 per cent. If all of these groups can do it, why can we not do it? It comes right back to my original point: the UK government aimed for 10 per cent and got 14 per cent; and Linfox got 28 per cent. Yarra City Council cut its emissions by 20 per cent. It generates 10 per cent of its own energy from photovoltaics and from solar hot water and has reduced its potable water usage by 50 per cent. If all of these organisations can achieve those sorts of results, is it really so hard? Why is it that Deloitte's modelling assumes that everybody who has to pay a carbon tax does nothing in response: that they simply pay it, increase their costs and reduce their output? Why does everybody on that side assume there is nothing we can do to reduce emissions but then set up a program of direct action?

Members of the Liberal Party feel like they are on a winner here; we know that. But one-third of their voters, the third we are not hearing from at the moment, think we must act urgently on climate change. They have their pretty strong group of deniers, but basically they are wedged. This could very well be the same one-third of Liberal voters who ignored Ted Baillieu and preferenced the Greens anyway in the state election. Right now the Liberals believe they are on a big winner with this one. Mrs Peulich made a bold prediction about a swing at the next election.

Mrs Peulich — Absolutely.

Mr BARBER — I do not know whether Mrs Peulich is a fan of the road runner cartoons, but I remember the way the coyote would chase the road runner. Sometimes the coyote would run off a cliff, but because he did not realise he had run off a cliff he would not fall. It was only when the coyote actually looked down and noticed his feet that he fell to his untimely demise below. We will see!

I look forward to receiving this document in a timely fashion. No doubt it will be here, ready and waiting for

us when the next sitting week arrives, and then I will move that we take note of the document. We will scrutinise the document and then we will have some facts on which to have a debate. Today the facts were almost completely absent from the contributions of those on the other side of the chamber and it has been left to us to introduce some light into the debate. That is why I am feeling energised and looking forward to the receipt of this document.

Amendment agreed to; amended motion agreed to.

PLANNING: AMENDMENT VC82

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

That amendment VC82 to the Victoria planning provisions be revoked.

I welcome the opportunity to move the motion, which seeks to revoke amendment VC82 to the Victoria planning provisions. This is a very important motion because what the government is seeking to do through amendment VC82 is to effectively close off, or indeed kill off, the Victorian wind farm industry. I think those on this side of the chamber are of the opinion that the government has gone too far and we ask that it go back and reconsider its extreme view and radical proposal. We would like the government to reconsider and come back with a more balanced approach which recognises the value and the views of all sides in the debate rather than simply handing a complete victory to one side. We think the balance has been missed completely and there will be a large number of consequences which the government clearly did not consider when it devised this proposal.

The proposal is a clear breach of the government's election commitment. It is completely outside the scope of the promises it made to the Victorian people. It has broken the commitment it made to the Victorian people. There was no mention in the government's election material that, if elected, it would close down the wind farm industry. There was no mention in its material of the 5-kilometre dead zones, areas where wind farms are prohibited, even if everyone in that community supports a wind farm.

There was no mention of that in its commitment to the Victorian people. There was no mention of a loss of income for struggling farmers who have been on the land for generations and who find that the income from wind farms might make the difference in their opportunities to survive. Some farmers go back many generations. They feel they have been kicked in the guts by this proposal. There was no mention in the

government's election material of the hundreds of Victorian families living in regional Victoria who are being discarded by this government and this proposal. What we have is a proposal which will throw hundreds of Victorians into unemployment. That will have a devastating impact on those individuals as well as on their families.

The motion seeks compassion. It is a plea for compassion for those families in regional Victoria who are being discarded by this government. Essentially it asks the government to stand back from the brink and to take another look. It asks that the government takes its time to consult and take a balanced approach that recognises the consequences of what is being proposed. The motion asks for fairness and dignity. It seeks to support the farmers who —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Crozier) — Order! The time has arrived to interrupt business for statements on reports and papers.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

Disability services commissioner: report 2011

Mrs COOTE (Southern Metropolitan) — I would like to speak on the disability services commissioner annual report 2011. I would like to quote Laurie Harkin, who is the disability services commissioner and who does an excellent job. In his foreword he says:

We are encouraged by those people who bring their experiences to us and who trust that we observe and respond faithfully to their concerns ...

With a new government well in place, we are encouraged by the positive working relationship we have with the Minister for Community Services, the Honourable Mary Wooldridge. We appreciate the minister's commitment to and support for the work of the office, and I thank the minister for this.

This is a very good working relationship, and I think it underpins what this report is about. The report contains a great deal of information that I would like to share with the chamber, but I have only 5 minutes in which to do so. Again I would like to quote from Mr Harkin's foreword. He says:

Our data analysis indicates that the majority of complaints we resolved this year resulted in improved relationships and better service outcomes for people. The overall number of inquiries and complaints made to us increased by 19 per cent. This is testimony to the strengthened relationships between people with a disability and service providers and reinforces the value in the education efforts made by us in this area.

It is very important to look at the statistics involved with some of the complaints and to learn from them, which is exactly what the report talks about and what I know the commissioner and his excellent team work diligently on. The annual complaints reporting system is a new tool that was launched in November 2010 to enhance the collection and analysis of service provider complaints data. There were 23 education and information sessions delivered statewide to 193 staff from 111 service providers. Service providers reported that the new tool is user friendly. In this day and age when IT and information is so readily available for people with a disability and their families, who are often isolated in rural and regional Victoria, that sort of access is imperative, and it is pleasing to see the number of people who are embracing it. There was 100 per cent reporting compliance achieved by service providers, with 301 service providers reporting 1428 complaints received.

It is very interesting to look at the education and information statistics. There were 64 presentations delivered statewide to 473 people with a disability, 111 families and carers and 880 service provider staff, making a total of 1464 people. If we are going to change the system and make it work better for people with a disability and their families, it is imperative that they know the facts and they understand exactly what their rights are. It is important that they know how to go about making a complaint to make quite certain their voices are heard. It is very pleasing to see that such large numbers were approached.

On page 9 of the report the commissioner talks about learning from complaints. The report states:

852 responses recorded for key lessons learned by service providers from complaints they received ...

The key themes of the complaints recorded included the need for better communication, improved understanding of the needs of people with a disability and more intensive support for staff and people with a disability. I think it is particularly interesting to look at the trends. Communication issues continue to be identified as an underlying theme in the majority of inquiries and complaints in 2010–11. The report states that:

... communication issues were identified in 55 per cent of complaints to DSC, with 44 per cent relating to poor or insufficient communication. The importance of communication and relationships is now increasingly being recognised by service providers in their approach to complaints, with providers reporting 26 per cent of complaints in 2010–11 to be about poor or insufficient communication, compared with 10 per cent in 2009–10.

This is a 16 per cent increase, and it is very important to understand what lies behind it. It is interesting to note the trend, and I know the commissioner and his staff are looking at and investigating it.

The trends in reports of alleged assaults and risks to wellbeing and safety show greater numbers of complaints relating to alleged assaults, abuse and neglect. There are other trends in individual support packages. The commissioner has noted an increase in the number of complaints relating to individual support packages from 15 per cent in 2009–10 to 26 per cent — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! The member's time has expired.

Department of Premier and Cabinet: report 2010–11

Hon. M. P. PAKULA (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to make a statement on the Department of Premier and Cabinet annual report. It is an interesting report, not the least because we now know from page 72 that the decision by the Premier to increase the size of the cabinet from 20 to 22 is in large part responsible for the fact that the total payment of ministers' salaries and allowances has risen by more than \$1 million over one financial year, from \$5.8 million to \$6.8 million, and I think we are all entitled to ask whether we are really getting value for that extra \$1 million.

Mrs Coote — More than value.

Hon. M. P. PAKULA — Mrs Coote says, 'More than value'. With a couple of ministers for nothing, I am not sure I agree. The part of the report that I would like to focus on in particular is on page 119, which talks about freedom of information services. The Department of Premier and Cabinet annual report states the following:

DPC's FOI unit no longer processes FOI requests on behalf of the office of the Premier. Requests to the Premier are now processed by staff in the Premier's private office. In accordance with this, DPC transferred 16 of the 112 requests detailed above.

To put that into context, this is a Premier's office which before the election spent a lot of time talking about how FOI would be different under a Baillieu government. It is different all right. Rather than having the Department of Premier and Cabinet doing what it has always done and processing FOI requests that are sent to the Premier's office or that relate to the Premier's office, that work is now being done by a private staffer in the Premier's office, and I can tell honourable members that nothing is getting out of that office — absolutely

nothing. I referred to the Ombudsman's report in this place in the last sitting week. The Ombudsman is now being required to provide the Premier's office with recommendations about its record management system, because it is impossible for anyone to get a suitable FOI search done by anything other than subject matter of correspondence.

