

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Tuesday, 26 November 2013

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The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

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

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

Legislative Council standing committees

Economy and Infrastructure Legislation Committee — Mr Barber, Mrs Coote, #Ms Crozier, Mr Drum, Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, #Mr Leane, Mr Lenders, Mr Melhem, #Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pulford and Mr Ramsay.

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

Environment and Planning Legislation Committee — Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Elsbury, #Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, Mrs Kronberg, #Mr Leane, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, #Mrs Peulich, Mr Scheffer, #Mr Tarlamis, Mr Tee and Ms Tierney.

Environment and Planning References Committee — Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Elsbury, #Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, Mrs Kronberg, #Mr Leane, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, #Mrs Peulich, Mr Scheffer, #Mr Tarlamis, Mr Tee and Ms Tierney.

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

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

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Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Mr P. Davis, Mr O'Brien. (*Assembly*): Ms Kanis, Mr McIntosh and Ms Neville.

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Council*): Mr D. Davis, Mr Hall, Mr Lenders, Ms Lovell and Ms Pennicuik. (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Ms Asher, Mr Clark, Ms Hennessy, Mr Merlino, Mr O'Brien and Mr Walsh.

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Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva. (*Assembly*): Ms Barker, Ms Campbell, Mr Gidley, Mr Nardella, Dr Sykes and Mr Watt.

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FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Mr J. LENDERS

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

Mr G. JENNINGS

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. R. HALL

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

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Coote, Mrs Andrea	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Millar, Mrs Amanda Louise ⁴	Northern Victoria	LP
Dalla-Riva, Hon. Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	O'Brien, Mr David Roland Joseph	Western Victoria	Nats
Darveniza, Ms Kaye Mary	Northern Victoria	ALP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
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Guy, Hon. Matthew Jason	Northern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Hon. Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Hall, Hon. Peter Ronald	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Scheffer, Mr Johan Emiel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tarlamis, Mr Lee Reginald	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Koch, Mr David Frank	Western Victoria	LP	Tee, Mr Brian Lennox	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP

¹ Resigned 26 March 2013

² Appointed 8 May 2013

³ Resigned 1 July 2013

⁴ Appointed 21 August 2013

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Tuesday, 26 November 2013

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson)** took the chair at 2.04 p.m. and read the prayer.

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent on 19 November to:

**Courts and Other Justice Legislation
Amendment Act 2013**
**State Taxation and Financial Legislation
Amendment Act 2013**
Statute Law Revision Act 2013
Transport Accident Amendment Act 2013.

FEDERATION ROOM

The **PRESIDENT** — Order! I advise members of the house that K Room has been formally renamed the Federation Room. For some time many of us have wondered how K Room came to be called K Room and what it actually means. We think it must have been on an architect's drawing as the letter accorded to that particular room in the parliamentary precinct. It has been affectionately known by us all as K Room for many decades, if not more than a century. However, the Speaker and I considered that it was important to recognise the historic aspects of this building's place in Australia's history, not just as the Victorian Parliament but indeed as the first Parliament of the Federation, and therefore it was considered appropriate that that room ought to be called the Federation Room.

It was renamed Federation Room in the last sitting week, and I invite members to refer to that room as Federation Room — or perhaps in transition as Federation, formerly K Room, sort of like Mrs Atkinson nee Siemens or something. We look forward to people recognising through that room the role these buildings played in the early days of Federation.

VICTORIA DAY COUNCIL

The **PRESIDENT** — In the same context I wish to advise the house that I recently attended a celebration by the Victoria Day Council of the separation of Victoria from New South Wales. It is one of the most significant days in the history of this state. It was certainly a momentous occasion at the time and one that, in terms of legacy, has been extremely important to Melbourne and Victoria. I quote from the speech given on that day by Norman Kennedy, president of the Victoria Day Council, and I do so because it is

important again that the Parliament recognises some these historic milestones. Mr Kennedy said in his speech on that day, which was actually delivered under the Separation Tree at the Royal Botanic Gardens:

The Victoria Day Council is an independent, non-political organisation maintained by public subscription. Membership is open to all Victorians.