The Ombudsman has had to recommend to the Premier that the system be upgraded so it can be searched by recipient, sender or subject. It appears that the system was put in place with the express purpose of trying to frustrate FOI. I want to read into *Hansard* remarks from an honourable member at the time an FOI bill was debated in December 1999. The honourable member said in part:

The time will come when the legislation will no longer be necessary. The introduction of mandatory publication, if it happened in the future, would be another material change. The community and the opposition will judge the government only on whether it conducts itself openly.

...

Freedom of information should be a matter of saying, 'Ask and you shall receive'. Freedom of information has a long way to evolve on matters of timeliness, comprehensiveness, mandatory publication and even internet publication.

...

True FOI will become an act of trust and faith in the future, of that I am confident.

Mrs Peulich — I think we know who you're going to say.

Hon. M. P. PAKULA — Mrs Peulich might want to predict who the member was, but before she does, perhaps I will have a go. It was indeed the member for Hawthorn in the Assembly and current Premier, Mr Baillieu.

Mrs Peulich — You're transparent.

Hon. M. P. PAKULA — I am more transparent than the Premier, Mrs Peulich. This Premier was elected on a promise of openness, transparency and accountability. He was elected on a promise of introducing an independent office of FOI commissioner — not just continuing things the way they were but taking decisions out of the hands of departments and putting them into the hands of an independent FOI commissioner. Not only have we not seen the creation of an independent FOI commissioner's office but we have seen the exact opposite occur whereby decisions are being taken out of the hands of the departments and put into the hands of the Premier's private staff. If that is open, transparent

and accountable, I will go he. This is the exact opposite of what the Premier promised to do, and I am grateful that in its annual report the Department of Premier and Cabinet has belled the cat on this disgraceful abuse of process and disgraceful broken promise. If the Premier wants to be seen as truly open, transparent and accountable, the practice of having FOI decisions handled by his private staff must stop and must stop now.

Auditor-General: *Early Childhood Development Services — Access and Quality*

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I would like to make a few remarks on the scope of *Early Childhood Development Services — Access and Quality*, a report from the Auditor-General tabled in May 2011. In October 2010 the Auditor-General began an audit into early childhood services. The objective of the audit was to assess the extent to which access to early childhood development services had improved and whether services were being provided in line with required standards. Basically the audit focused on three things: management of demand, accessibility of services and service quality. The audit included the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as well as providers of state-funded early childhood services, including local government and non-government organisations. The audit specifically looked at the southern metropolitan, western metropolitan and Loddon Mallee regions.

I think the report is very good. It concludes that access to universal services and services for vulnerable children improved over the five years since the previous report but that the department could not demonstrate that early childhood services are accessible when and where needed, especially for vulnerable children and families. It is interesting that today's Auditor-General report into individualised funding for disability services makes a similar recommendation about particular thought and consideration needing to be given to how to deal with the special needs of vulnerable children at vulnerable times in their lives.

The report into access and quality of early childhood development services makes three recommendations. The first is that the department exercise more purposeful oversight of the quality and consistency of council planning. That also resonates with the recommendations of another Auditor-General's report that was tabled today.

The second recommendation is that the department develop a better understanding of service demand by means of three actions: reviewing its definition of

vulnerability to guard against children and families slipping through the net; working in partnership with service providers to identify and act to remove barriers to access and participation; and working in partnership with service providers to identify and act to mitigate the reasons for the fall in attendance at maternal and child health checks after the first visit. I think that is a particularly important point, especially in some of the more disadvantaged communities. For example, in Frankston maternal and child health attendance is lower than the state average. It is really important that we collate that information into a statewide picture.

The third recommendation made by the Auditor-General is that the department strengthen its monitoring of service quality by, firstly, better integrating its processes for assessing compliance with regulations and service and program standards; secondly, including performance measures and targets for service quality in its service agreements with providers, and I think that is very important; and thirdly, reviewing the results of self-assessments by kindergarten service providers to inform decisions on improving service quality. Obviously kindergartens are going to be particularly stressed because of universal access to kindergarten moving from 10 hours to 15 hours. Huge black holes have been left in the resourcing of that change in terms of infrastructure, trained staff and so forth. It is almost unrealistic to implement those recommendations as they currently stand. A lot of families will miss out on the three-year-old kinder. It is very important that we have an overall picture of where the kindergarten service is at.

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office advised that the final report, including the department's management comments, would be tabled on 25 May 2011. I understand that the department has considered the detailed findings of the report and is working over time to respond to these issues as appropriate. Obviously it is very important to assess accessibility, especially for vulnerable children, to strengthen the quality and consistency of local government planning of services and also to make sure that we gather all of the empirical data that is available so we have a true appreciation of the state of the services. This particularly applies to kindergartens and maternal and child health, which are services families and communities value so much and the services that are in the best position to intervene in the early stage of life of a child, especially where there are issues.

Gordon TAFE: report 2010

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Gordon Institute of TAFE 2010 annual report. The Geelong area is famous for many things. It has a champion football club, great beaches, a strong economy, Ford Australia and more and more. Geelong is also becoming known for hosting one of the most successful TAFE colleges in our state.

Last year the Gordon TAFE was awarded the training provider of the year award, an award which was justifiably earned by the commitment of the staff, by their hard work and by their caring approach to their students. The only negative thing I can raise is that, sadly, it is not part of my electorate. The former Labor government placed great attention on technical and further education in our state and the Gordon TAFE is a shining example of the success that was achieved due to that commitment.

As the annual report for 2010 states, a number of exceptional new facilities were provided to Gordon TAFE by the then state Labor government and federal Labor governments. Again that proves that we care very deeply about education, that we care very deeply about the youth of our state, and that we have a vision for the future.

Last year Gordon TAFE had over 25 000 enrolments with students studying both on and off-campus, in industry, in business, full time and part time in over 400 accredited courses. That is impressive in anyone's language. I quote the CEO, Mr Grant Sutherland, from page 15 of the report:

The Gordon is really well positioned to look forward ... with a high level of confidence.

When you look through the report you can well understand why he is so positive and confident about Gordon TAFE. The completion rate for unit modules is 78 per cent; the student satisfaction rate is 92 per cent. These are figures that state a great deal about the professionalism of the staff and the manner by which they deliver courses to their students and then assist them as required to learn and to achieve.

There are many schools across our state that have signs which mention the word 'excellence', as if it is easy to obtain and easy to maintain. But for Gordon TAFE I believe we have proof that it has achieved excellence; for example, representatives from Queensland and Western Australia visited Gordon TAFE to learn how it delivered the best plumbing education programs in the nation. Also in February last year, in partnership with CSIRO, it delivered the very first five-day, bio-risk

management course — a truly impressive accomplishment. There were many other successful partnerships with businesses to deliver courses essential to upskill, to prepare young people for work and to enhance career opportunities for all of its students. Its apprentices were only one area of its successes.

Innovation is high on its list and it established a number of new courses with the vision of what our state needs now and in the years ahead. Before I forget I must pay my respects to the Honourable Jacinta Allan, the member for Bendigo East in the other place, who was the relevant minister before the state election; that position is now held by the Honourable Peter Hall. Over \$123 million of new and key capital projects were delivered in 2010, and Ms Allan's leadership as well as her lobbying of her counterpart in Canberra were essential for the growth and future prosperity of this great educational body.

When you read the annual report and also consider the various international projects which it is either partnered with or in fact leading, you see we have a college that is becoming well known and respected on the world stage. Indeed as you read the report you cannot help but arrive at the one conclusion: this TAFE college is a role model for others. I commend the report to the house.

Ambulance Victoria: report 2010–11

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — I would like to take the opportunity to make a contribution on the Ambulance Victoria 2010–11 annual report. The report goes into the key operations of Ambulance Victoria over the last 12 months. It talks about some of the key reforms it has had to work through, given the fact that there was what you might call an unplanned merger in the previous year under the watch of the previous health minister, Daniel Andrews, who is now the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. The merger was poorly put together. It meant that a lot of catch-up needed to be done, a lot of systems were never properly put in place in relation to the communication systems that Ambulance Victoria was trying to work with, and many of the management systems were also not put in place to adequately cope with bringing together the Metropolitan Ambulance Service, Rural Ambulance Victoria and the Alexandra and District Ambulance Service.

As that unplanned merger has been brought together there have been many other problems associated with Ambulance Victoria. Effectively its ongoing performance has deteriorated over the last five or six years, not just with its performance criteria but also its

financial criteria. That was highlighted by the Auditor-General's report that was released in October last year, which really did not show Ambulance Victoria in a great light.

But with the election, the new government and the new minister have come commitments, which have been highlighted in this annual report, along the lines that there will be 340 additional employees, which will certainly put Ambulance Victoria back on a better footing. It has shown that even in the last 12 months, 240 new paramedics, including 188 university graduates, have been added to the system. I understand that of the 340 employees that have been promised, 310 are going to be paramedics and 30 are going to be involved in patient transport, along with the 10 mobile intensive care ambulance single-response units that are also going to be brought online, quite a few of which are already in place at regional centres around Victoria.

It is all part of the \$151 million that the minister has highlighted. The Minister for Health, Mr Davis, has visited the facilities and has put an awful lot of effort and energy into Ambulance Victoria, and much of that is reflected in the annual report where it talks about its key reforms. It is certainly something that will be highlighted.

There is another issue relating to ambulances about which Minister Davis has been clear, something which he talked about in opposition and which he has carried into government — that is, he is going to put the issue of ramping out there for public consideration. That will give all Victorians an opportunity to see the true extent of ramping. Whilst the issues surrounding ramping are largely due to the inefficiencies that are happening in the emergency departments of hospitals, by their very nature ambulances are effectively the unintended victims of ramping and effectively their service has been hit hard by this problem.

Minister Davis has also moved to introduce a new board for Ambulance Victoria. We thank the previous board, which had to suffer through some pretty tough situations in relation to the merger, including underresourcing. Now there is a new board, headed up by Just Stoelwinder. We wish board members all the best in taking our ambulance service forward.

The report is a sobering read, but it shows there is a bright light at the end of the tunnel. There have been some big issues surrounding communications. Those issues were causing serious trouble six months ago as the dispatch centre moved to Ballarat and the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority was making all the calls out of there, which is still the

case. A lot of those problems have been fixed, but I understand there is still a lot of work to do to make sure that when people call for an ambulance, in what are always very anxious moments, communication systems have been put in place that create the best outcomes. Hopefully under a new board, with a new minister in charge, we will get better outcomes with Ambulance Victoria.

Department of Premier and Cabinet: report 2010–11

Mr SCHEFFER (Eastern Victoria) — Given this afternoon's debate on climate change it was reassuring to read in the annual report of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that:

The climate change branch supports the Premier to provide state and national leadership on climate change policy and creates whole-of-government solutions to deliver effective and enduring economic, social and environmental outcomes.

The report tells us that throughout the last year the branch has valiantly provided advice to the Baillieu government in the face of continued uncertainty at the national level about carbon pricing, which was caused in large measure by the refusal of the federal arm of the coalition to treat the issue with the great seriousness it deserves.

The report indicates that the climate change branch led the finalisation of the Climate Change Act 2010, which came into force last July. Regrettably the greenhouse gas emission targets in that piece of legislation are now merely aspirational for the Victorian government. As for the future, the report says the climate change branch will ensure that Victoria's interests are well served as the national carbon price is implemented and that the branch will continue to work on the implementation of the Climate Change Act 2010, including the production of the climate change adaptation plan.

The climate change branch's brief, 300-word contribution to the department's annual report on a matter of immense importance to this country is much more positive than I would have thought. This is probably indicative of the fact that in its real-world life, as distinct from the day-to-day political theatrics, the government understands that the federal opposition leader has taken leave of his senses when it comes to carbon pricing. But what is the Baillieu government's position on climate change? We have heard quite a lot about this today from members in the chamber.

Going back briefly over this matter, the first indication of where this issue would figure was in the ministerial line-up. It was clear that the portfolio did not go to a

heavy hitter. Climate change is a whole-of-government portfolio responsibility so the minister needs to work in conjunction with other ministers and the emphasis will shift according to the exigencies of the time. We have tended to link climate change to the environment and energy portfolios, but a challenge is to link it with the economy, especially when the key debate concerns carbon pricing and its effect across the breadth of the national economy. The challenge is to ensure that all economic activity can positively capitalise on the new opportunities of the carbon-priced economy.

Yet at this exciting time on 18 November last year, days before the election, the then Leader of the Opposition and now Premier, Ted Baillieu, said the coalition was not really committed to the 20 per cent target for reduction in greenhouse emissions as provided for in the Climate Change Act 2010, which he had hitherto embraced. He said in his rather understated and unfocused way that the coalition did not oppose the legislation, and then he finally stepped away from the target, saying that he was not sure whether it could be achieved and that it would be a function of what is possible and affordable — that is leadership, vision and commitment!

Mary Wooldridge, the then shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change and now the Minister for Mental Health, and one of the more principled, consistent and intelligent ministers in this government, wanted to stick to the 20 per cent commitment but was effectively sold out by her leader, who does not have the courage to speak truth to his federal leader, Tony Abbott.

By July this year — and this was really the subject of the debate this afternoon — just before the release of the federal government's clean energy future plan, the Baillieu government released figures that purported to show that a carbon price would slug Victorian hospitals with a \$13.6 million-a-year electricity price hike. The Baillieu government said the study showed that the cost of running public transport would increase by \$14.1 million and that households would pay an additional \$204 a year.

We have heard a lot of discussion of this today, and the contributions from government members have shown that this was absolutely a stunt designed to scare the hell out of Victorians. In the end I believe the fact that this so-called study of effect did not take into account the federal government's compensation package has discredited the government and the members who made outrageous contributions this afternoon. As Mr Barber said in a previous debate, now that we mercifully will

have the documents we will be able to have a proper debate based on the facts at some future time.

While the department's annual report talks about ensuring positive climate change policies, the reality undermines the excellent work that departmental officers and the secretary, Helen Silver, are no doubt doing their best to achieve. There are no better examples than the recent planning amendments to the siting of — —

The PRESIDENT — Time!

Auditor-General: *Road Safety Camera Program*

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I rise to speak on the Victorian Auditor-General's report on the road safety camera program. I do so with some personal interest, given that my region covers some 7000 square kilometres of roadway which I travel regularly, and unfortunately I have been subjected to a number of speed cameras over that time. I am happy to say that I have always travelled within the confines of the law in relation to speed limits, apart from some exceptions in a previous life!

This is a brief report so my contribution will also be brief. Under the previous government there is no doubt there was a loss of confidence in the certification and accuracy of speed cameras as well as concerns about the secrecy of the positioning of those cameras. I am happy to say that the first conclusion of the report is that road safety cameras improve road safety and reduce road trauma and that their ongoing use as an enforcement tool remains appropriate. That is well supported by both sides of the chamber. The report also says:

While there can be no absolute guarantee over the accuracy of any system, the processes and controls in place provide a particularly high level of confidence in the reliability and integrity of the road safety camera system.

That was certainly not the case under the previous government, which was unwilling to provide any independent certification of speed cameras and their accuracy. More importantly, the report goes on to say:

... the lack of past evaluations of fixed speed cameras on freeways, and failure to provide for the ongoing, systematic review of their efficacy is a gap in Victoria's evaluation program.

I congratulate Deputy Premier Peter Ryan, who in one of his first commitments made sure there was an independent investigation into the certification and accuracy of the speed cameras. He also made a commitment that there would no longer be secrecy in

relation to the placement of speed cameras, and he fulfilled an election commitment by providing information to the travelling public about the location of speed cameras on roadways.

I would quickly like to mention a conclusion in relation to the rationale for the road safety camera program from the Auditor-General's report. It states:

There is a sound rationale for using road safety cameras as part of a broader road safety strategy ... While cameras cannot differentiate between road user groups with different levels of risk of road trauma, they are appropriately complemented by targeted non-camera approaches ...

That is part of the Arrive Alive 2008–17 strategy.

An important point that came out of the recommendations in the Auditor-General's report was:

To increase assurance over the accuracy of infringements from mobile cameras, the Department of Justice should get stronger assurance that mobile camera operators comply with critical procedures.

In relation to communication, the report goes on to say:

Despite clear evidence to the contrary, there is ongoing public concern that the program is revenue-raising, inaccurate or not soundly grounded in improving road safety outcomes.