The separation of Victoria from New South Wales in 1851 on the eve of the great expansion caused by the gold rush is probably the single most important factor in the development of Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne as we know it today. If Port Phillip, as Victoria was known before separation, had remained a district of New South Wales, it is very likely that the wealth of the gold fields would have been plundered by NSW and Victoria would have remained a neglected outpost.

The first attempt at a separate colony occurred in 1840.

The following year, 1841, Governor Gipps visited Port Phillip and found its citizens full of complaints —

and a number of complaints were raised with the Governor at that time. He probably thought that it was a good idea to get rid of this troublesome colony. This occurred in 1850, and when news arrived on the barque *Lysander* on 11 November 1850:

... Lieutenant Governor Latrobe made his famous formal announcement under the Separation Tree at 10.30 a.m. on the 15th of November in front of a huge crowd of Melbournians.

As we all know, after separation Victoria grew at a very significant rate, as Mr Kennedy referred to on that day. Following that historic event Victoria had the gold rush, and what Victoria and Melbourne are today is partly due to the legacy of both the separation of Victoria and the enterprise of Victorians at the time of the gold rush. I would like to extend my thanks to the Victoria Day Council for keeping alive the tradition of recognising this important event in Victoria's history. I note that Separation Day was celebrated on 1 July for around half a century.

Hon. D. M. Davis interjected.

The **PRESIDENT** — The Leader of the Government said, 'Until 1913', and I think that is the correct date. Whilst I do not want to enter into the policies of parties, I note that as part of its policy propositions the opposition indicated that Show Day might become another public holiday going forward. I would suggest that in terms of significance perhaps we might reconsider Separation Day and its importance in the history of this state if we are to look at creating further public holidays.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Vocational education and training subsidies

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Mr Hall. On 13 November the minister told this house that he would provide 60 days notification to training providers of any changes to core subsidies, and yet on Friday, 15 November, he announced changes to start on 1 January 2014, which is 47 days notification. Given that in his own words this is a mandatory requirement for the contracts, is the minister in breach of his own contractual requirements?

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — In response to the question, no, I am certainly not in breach. I did make an error, though, in terms of a legal requirement, and I freely admit to that. I think, if my memory is correct, that I said I am required to provide 60 days notice for any change in subsidies. When I went back and checked that fact, I found that the legal requirement is to provide 20 days notice, so I was incorrect in providing that advice to the chamber in that answer. But Mr Lenders is correct in saying that more than 40 days notice of changes in subsidies was given to providers.

Supplementary question

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for his answer and for the reassurance that he was within his contractual requirements. Given the minister has advised the house that he must provide 40 days notice, and given the *Australian* reported last Wednesday that a provider was concerned about this issue, does the minister think that, to avoid the tag reported in the *Australian* that the government is an ‘unreliable business partner’, he could advise all providers that 20 days notice is required and not the 60 days he mentioned in Parliament?

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — When providers express an interest to engage with government in a contract or other arrangement, all of those conditions are clearly spelt out as part of the contracting arrangements. Every single provider out there knows that a minimum 20 days notice must be given for any change in subsidies. That is already clearly advised in the expression of interest documents that they all receive.

Victorian Public Healthcare Awards

Mr KOCH (Western Victoria) — My question without notice is to my colleague the Honourable David

Davis, the Minister for Health. Will the minister inform the house of which health services were recognised for their excellence at recent health-care awards?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I am very pleased that the member has asked this question about the 2013 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards. I was very pleased last Wednesday to be at the health-care awards and to see a number of our key health facilities win recognition for their contributions. I see Mr Jennings smirking, but this is a serious matter. This is a matter where health-care services across the state — —

Mr Jennings — In fact I retweeted, with pride, the award recipients on your behalf.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — Yes. That is what I was about to say — that the award recipients deserve all the recognition they are getting.

I pay tribute to Ms Crozier, the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, who sat on a number of the selection committees. The committees took a good deal of time to make difficult decisions on a number of applicants, who can take great pride in their applications. Eastern Health won the Metropolitan Health Service of the Year award. I congratulate it on that award.

Mr Koch will be aware that Barwon Health won Regional Health Service of the Year award, for the second year running, and did so with great aplomb. Rochester and Elmore District Health Service won Rural Health Service of the Year. Diaverum won the Private Hospital Excellence award, which is a new award for a private service that is contributing to our health system. Western Region Health Centre won the Primary Health Service of the Year award. The Alfred won the Premier’s Award for Advancing Healthcare — Putting Patients First.

This is a very good outcome. Key health services across the state have applied for these awards. The selection panels had to make difficult decisions in determining these awards, and they have done great work. This is an important way of recognising health services for their great contributions.

As I said, Rochester and Elmore District Health Service was named Victoria’s top rural health service.

In a number of cases the awards pay tribute to specific experts who have contributed over a lifetime. They include Dr Eric Fairbank, AM, of South West Health Care; Associate Professor Lesley Reti of the Royal Women’s Hospital; and Clinical Associate Professor Alison Marie Streep, AO, of Alfred Health. All these

people have had outstanding careers in their respective fields and in my view are truly deserving of the accolades they received. This is an important category that recognises those who have contributed often over many decades to not only their health service but also to health care across the state.

Victorians can be proud of the outcomes of the health-care awards. Barwon Health can take pride in winning twice in a row. Austin won the metropolitan service award last year, but it was good to see Eastern Health win it this year. As members will know, a major \$447 million development is occurring at Box Hill Hospital. At the same time, that health service has important campuses across the eastern suburbs, out to Healesville and up into the Dandenongs — —

Mr Lenders — Lilydale as well.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — Lilydale as well. That health service can take great pride in what has been achieved.

Aged-care training courses

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Ageing. Last week's announcement of further TAFE funding cuts has led to a significant reduction in government subsidies for aged-care training courses. The funding for the aged-care certificate III has been reduced from \$8 to \$7 and the certificate IV from \$10 to \$7. The certificates III and IV in home and community care have also been cut from \$8.50 to just \$5. In light of the Australian Productivity Commission highlighting significant workforce shortages in aged care, why is the minister's government making it harder for Victorians to embark on a career in the aged-care sector?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Ageing) — The house will be aware that the minister responsible for tertiary education makes those settings, but they are significant in their impact on other sectors. The government has over its term been prepared to increase funding to a number of areas. The government takes those training focuses very seriously, and last year a number of those funding categories were increased.

Supplementary question

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — The minister's government says it is prioritising skill shortages and industry high-need areas for government funding, but clearly the reduction in aged-care courses shows that the government is not regarding aged-care training as a high-need area. Was the minister involved in the decision that was made to reduce the subsidy for the aged-care courses?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Ageing) — The member will understand that the exact decision is made by the relevant minister. Notwithstanding that, I do in fact talk from time to time to my colleagues, including the minister responsible for tertiary education, about this and other related matters. What I can say is that the year-to-date expenditure across community services in this particular training area is \$98 million. That is 21 per cent greater than the \$81 million in 2012, 41 per cent greater than the \$69 million in 2011 and more than double the \$44 million in 2010. In the examples — and I will give the certificate III — —

Ms Mikakos — On a point of order, President, I had a very specific supplementary question, and that was whether the minister was involved in the decision that was made to cut the subsidies. Given that the minister has 9 seconds left on the clock, I ask him to address the specific question that was asked in the supplementary rather than to start wasting time in the way he usually does.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — On the point of order, President, I did actually address that question directly. I said that I talk to my ministerial colleagues about this and other matters.

The PRESIDENT — Order! In that context I am obviously not able to direct the minister in precisely how he answers the question. Members will be aware that in this place I try to ensure that ministers have responses that are apposite to questions. On the point of order, the minister has made a point in his defence in terms of his response to that question. Whilst it may not satisfy Ms Mikakos in terms of the question she posed, the minister has at least made some attempt to respond in the context of how he has dealt with this matter that was raised in terms of the subsidies. With 9 seconds to go, I do not know whether the minister wishes to just reiterate the point he has made for Ms Mikakos in terms of his actual actions.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — The point is that I have already responded in detail to that, and in context it is important to see that more than double the \$44 million in 2010 has been expended to November 2013.

Live music venues

Mrs COOTE (Southern Metropolitan) — My very eager question is to the Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation, Mr O'Donohue. Can the minister inform the house — you will all be interested in this — what the government is doing to support live music venues in Victoria?

Ms Pennicuik interjected.