This has been borne out by some of the secrecy of the previous government, as well as the program's lack of independence and certification. The report says the gaps within the program include the lack of communication, the lack of evaluation in relation to strategy aims and the need to address some of these negative public perceptions. It calls on the Department of Justice to implement a communication program to allay community fears and give the community comfort and assurance that these speed programs are providing accurate recordings of speed.

All in all, it is pleasing to see that the conclusions in the report state that the cameras play an important role in road safety programs and that following the recommendations of the report and action taken by the Deputy Premier there is now independent certification of speed cameras. There is transparency in the location of these speed cameras, and also accuracy, which should give the travelling public confidence that speed cameras do in fact provide an accurate recording of speed.

Disability services commissioner: report 2011

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak to the disability services commissioner annual report 2011. The disability services board was originally established in 2007, and its purpose is to

provide a proper dispute resolution mechanism for people with disabilities and for service providers who take care of the disabled within our community. It was the former Labor government which in 2006 through its Disability Act 2006 set in train a process by which complaints could be dealt with by dedicated medical health professionals. Indeed the board itself comprises specially chosen people who are all qualified representatives of the disability sector, either by virtue of their medical or social worker credentials or by direct representation from the disability sector.

According to the report, emerging trends this year indicate a broad systemic problem arising out of the quality of services in supported accommodation and the role of families within that supported framework. That is something we should all keep a watchful eye on. However, having said that, in consultation with government agencies the commissioner's office has managed to resolve a fair number of disputes referred to it in 2010–11.

It is how the vulnerable and frail are treated within the community by governments that sets the benchmark for compassion and justice in society. In my opinion the unsung heroes in the workforce are the men and women who work in the disability sector. It takes enormous passion and commitment to stay the course and make the lives of the less fortunate, who are disabled either by birth or by accident, more livable and kind.

The disability commissioner and his board and staff are to be commended for their ongoing diligence and respect in continuing to provide real solutions to complaints or problems highlighted by service providers, families and disabled people living in the community. The introduction of a plain English newsletter and an online complaints reporting tool saw an increase in the awareness of the commissioner's role as a way to access justice. This has been most successful, and as the data is collected so is the success rate for handling and resolving issues before they escalate to the judicial system.

Auditor-General: Road Safety Camera Program

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise to speak on the report on the road safety camera program. I know we are going to be debating the Road Safety Camera Commissioner Bill 2011 tomorrow, so I do not want to pre-empt members' contributions to that debate, but I wanted to make a few comments in relation to this report, which Mr Ramsay has also spoken on this evening.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms CROZIER — Indeed, he did a terrific job. I wanted to speak in relation to aspects raised by the report in relation to road trauma. As we know, Victoria has been leading the way on many road safety initiatives. We led the way with safety belt initiatives some time ago, and I know that all members of this chamber are supportive of any measures that can reduce road trauma and improve road safety initiatives.

The audit determined that the road safety program is effective. In relation to those significant concerns that have been raised by the road trauma statistics, the report points out that there was a peak of 1061 deaths in 1970 and the road toll fell to 288 in 2010. That is a significant drop, but there needs to be further improvement. There have been many initiatives of governments of all persuasions to improve those statistics. In 2010 alone there were 4503 car accidents on public roads that, sadly, resulted in either fatalities or serious injuries. Of that number around 288 people unfortunately lost their lives on Victorian roads. Those statistics are sobering even though they have reduced significantly since 1970.

Those involved in car accidents know of the devastating effects of road trauma suffered by individuals, families and communities. Not only does road trauma cause serious injuries and fatalities but it also costs the Victorian economy an estimated \$3.8 billion each year. It is a significant cost to not only the individual but also to the Victorian economy. Anything we can do to reduce those costs should be done.

The Baillieu government, like the previous government, is involved in road safety initiatives. We heard from Peter Ryan, who is the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and also from Terry Mulder, the Minister for Transport, about the concerns they have had with the road safety programs of the past. Quite rightly, there was a public perception around secrecy and the accuracy of those speed cameras, and therefore there was a lack of public confidence in the road safety camera programs. I am pleased we have fulfilled one of our commitments in making it known where road safety cameras are located.

Speed camera locations were published in the *Herald Sun* this week. There are 615 locations in total, with 46 speed cameras having been highlighted within my region alone. That shows that this government is fulfilling its commitment to transparency in relation to this issue.

The report contains some detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations. One of those conclusions is that road safety cameras improve road safety and reduce road trauma, and their ongoing use as an enforcement tool remains an appropriate measure. There are aspects of the program that can be further strengthened to allay public perceptions of its integrity and purpose, and we as a government need to continue to strengthen it.

I have not gone into the detail of the report and would like to speak further on it. I commend the Auditor-General and the Department of Justice for their input into this report. As I said at the outset, anything we can do to further improve road safety should be undertaken.

Mental Health Review Board: report 2010–11

Ms DARVENIZA (Northern Victoria) — I am pleased to rise and speak on the Mental Health Review Board annual report for 2010–11. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and bring to the attention of this chamber and the Parliament the important work of the Mental Health Review Board. I worked for many years as a mental health nurse and also had a lot to do with the mental health industry prior to being involved in politics and Parliament. I am interested in all things to do with mental health, particularly the Mental Health Review Board. I have been around for so long I can remember when it first got its powers under legislation and started to carry out its work in our mental health facilities.

The report is well written and easy for any layperson or person from the industry to look at and get a good overview and understanding of the important work carried out by this board. It is interesting to note that the report sets out case studies in an easy-to-understand way, as well as the sorts of cases and issues that the board is dealing with all the time. Those case studies give readers an insight into the complexities and challenges that the Mental Health Review Board is dealing with all the time.

At the outset I congratulate the board for the report. I particularly congratulate Matthew Carroll, who is the president of the Mental Health Review Board. Included in the report is a long list of people who have been members during the reporting period. People from the legal fraternity, psychiatrists and community representatives are on the board. There are too many to read out, and there has been a range of changes over that 2010–11 period. I bring to the attention of the house that the report has made particular mention of the contribution made by Dr James Carson, who was first appointed as a psychiatrist member in March 1988. The

report states that Dr Carson played a lead role in the development and implementation of the current Mental Health Act and the establishment of the board. He occupied the position of a full-time psychiatrist member and was also the board's acting president for a number of extended periods.

The report sets out its priorities, of which there are three. The first is the implementation of the board's statutory functions according to the charter. The report outlines what those functions are and points out that the board attends 52 venues regularly — generally fortnightly, and some divisions visit more than one mental health service on the same day as the board undertakes its hearings. The board conducts hearings by videoconference, particularly in some of the regional areas, and it regularly visits regional areas. The report outlines the importance of the use of interpreters, advocates and other representation for people who are appearing before the board.

The second priority is maintaining and developing the knowledge, culture and capacity of the board. The third priority is pursuing ongoing improvements to the way in which the board carries out its work. In relation to those two areas, the report outlines issues to do with consultation and engagement as well as staff development. It also outlines a number of changes that have been initiated by the board during the reporting period and the changes that it is looking to pursue and finalise in the future. It is a comprehensive report, which is easy to read and well worth taking a look at.

Department of Premier and Cabinet: report 2010–11

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Department of Premier and Cabinet annual report for 2010–11. I would like to concentrate on pages 14 and 15 of the report, which refer to the introduction of the inaugural *2011 Victorian Families Statement*. Page 15 outlines the context in which the Victorian families statement was made. Page 14 of the report contains a black-and-white picture of a number of people applauding. I suppose the people who produced the report would like to think that anyone reading it would believe there was a round of applause for the introduction of the Victorian families statement.

I understand that the Premier's introduction of a families statement is going to be an annual occurrence, and I think, to be a bit cynical, there was a process brought in by the previous Premier whereby he would make a statement of intent regarding legislation that would be introduced that coming year. When in opposition the now government was very critical of that

process; it said the process was the previous Premier, Mr Brumby, being vain and making a state-of-the-union-type address to bring attention to himself. I think it is a bit rich that the new Premier has repackaged this process and now calls it the Victorian families statement. I do not see a great deal of difference. The way I see the world is that most people are fortunate to be part of some sort of family and I think you make a statement that covers everyone. Most people are part of some sort of family. Even if you are not a direct relation, you can be a member of a family just by being a family friend who associates with and sees themselves as part of that family. The then opposition ridiculed what Mr Brumby did and then rebadged it with the name 'Victorian families', and I think that is a cynical exercise that this particular government undertook.