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE (Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation) — I welcome Mrs Coote's question and note her interest in the importance of live music in a number of areas of her electorate. I pick up Ms Pennicuik's interjection and welcome her support of live music. I note that Mr O'Brien is a great supporter of live music and indeed a musician of some repute.

Live music venues in Melbourne, and indeed across Victoria, are very much a part of the cultural landscape of Melbourne and part of what makes Melbourne such a great destination. Right across Victoria, throughout our regional cities and towns, live music venues play a central part in the cultural landscape of Victoria. More than that, they are also a key driver of economic activity in our economy.

Live music in Victoria helps to support 15 000 full-time jobs across 600 venues in Victoria, with up to 3000 gigs being performed each and every week. This contributed approximately \$301 million to gross state product in 2009–10, so it is a significant driver in the economy in addition to what it adds to our vibrancy and culture. In that context I was very pleased to attend the Age Music Victoria Awards last week, at which Mr O'Brien and Ms Garrett, the member for Brunswick in the other place, were present.

Ms Pennicuik — And Ms Pennicuik was present.

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE — And Ms Pennicuik was present. I did not see you there, Ms Pennicuik, but I am glad you were there.

I was delighted to announce reforms that will support live music in Victoria. I was very pleased to launch new guidelines for live music venues and announce planned legislative changes that will mean less red tape for licensees hosting alcohol-free under-age and mixed-age events. These guidelines provide important advice for venue operators on running safe and successful businesses. This includes issues such as sound management, liquor licensing and building positive relationships with local authorities and residents.

These guidelines are the first of their kind, written specifically for live music venues and developed through the live music round table, which this coalition established in 2012. The live music round table was part of our reform agenda to assist with live music. It brings together music industry representatives, venues, licensees, government representatives and, very importantly, Victoria Police to discuss and address various issues affecting the live music industry.

The coalition government is committed to reducing red tape. We are going to change legislation so that licensees will no longer have to seek approval 45 days before staging alcohol-free under-age and mixed-age events. We want our live music operators to continue to thrive, not be bogged down in paperwork and red tape. These reforms will remove the administrative burden of hosting such events.

This is a government that is committed to supporting live music venues, unlike the Labor Party. Those of us who were here in the last Parliament remember the impassioned scenes on the steps of Parliament House when we saw icons of Melbourne's music industry protesting to save this state's live music scene. It is clear that Labor failed live music venues in Victoria. This government is absolutely committed to supporting and ensuring the continued growth of the live music industry in Victoria.

Air ambulance fee

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Health. Yesterday an article appeared in the press about a \$4000 fee that is now going to be charged to ambulance patients if they use an Ambulance Victoria helicopter. Within that article there was a reference from this government's chair of Ambulance Victoria, who indicated that there is a \$50 million shortfall in the operation of the five ambulance helicopters and the fixed-wing service. The minister's media spokesman spoke of a carbon tax impost of \$600 000 on Ambulance Victoria. That accounts for 1.2 per cent of the shortfall in the revenue for Ambulance Victoria. Can the minister tell the house what contributes the other 98.8 per cent of that shortfall?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — Let us be quite clear. Ambulance Victoria came in in the positive last financial year, unlike when that lot over here was in charge and there was a \$56 million deficit at Ambulance Victoria. That is what the board minutes show: a \$56 million deficit. In the last financial year Ambulance Victoria came in on budget, in fact in the positive. Ambulance Victoria has increased charges to a number of users to recover more of the cost of air ambulance services. That is important because we want to make air ambulances and all of our ambulance services sustainable in the long term.

We inherited a basket case. Under the previous government the merger in 2008 of the Metropolitan Ambulance Service and the rural ambulance services had no planning and no preparation. They were lumped together like a cake being mixed up. That government

and the former health minister did not plan for the services properly.

Mr Jennings — On a point of order, President, it is relatively clear that the minister is debating, because I asked him a question about what comprises 98.8 per cent of a shortfall, and he is referring to a previous government's administration of ambulance services.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — On the point of order, President, it is important because the member mentioned some deficit, as he describes it. In fact Ambulance Victoria came in with a positive position in the last financial year and will do so again this financial year. It is important for the public and the chamber to get very clear the preamble that the member put in front of his question and to correct the errors he put.