This report on the inaugural families statement says the launch of the statement marked the beginning of the government's dialogue with families on these priorities. There was a kitchen table consultation session with the Minister for Community Services involving 14 community members from diverse backgrounds. This forum developed support for families going forward, and I am just wondering if those community members mentioned that it would be a good thing for families if VCAL (Victorian certificate of applied learning) coordinators were cut. I would be very surprised if they mentioned that. I would be very surprised if those community members said it would be a good thing if funding for occasional child-care programs, including Take a Break programs at community centres, was cut.

I would be surprised if those people sitting around the kitchen table talking on behalf of their communities said it would be a good thing for this government to take away the apprentice welfare officers who worked out of TAFE institutions with young men and women undertaking apprenticeships in the TAFE system. These apprentice welfare officers were there to help support young people through their apprenticeships in any fashion at all. If those doing apprenticeships required welfare services or had any other issue, these officers were there. However, the new government came in and removed the funding for them. If these community members were sitting around and talking about what was good for families, I would be surprised if they were to agree to cut VCAL, get rid of the Take a Break program, get rid of apprenticeship welfare officers and make a number of other funding cuts that this particular government has instituted and which have been very bad for Victorian families.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: report 2010–11

Mr VINEY (Eastern Victoria) — I wish to make a statement in relation to the annual report of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for 2010–11. Upon coming to government in 1999 and after subsequent elections the Labor Party declared that education would be its no. 1 priority. In doing so it invested substantially in the education budget. The former government invested massively in the recruitment and training of new teachers in the system, reducing class sizes across the system, and in major capital developments across the education system in Victoria, not only in government schools but also in non-government schools.

I know that in his time as Minister for Education Mr Lenders was extremely proud of the work the Labor government was doing, particularly in the capital works area. In fact the government set a substantial target, which is reflected in much of this annual report, for the refurbishment or rebuilding of every school across the state. I think Mr Lenders could probably remind me of how many government schools there were.

Mr Lenders — There were 1596 schools.

Mr VINEY — There were 1596 schools, all of which were getting substantial injections of capital funding.

One of the programs the Labor government introduced that it was very proud of was the VCAL (Victorian certificate of applied learning) program. Figures on page 45 of the annual report show that in the 2010–11 year the target for the number of students to be admitted to the VCAL program was 14 000. The actual number of students admitted into the VCAL program between 2010 and 2011 was 14 998 — 2 off 15 000. An extra 1000 students partook of the VCAL program, which is a great program that provides educational opportunities to students who might not fit into the normal school curriculum, particularly into the Victorian certificate of education program, and who do not have a specific pathway plan for tertiary or university-type education.

VCAL provides them with a pathway into further education and vocational education. This is a program that is funded on a per-student basis. The critical thing about this program is that it needs coordinators. These students need mentors; these students need support; these students need individualised program training. If this government cuts the coordination out of the VCAL program, it is going to cut the vocational education and

further training opportunities for students across Victoria. It reminds me of the former Kennett government's cuts to the Grey Sisters. These cuts are unnecessary; these cuts are harmful to ordinary people; these cuts affect people who are perhaps more vulnerable in our community. To cut this program and service for vulnerable students and people with some disadvantage when the normal education program is unsuitable for them, or not going to be practicable for them, is a disgrace.

I know \$48 million has been cut out of this program. That is on top of the \$480 million cuts to the recurrent education budget and a halving of the capital works budget for education. I think Victorians will reject these cuts. They will reject them, because not only is there no net benefit from these cuts, but no Victorians will see any gain from these cuts. These are mean-spirited cuts that demonstrate that this new government has not learnt from the history that resulted in its loss at the 1999 election; it was because of the way it treated education. It would do well to put education as its no. 1 priority, which was the position of the previous government. I urge the government to reconsider these matters.

Department of Premier and Cabinet: report 2010–11

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — I wish to comment on the report of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. I will make a brief contribution because time is running out. My issue essentially is that the Department of Premier and Cabinet chose to make huge increases in ministerial salaries. The first act of this government was to increase the cabinet by 10 per cent.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I desire to move, by leave:

That the house do now adjourn.

Leave refused.

Sitting suspended 6.30 p.m. until 9.49 p.m.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I desire to move, by leave:

That the house do now adjourn.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The same issue applies now as would have applied at 6.30 p.m., and that is that the Chair cannot take an adjournment

motion whilst there is a motion before the Chair. There is a motion before the Chair at this stage; it is the motion moved by Mr Tee. The house has to go through the process of dealing with that motion before I can take a different motion, which may or may not be the adjournment motion. Under standing order 5.02 we are dealing with Mr Tee's motion. Standing order 5.02 establishes the business proceedings of the house, which is the issue that may have been impacted on by Mr David Davis seeking leave to adjourn at 6.30 p.m. The standing order that applies in the case I have just described is standing order 4.05, which pertains to a motion to adjourn moved by a minister. It states:

A minister may move at any time when there is no question before the Chair that the house do now adjourn. Such a motion may not be amended.

There is a motion before the Chair, so I am unable to accept an adjournment motion.

PLANNING: AMENDMENT VC82

Debate resumed.

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Before the interruption for statements on reports and papers I was working through what is an extraordinary development in Victoria: we have a state government that is determined to close down an industry that is good for Victorians, the environment and families. I was addressing the concern felt by many farmers in regional Victoria who are worried that their opportunities to stay on the land have been dealt a blow by this government's proposal. Farmers who have been farming for generations and who are struggling, have been dealt a blow. In terms of wind turbines, the evidence is compelling and clear that host farms can benefit from leasing land for wind farms. Today, as we speak, the limited wind farms we have at the moment represent some \$2.1 million per year.

That figure of \$2.1 million is projected to increase to \$16 million if existing approved wind farms are constructed. At the moment when the clock stops under this government the income that farmers are locked into receiving might be as high as \$16 million. There are a number of caveats in relation to that, because the assumption behind the \$16 million is that all approved wind farms have commenced construction. There are some very severe and draconian transitional provisions in the planning scheme dealing with wind farms which may mean that that \$16 million figure may not be met. But as it stands, when the former government left office there was \$16 million worth of annual payments that were locked in for Victorian farmers. I am pleased that

we can be confident that that income will be delivered, but because of the actions of this government that will be the end of the capacity of farmers to gain any additional income from wind farms.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr TEE — That is not just simply my view; that is the view of the government, Mrs Peulich. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has put out its forecast in terms of wind farms. Its forecast is that for three years effectively upon the completion of the Macarthur wind farm — for the term of this government — there will not be any additional wind-generated power put into the grid. The figures of the Department of Primary Industries show that the effect of the wind farm policy will be to halt the provision of energy into the grid and therefore halt the opportunities for farming communities to get revenue. This is the start; that is one area where farming communities will suffer. But this is an important component in a \$3.6 billion regional investment package which has literally been blown away by this government.

In addition to those rental returns for farmers, there is \$3.6 billion which flows through to families in regional Victoria. What that means — and I am using the government's own figures — is that there will be no new wind farms for three years after the construction of this wind farm; there will be no new wind farms for the term of this government. Using the department's own figures I can say that \$3.6 billion of investment is gone. Farmers will lose out on rental return and families will lose out on high-skilled jobs in regional Victoria. That will have a ripple effect through regional communities, because people will see gaps in the Country Fire Authority as these families move to get jobs elsewhere. There will be gaps in local netball teams, there will be gaps in local football teams and there will be gaps in local schools.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr TEE — We are seeing the glue of local communities being under threat because of your government's decision to close down this industry. Your government's decision means that for the next three years — these are the government figures —

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Mr TEE — No, this are the DPI figures. Have a look at the DPI figures.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TEE — No, the DPI government figures show there will be no new energy put into the grid for the term of this government.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TEE — They are your figures, not mine. I am not arguing; I am just saying that these are the figures the government has put out. The government has stated that the current income for farmers to receive is \$16 million. That is not the opposition asserting that; that is the government's figure. You cannot deny the impact of taking \$3.6 billion out of regional communities and farming committees.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TEE — Those are your figures. I would encourage those opposite who deny their own government's figures to come with me and talk to some of those farmers and communities and listen to their concerns and look at the fear. They will see the fear in the eyes of the farmers about the future members opposite have created.

I encourage members opposite to talk to those communities, and to have some answers to the questions those communities ask about what it is they have done to deserve this. They would like some answers to the questions about — —

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The PRESIDENT — Order! The question is:

That the house do now adjourn.

Firewood: collection permits

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — The matter I raise tonight on the adjournment is for the Minister for Local Government. The matter goes to an issue that I have raised previously with four other ministers and have not had a response to: what I would describe as the botched firewood policy announced by Ms Lovell in November last year. The Minister for Environment and Climate Change has failed to respond regarding the policy itself, the Minister for Roads has failed to respond regarding the effect on roadside reserves and VicRoads, the Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business has failed to respond regarding the effect on small business and the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security has failed to respond regarding the effects on forestry.

My issue tonight is for the Minister for Local Government, and the action I seek is that she make very clear to Victoria's regional municipalities how this firewood policy will be implemented and in particular the difference between what will happen on local roads and what will happen on state roads.

I heard the mayor of Indigo shire on the radio just last week expressing real anxiety about how she as mayor of a municipality was meant to be dealing with the queries that her council was getting from citizens who were puzzled. They were puzzled by the Department of Sustainability and Environment website conflicting with press releases from numerous Nationals MPs representing electorates in northern Victoria saying that firewood was free from 1 September and that they just needed to go and collect it. When you checked on the DSE website you saw that there was nowhere along the length of the Murray River, nowhere in East Gippsland and nowhere in the north-west of the state where there were any depots where firewood was available.

Of course those who saw the press releases went out with their trailers and chainsaws to harvest some of this firewood from the roadsides. The issue for local government and local roads is how to apply the occupational health and safety standards and how council by-laws officers are to apply the rules when they are told by press release from local members of Parliament that firewood harvesting on roadsides is safe.

The action I seek from the Minister for Local Government is that she communicate Ms Lovell's policy and how it has been applied by various government departments across the state so that the roadsides are safe, so that councils know where they stand and how many resources they need and most importantly so that citizens can act safely.

Carbon tax: economic impact

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I wish to address my adjournment contribution to the Minister for Regional and Rural Development, the Honourable Peter Ryan. As we sit in this Parliament today I am conscious of our federal counterparts doing similarly in the nation's capital and debating the Gillard government's push to introduce a carbon tax. In its current guise the tax will cripple the nation, it will cripple jobs growth, it will cripple prosperity and it will cripple the heart of Victoria's manufacturing, production and farming capacities. It is to this matter that I wish particularly to draw the minister's attention.

In my electorate of Western Victoria Region the impact will hit farmers and small businesses of all persuasions, but possibly the hardest hit will be the dairy industry. It is the producer of the state's biggest commodity, supplying 65 per cent of the nation's milk from 4500 dairy farms. This industry is energy intensive. The United Dairyfarmers of Victoria and the Victorian Farmers Federation believe the cost burden could be at least \$5000 a year per dairy. Indeed Department of Primary Industries modelling suggests that that figure could be as high as \$28 000 for large non-irrigated farms in the state's south-west. Further, figures released last month by Deloitte Access Economics reveal the carbon tax will reduce Victoria's jobs growth by more than 24 000 and reduce output by nearly \$3 billion in 2015.

Put simply, this is an insidious tax. It is all pervasive and will eat into the Victorian economy like an acid spill over flesh. I would like to know how Victoria can be protected from this tax and importantly how our farms and farming communities can be shielded from the ugly consequences now shaping up before them in a murky cloud of financial gloom. We must protect the integrity and security of our food producers and small businesses. I ask: what is being done to achieve this?

The federal government needs energy solutions, and it cannot continue to find refuge in its current position that places wind as the clean energy panacea. Wind will indeed be part of the solution, but only part. And it comes with a set of issues of its own. To many the turbines are bastions and beacons of a new frontier that beckons greenfields, crisper air and bluer skies — and, in theory, less carbon. But we are a long way from this.

The chase by companies seeking coal seam gas supplies is also rapidly becoming the next debate to swirl across Victoria's paddocks. I am increasingly confronted with angry residents who seek greater rights and improved communication from these companies.

The hasty, poorly considered antics of the Gillard government on carbon tax are shoving Australia into a carbon oblivion so deep that it could be decades before we dare emerge to sniff the stench of lost fortunes on so many fronts. Now is the time for sensible and genuine debate on carbon tax and its outcomes. The balance of power is indeed taking on a new meaning beyond the corridors of Canberra.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I will let this stand tonight because I am in a benevolent mood, but what members need to understand is that the adjournment debate is not an opportunity to deliver a setpiece speech. Whilst it is true that a member no longer needs

to actually pose a question to a minister in asking for specific action, the adjournment debate is not about giving a setpiece speech. I think Mr Ramsay sailed very close to the wind tonight in delivering a setpiece speech rather than actually seeking some consideration by the minister or the government in respect of government administration. As I said, I will let it stand tonight, but members ought to be aware that that type of presentation in the adjournment debate really is not in keeping with the standing orders.

Thomas Embling Hospital: security

Ms BROAD (Northern Victoria) — I raise a matter for the Premier concerning the Thomas Embling Hospital, also known as Forensicare, Victoria's most secure mental health facility. I seek a response from the Premier advising what action was taken by the Victorian government to ensure the safety of patients and staff at Thomas Embling Hospital last week following the lockout of security guards by the security contractor at the hospital.

Members will be aware that the Thomas Embling Hospital is a very important mental health facility in Victoria and that an inquiry is currently under way concerning the stabbing deaths of two patients some two years ago at the facility. The lockout occurred in circumstances where security issues had been specifically considered by Fair Work Australia. They were considered because security staff took the protected action that they were seeking to take, as is their right. In negotiations for a new enterprise bargaining agreement their application was considered by Fair Work Australia, which specifically considered issues around safety of staff and patients, and it came to the conclusion that the bans that were being sought by staff could proceed without endangering life or the safety, health or welfare of the public, staff and patients. These matters were specifically considered. However, action was then taken by the security contractor to lock out security staff and to put other staff in place. I think it almost goes without saying or needing to underline the point that in a secure mental health facility circumstances such as these make for a very serious situation indeed.

Given all of the circumstances and the particular facility in which these events took place, and because there are a number of ministers with various portfolio responsibilities in relation to all of the matters surrounding the circumstances at the Thomas Embling Hospital last week, I am directing my query to the Premier. That is the reason I am seeking advice from the Premier about these matters.

Puppy farms: abolition

Mrs PETROVICH (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter today is for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, Peter Walsh. My concern is for prompt action to be taken to stop the cruelty and inhumane conditions of some commercial dog breeding facilities.

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 requires any person who runs a dog breeding business for profit to register with their local council. I understand that most dog breeders love their animals and look after them properly; however, we need to ensure that backyard breeders and what have become known as ‘puppy factories’ are registered and strictly controlled.

This Sunday, 18 September, from midday at Parliament House there will be a rally for what has become popularly known as Oscar’s law. A previous rally attracted 5000 protesters to the steps of Parliament House. Oscar’s law has had overwhelming public support, as well as assistance from the Kindness Trust, and its website has had over half a million visits.

Oscar was a stud dog who lived for six years in a tiny, filthy cage with no sunlight or walks. He lived with hundreds of other dogs and, I am sad to say, it was within my electorate and the Macedon Ranges area in which I live. He was found by Debra Tranter, who has investigated about 70 puppy factories and backyard breeders in Victoria and New South Wales. She tells us that up to 1000 dogs are held in some puppy factories and that puppies are being sold for around \$1000 over the internet and through pet shops. Oscar was in a really bad way when she found him.

As part of the coalition’s election commitments, we pledged to ensure that dogs such as Oscar would not be subjected to this sort of treatment. I ask the minister to provide an update on this legislation.

Victorian certificate of applied learning: funding

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Education. It regards funding to the Victorian certificate of applied learning and specifically cuts to funding for VCAL coordinators in schools.

This issue has been raised by schools across Victoria. It was raised by Ms Tierney in her members statement today, when she indicated that the school principals association had also raised concerns about the \$12 million that has been cut from VCAL funding. The

Australian Education Union has also raised concerns and is running a campaign regarding this issue. I had a look at some of the testimonials on the AEU website. One is from Bronwyn Carlos, who coordinates VCAL at Hallam Senior College. She says:

VCAL is a vital program in education in Victoria. It caters for a range of students and some are disengaged from mainstream education. When kids have choices, they are more likely to stay engaged.

...

The government’s cuts are an enormous amount of money to be chopped out of the blue. I can see some schools will just say it’s too expensive, we can’t afford to run it and we’re not getting the support. It will create further skills shortages and have a detrimental effect on a large number of students.

VCAL allows our applied learners to grow and complete their secondary education.