The PRESIDENT — Order! On the point of order, the minister still has a little over 2½ minutes to complete his answer. A minister is entitled to provide context for a response to a question. I take it that that is the minister's position at this point, and he has reinforced that in his response to the point of order. I would hope the minister might move to respond to some of the specific aspects of the cost pressures that Mr Jennings has in effect referred to in his question, notwithstanding that the minister has already given an assurance to the house that he expects the budget to be in the positive again this year. There are clearly some issues between those two positions, and hopefully the minister will get to explain those in the remaining time.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — Let us be quite clear. Ambulance Victoria came in with a positive position at 30 June and will do so again in the next period.

Mr Jennings interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — And delivering more services than ever before, more air ambulance services than ever before and more rotary services, which is what we are talking about in this context. Let us be quite clear. The outcome for our ambulance services will be a good one. On the additional costs they face — and this is in comparison to other states — our ambulance services certainly face significant increases in costs. A failure of the previous government to put charging in a proper format is part of the historical challenge that this government faces.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — Yes, I am coming to that, Ms Crozier. As Ms Crozier correctly points out, the carbon tax that has been imposed on our air ambulance service at \$600 000 by the federal government is more

than the amount of increased charging that is proposed under the measure that this government has put in place. A \$400 000 increased charge has been put in place, and that \$400 000 is less than the cost of the carbon tax that Mr Jennings and his party at a national level and a state level supports. He supports carbon taxing of health services, he supports carbon taxing of air ambulances — indeed he supports carbon taxing of normal ambulances.

The point here is that this is another cost pressure that has been put on the ambulance service. Certainly we welcome the carbon tax being removed by the federal government and would call on the opposition nationally to support the removal of that additional impost.

The key point here is that the ambulance services were in the positive at 30 June. They will manage themselves to a positive position, as they have in the past couple of years under this government, in this financial year. The fact that historical anomalies exist in the charging and the arrangements between metropolitan and rural ambulance services means that we face some challenges. Nobody has ever argued that there are no challenges in unwinding the mess left by the previous government. Yes, there are challenges. We will face those challenges, and Ambulance Victoria will take steps to put itself in a firm long-term position.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — For the minister's edification and perhaps education, I quote from page 6 of Ambulance Victoria's annual report. The chair's report says:

... the cost of providing our five helicopters across the state exceeds our fee revenue for these services by some \$35 million and we lose an additional \$15 million on the operation of our fixed-wing aircraft.

That is what I put to the minister in my substantive question. Is not his own chair's report saying that his flawed support to Ambulance Victoria has left it \$50 million short of the cost of the operation of those essential services to Victorians?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — Let us be very clear here. When the chair of Ambulance Victoria went into that position he discovered a basket case, and he did the intellectual work needed to understand the challenges and the cost pressures he inherited from the former health minister. Let us be quite clear. What he faced was a \$56 million deficit — as recorded in the minutes — left by the previous government. That has had to be cleared up. It is true that cost raising by Ambulance Victoria — from

government sources, from the membership scheme and from direct billing to a number of services — has not been well worked through in historical terms. We now face the challenge of having a more sustainable ambulance service based on better and fairer charging, and that means paying the relevant availability charges, but it also means dealing with the historical anomaly left by the former health minister, the Leader of the Opposition and member for Mulgrave in the Assembly, Daniel Andrews.

City of Wodonga urban planning

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Planning, Matthew Guy. Can the minister advise the house of what action the government is taking to bring forward urban growth for the growing city of Wodonga?

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — I thank Mr Drum for his very important question about one of Victoria's most important regional centres, the city of Wodonga. As we know, the Wodonga city area, with a population of around 35 000 people, lies about 3 hours up the Hume Freeway. This government has worked very closely over the last three years with the City of Wodonga and in particular mayor Mark Byatt to ensure that we get well-planned, good-quality growth for Wodonga.

Mr Lenders interjected.

Hon. M. J. GUY — No, it is 110 kilometres an hour for 320 kilometres, Mr Lenders; to me, the maths is pretty good. As I said, this government has taken the important step of ensuring that good-quality, well-planned urban growth is under way in Victoria's regional centres. That is why we have sent the former Growth Areas Authority, now the Metropolitan Planning Authority, to particularly the city of Wodonga but also to the cities of Latrobe and Ballarat and other regional cities to assist and provide support where necessary.