Jane Davey, the manager of youth programs at Preston Reservoir adult community education (PRACE), says:

At PRACE, we run a VCAL and PreCAL program for young people who can’t complete their education in a mainstream setting. Our students have significant and complex issues including homelessness, teen parenting, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, physical, mental and sexual abuse, severe bullying, victims of crime. We work with them so that they can complete their VCAL and re-engage back into education, family, community and society.

...

The program has an integrated curriculum and the theme is healthy eating, healthy choices and healthy lifestyle.

She goes on to say the cuts are ‘devastating and the more I think about it, the more I realise what we won’t be able to do’.

Rob Duncan is the assistant principal at Narre Warren South P-12 College. He says that the \$126 000 cut at his school will mean that without effective coordination the outcomes that its programs have achieved cannot be achieved. There has been a lot of media concentration on this issue, and I heard the Premier say on ABC radio that funding for VCAL coordination was not needed because the program is mature and embedded.

Given all the concerns raised about it, my request to the minister is that he indicate to me and to the house on what evidence he bases the comment that the funding for coordination of VCAL is no longer needed because it is embedded.

National Stroke Week

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Health,

Mr David Davis, and I want to bring to the attention of the house that this week is National Stroke Week.

One in six people will suffer a stroke in their lifetime, but many more people will be affected by stroke. Every person who has a stroke is significantly impacted upon, as are their family and friends. Every 6 seconds someone, regardless of their age or gender, dies from a stroke. Strokes do not discriminate and can happen to anyone, but many strokes are preventable. Imagine waking up one morning and being permanently paralysed on one side of your body or having to spend months or even years relearning the basic daily tasks that we take for granted, such as eating, dressing, bathing, walking, speaking or writing.

Strokes happen when the blood supply to the brain is cut off, and they can result in severe disability or death. Recovery, where possible, can be long and people may never completely recover. The risk of having a stroke increases with high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Simple interventions, such as undertaking regular exercise, can have a big impact and help prevent stroke — and many other conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease. I encourage all Victorians and indeed all members in the house to know their stroke risk and learn how simple changes can have a dramatic effect on reducing their chances of suffering a stroke.

I would like to congratulate Caulfield Hospital, which is just around the corner from my office in the electorate of Southern Metropolitan Region, on participating in the National Stroke Foundation's Know Your Stroke Risk program for National Stroke Week. I ask the minister to take note of the importance of programs such as these within the electorate that I represent, and indeed which he represents, as do Mrs Coote, Ms Pennicuik and Mr Lenders.

Mental health: government inquiry

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The matter I would like to raise on the adjournment tonight is for the Minister for Mental Health. I want to encourage the minister to consider the appropriate governance arrangements for the inquiry into mental health issues that the government has announced in response to public disclosure and discussion, particularly through the *Age* newspaper recently, about a range of matters in the mental health portfolio. I raise these matters not in any shape or form to give comfort to any intrigue about or salacious interpretation of those matters or to seek the minister's reflection on the appropriate governance of and mechanisms for that inquiry, and not in a way to try to contaminate or dilute the terms of reference that have been created by the

government, but rather in relation to the way in which that inquiry is to be undertaken in accordance with the duties and obligations of the chief psychiatrist, as outlined in the Mental Health Act 1986.

The reason I raise this matter is that the government has sought that the inquiry be undertaken under the auspices and powers of the chief psychiatrist and the Mental Health Act 1986. Whilst the act provides for such a review to be undertaken and whilst it is clearly within the scope of powers of the chief psychiatrist, I ask the minister to reflect on whether this is in the best interests of the mental health portfolio and whether it is in the best interests of the chief psychiatrist herself to be the person who undertakes this inquiry.

I draw the minister's attention to the fact that under section 105 of part 3 of the Mental Health Act 1986 it is quite possible for the chief psychiatrist to delegate responsibility for any of her functions, including the ability to undertake this inquiry, to a psychiatrist who is eligible to be registered within the state of Victoria. I suggest that on reflection it may be wise for the minister, in consultation with the chief psychiatrist, to embark upon this course of action, in that it would satisfy the expectations of the government and the terms of reference that have been established. It would also enable the inquiry to be undertaken in a way which would not lead to a potential conflict of interest.

Point Cook: infrastructure

Mr ELSBURY (Western Metropolitan) — The matter I wish to raise this evening is for the attention of the Premier and relates to misinformation being disseminated in the western suburbs by members of the opposition who sit in the other place. I refer in particular to a recent mail-out by the member for Altona in the other place, Jill Hennessy, to Point Cook residents seeking to spread fear about a council-initiated review of the use of green wedge land in Wyndham.

In calling for a rally, which Ms Hennessy did not attend, the literature says:

The Baillieu government just won't listen. They won't build us any more desperately needed local primary schools or upgrade our roads and public transport. All that the Point Cook community can expect is more houses and even more traffic.

This was a lazy attempt by the member at cheap politics, when she knows full well that the new coalition government could not possibly have caught up on the 11 years of neglect her government inflicted on the people of Point Cook. Ms Hennessy instead chose to lay blame for ongoing issues with roads, schools and

other amenities across Point Cook on the 10 months of the Baillieu government. Ms Hennessy claimed that the coalition was ignoring the need for more schools in the Point Cook area, but it is the Baillieu government that is committed to providing a P-9 school in the Point Cook area in this year's budget. Either Ms Hennessy has failed to keep herself informed about what is going on in her electorate or she is deliberately misleading the people of Point Cook.

Ms Hennessy has also chosen to attack the coalition on providing public transport infrastructure. That is a bit rich. We have committed to providing disabled access at the new Williams Landing train station, a measure that the previous government and Ms Hennessy did not initiate when the designs were conceived for that train station. Compared to the disaster of the previous government's Laverton train station redevelopment which relies on lifts that break down and goat-track stairs, the Williams Landing station provides great accessibility through a combination of lifts and ramps. All Ms Hennessy needed to do to be informed about this matter was to read the *Point Cook Weekly*, but perhaps she does not get the local papers.

I understand and fully appreciate the difficulties that the people of Point Cook have in gaining access to the freeway as the arterial roads in the area have clearly been neglected for a very long time. It was under Ms Hennessy's Labor government that these matters were allowed to get out of control. I am not the only one who says that this is going on. A Point Cook resident was reported in this week's *Point Cook Weekly* as accusing the Labor Party of 'using last week's rally as a publicity stunt to mask its failure to invest in Point Cook while it was in government'.

As a local member I am raising these matters to do with public infrastructure and will be seeking in the future further benefits for Point Cook residents to remedy past mismanagement.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I direct that the minister not answer that adjournment matter because again it was a setpiece speech; it was not a contribution that met the terms of the adjournment debate standing orders. I previously allowed Mr Ramsay's adjournment item on the basis that I then issued a warning to members, and I think Mr Elsbury might well have considered his remarks, having regard to that warning earlier tonight.

Members need to familiarise themselves with the terms of the adjournment debate standing orders. Mr Elsbury's adjournment item was a setpiece speech, and I direct that the minister not respond to that matter.

Victorian certificate of applied learning: funding

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, Martin Dixon. The action I seek from the minister is that he seriously reconsider his decision to strip funding from the VCAL (Victorian certificate of applied learning) program. I understand that this decision was directed at removing funding for VCAL coordinators under the guise of them being no longer necessary for this program to keep forging forward.

There is one particular school in the electorate that I represent, Croydon Community School. A number of students find their way there. It is a great school. Some students have not been able to go forward in mainstream schools — they may have found it hard to exist there, or the school they were at found it hard to coexist with them. Croydon Community School has a huge catchment in Eastern Metropolitan Region, where a number of young people find themselves. The Victorian certificate of applied learning is what this school is all about. Through VCAL these young people can find a way forward to employment. The VCAL coordinator performs functions like driving young students to their work placements, intensively coaching each student in surviving in a workplace environment and giving intensive coaching about how to organise their lives, their study and their work placements.

I would like to reiterate that I implore the minister to reconsider removing funding from the VCAL program and to reinstate it and look at it as an important investment in certain young people in Victoria.

BlueScope Steel: job losses

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade. The recent announcement by BlueScope Steel that it will cut 200 jobs from its plant in Hastings is terrible news for the Western Port and broader Mornington Peninsula community. It is a blow for the Western Port region and represents an anxious time for the families and community members affected by the job losses. Some face the prospect of trying to continue to pay a mortgage and support their family in the face of unemployment and the uncertainty that can generate.

BlueScope Steel's plant has a long history in the area; it is one of Victoria's largest manufacturers. The company makes an important economic contribution to the region as one of the top employers on the Mornington Peninsula. The loss of jobs at BlueScope

Steel will no doubt be felt by local businesses as well. While providing local jobs, BlueScope Steel has also been a great contributor to the wider community by contributing to local projects for the benefit of the Mornington Peninsula. The loss of these jobs comes soon after the fire at the Inghams plant in Somerville, which temporarily closed that facility, so it is a most unwelcome development.

There is no doubt that the current environment is a particularly challenging one for Victorian and Australian manufacturing. The high Australian dollar is hurting this country's manufacturing trade as increasing overseas competition presents a range of difficulties for manufacturers. This week sees the federal government introducing legislation for a carbon tax — a tax that will further add to the competitive challenges facing manufacturers such as BlueScope Steel if they are to continue to manufacture here in Victoria.

I am pleased that the coalition has moved quickly to support affected workers through the Victorian training guarantee, which allows workers to access a government-subsidised training place. The coalition has also negotiated with the federal government regarding its contribution to the Western Port area in the aftermath of these job losses. I note the action by the Baillieu government and ask that the minister continues to work with the BlueScope Steel workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the recent announcement.

Responses

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Housing) — I have written responses to adjournment matters raised by Mr Viney on 25 May, Mr Finn on 31 May, Ms Tierney on 17 August and Mr O'Brien on 18 August.

In the adjournment debate tonight Mr Lenders raised an issue for the Minister for Local Government regarding firewood collection policy on local roads.

Mr Ramsay raised a matter for the Minister for Regional and Rural Development regarding the cost of a carbon tax to Victoria.

Ms Broad raised a matter for the Premier regarding security at Thomas Embling Hospital.

Mrs Petrovich raised an issue for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security regarding the conditions in puppy farms in Victoria.

Ms Pennicuik raised a matter for the Minister for Education regarding Victorian certificate of applied learning (VCAL) funding.

Ms Crozier raised a matter for the Minister for Health regarding programs for those who have suffered a stroke, which is particularly timely as this is National Stroke Week.

Mr Jennings raised an issue for the Minister for Mental Health regarding a review of the Mental Health Act 1986 by the chief psychiatrist.

Mr Leane raised a matter for the Minister for Education regarding funding for VCAL.

Mr O'Donohue raised a matter for the Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade regarding job losses at BlueScope Steel and also the future impact of the federal government's carbon tax on jobs in Victoria and asked the minister to continue to support workers at BlueScope Steel to retrain and gain employment.

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — I guess I will simply flag this for an answer from the Minister for Housing now rather than taking any further action because I have not gone down this course before, but standing order 4.13 is quite explicit that adjournment matters need to be responded to within 30 days. I draw to the minister's attention that on 10 February I addressed an adjournment matter to the Premier regarding the Council of Australian Governments to which I have not had a reply. On 5 May I addressed a matter to the Minister for Health regarding a visit to East Gippsland to which I have not had a reply. On 2 June I addressed a matter to the Premier regarding Department of Premier and Cabinet catering to which I have not had a reply. I am less aggrieved by the one on 15 June to the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security regarding a grasslands conference in that he is generally fairly assiduous in replying.

I ask the minister for an explanation for the first three matters and action on her part to get the Premier to reply to two adjournment matters and the Minister for Health to reply to the third according to our standing orders.

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Housing) — I remember raising a similar issue with Mr Lenders when he was the Leader of the Government in the last adjournment debate in my first year in this Parliament when numerous adjournment matters had not been responded to. I am happy to raise these issues with the Premier and with the Minister for Health and seek responses for Mr Lenders.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Elsbury in particular might feel aggrieved that I ruled his matter out of order. Tomorrow I will circulate to members again the basic elements of the contributions they can

make to the adjournment debate, because I think it is important for us all to be reminded exactly what constitutes an adjournment item. As I said, it is not a period for setpiece speeches.

In the context of Mr Lenders's query tonight about the failure of ministers to meet the 30-day requirement that is set out in our standing orders, I accept that for the most part, if not always, in the contributions that Mr Lenders makes, particularly as we wander through the woods with various ministers, at the moment he does actually pose queries or seek actions or responses from ministers. One of the reasons I pulled up Mr Elsbury and Mr Ramsay tonight was that the nature of their matters in the adjournment debate, apart from anything else tonight, would leave a minister in a position of saying, 'I really do not have to answer that. There is nothing to answer'.

As I said, while the adjournment debate no longer specifically requires a question to be put to a minister, essentially it still requires some consideration by the minister of the item that has been raised. I would have thought that in most cases the expectation of members would be that they would receive a response to what they have put to the minister. In the case of the contributions of Mr Elsbury and Mr Ramsay tonight, quite apart from the fact that they were outside my view of how the standing orders operate in regard to the adjournment debate, I would be sitting there thinking, 'How do I respond to this? There is no question. It is a debate. It is actually entering into the realms of debate, apart from being a setpiece speech, and I have absolutely nowhere to go except to write back and say, "You are a colleague in my party, and congratulations for putting that on the record. I agree wholeheartedly"'. You might expect that response, but that is really not what the minister should be doing.

Mr Lenders, in raising tonight the fact that a minister has not responded within the time set out in our standing orders, reinforces the fact that members have to frame their adjournment items in a way that makes explicit to ministers the response that is required. If there is a question asked or a specific consideration that is sought from the minister, it is therefore right to expect that the minister would respond.

As I said, I do not want to enter into a judgement on Mr Lenders's matters because it is my view, on thinking back, that most, if not all, of Mr Lenders's adjournment items do in fact ask the minister for some sort of action. Mr Lenders is safe in terms of his expectation that he will get a response. I raised this issue tonight in respect of the contributions of two members because members need to know that if they

expect a response to their adjournment debate matters, then the adjournment matters need to be couched accordingly.

Ms BROAD (Northern Victoria) — Firstly, I thank the minister for her response last night in the adjournment debate to an adjournment matter I raised on 1 June. Secondly, I seek from the minister an explanation in relation to two overdue adjournment matters. One matter I raised on 28 June for the attention of the Premier was on support for the family violence program by the name of B-safe, and the other on 30 June also for the attention of the Premier was on support for the Take a Break occasional child-care program.

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development) — Although those two programs have been defunded by the federal government, I will chase up answers for the member.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 10.37 p.m.



Attorney-General

RECEIVED

13 SEP 2011

Clerk of the
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Our ref: CD/11/412143

Mr Wayne Tunnecliffe
Clerk of the Legislative Council
Parliament House
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Mr Tunnecliffe

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL RESOLUTION RE SENTENCING SURVEY

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 17 August 2011 seeking the production of:

a copy of the arrangement and/or contract between the Department of Justice and the Herald Sun newspaper to conduct the on-line sentencing survey.

I also refer to my letter to you advising that the Government required additional time to respond to the resolution.

The Government has arranged for the Department of Justice to search for any documents that would come within the terms of the Council's resolution. It appears there is no document that matches the terms of the Council's resolution.

However, I have enclosed with this letter a copy of a letter from the Department of Justice to the *Herald Sun* newspaper that sets out the arrangements for the publication of the sentencing survey in the *Herald Sun* newspaper, which may be of interest to Members.

The document contains the names and details of individuals. In the interest of personal privacy, and in accordance with normal practice, these details have been excluded.

Yours sincerely

ROBERT CLARK MP
Attorney-General

a/9/11



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Clerk of the Legislative Council
Parliament House
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Mr Tunnecliffe

ORDER FOR DOCUMENTS – NETWORK REVENUE PROTECTION PLAN

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 15 June 2011, seeking the production of:

"a copy of the Network Revenue Protection Plan for the 2011 calendar year, prepared under section 10.1 of the Metlink Services Agreement."

I can now advise the Council that there is no document that responds to that order as the Network Revenue Protection Plan for the 2011 calendar year has not yet been finalised. The Director of Public Transport has provided an extension of time to Metlink to finalise the 2011 plan so it can be enhanced to reflect recent operational changes to the network and to provide greater consistency between the operator components of the plan.

However, in the interests of providing the Legislative Council with information regarding the important issue of revenue protection, I have enclosed a copy of the *draft* Network Revenue Protection Plan for the 2011 calendar year.

I also note that a copy of the *draft* Network Revenue Protection Plan for the 2011 calendar year has been released by the Department of Transport, pursuant to a Freedom of Information request.

Yours sincerely

Hon Terry Mulder MP
Minister for Public Transport

12/9/2011