I inform the chamber that last week I provided a \$250 000 grant to Wodonga City Council to get on with planning its important Leneva-Baranduda growth corridor, which Mr Drum would be well aware of. That growth corridor to the south of the city is a long-term plan for Wodonga to add to its White Box Rise development in the southern suburbs, to ensure that the city of Wodonga will grow, as a metropolis unto itself, to around 75 000 to 80 000 people and will indeed be larger in terms of population than its conurbation partner, Albury in New South Wales.

This is not the only initiative the Liberal-Nationals government is funding in Wodonga. We have provided a lot of support to the council and incentive to the private sector to bring forward the Junction Place development so that Wodonga as a city and key regional centre has inner city urban renewal available to it, as well as existing outer urban development in the well-planned White Box Rise development, which is now under way, and can also plan for the future with its Leneva-Baranduda corridor. That is why this money is so important in assisting the council to ensure that it can plan for the longer term.

Again I congratulate the council and its outgoing mayor, Mark Byatt. That council can plan its future and be a standout example of Victoria's regional cities in terms of planning for the future and ensuring that we sustainably build a state of cities, because the coalition government knows how important that is to the future sustainability of our great state.

Hospital infection prevention and control

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Health. There is a report in today's press about 21 babies at the Monash Medical Centre and Casey Hospital who have contracted a potentially fatal superbug. As the minister would be aware, this follows instances in September when I asked him about infection control measures and public health warnings at the Royal Women's Hospital, and he indicated to the chamber that public health warnings were not warranted and that infection control measures were adequate. Is the minister still of that view, and has he considered the infection control measures in these hospitals given today's story?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — As the chamber will understand, infection control is important, and the state government is very much focused on that. On 21 November Monash advised the Department of Health that three babies at the special care unit were confirmed to be carrying the VRE bug, vancomycin-resistant enterococci. None of the three babies became ill, and all have been discharged home. On screening, additional babies have been identified at Monash Medical Centre and Casey. None of these babies have become ill as a result of the organism.

Monash Health has in place very rigorous testing and infection-control methods and measures, and all patients have been informed and will continue to be updated. As a precaution, babies at risk of having been exposed have been kept together, and transfers between the Monash Medical Centre nursery and other nurseries

are being managed to ensure that there is no further spread of the infection.

The state government takes these matters very seriously. I have confidence that Monash Medical Centre has managed these and that they are being carefully managed at Casey. I know the department has been in close contact with Monash to discuss these matters and to ensure that the steps that should be taken are indeed being taken. Monash has initiated rigorous testing and infection-control measures, including cohort nursery bays so that newly admitted babies are kept separate from babies who could be carrying the organism. Each nursery bay will receive additional environmental cleaning, and precautionary screening has been commenced at other Monash Health nurseries.

All these steps have been put in place. These are sensible steps. I have confidence that Monash Medical Centre is managing this issue carefully. It is true, as I told the chamber at the time when the member asked his last question regarding the Royal Women's Hospital, that this is a condition that appears from time to time in neonatal intensive care units around the world. It is not unusual; it is not something that is in any way unheard of. It is managed carefully; it is managed in a very thoughtful way by Monash, indeed by the state and more broadly.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for his answer, in which I heard him say that the initial incidence of the infection was detected when there may have been 3 babies and subsequently 21 were discovered to have actually had the infection. The minister also indicated that in fact there has been some monitoring of transfers out of Monash Health services and Southern Health services. Can he provide confidence to those services and to the community that in fact there is careful monitoring of the condition of any babies that have been transferred out, to prevent subsequent infection in other locations, and can he provide us with the reasons he is confident that the procedures in place have caught up with the spread of the current infection?

Ms Crozier — It is standard procedure.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — As Ms Crozier points out, many of these are standard procedures, and 'caught up' is the wrong way to describe it, as the member tried to do then. I can indicate that the government is very aware of this issue, has in place a number of measures across health services and is prepared to work with health services

where there is a particular challenge at a particular point in time, whether that be at the Royal Women's or at Monash or at Casey on a particular occasion. I have great confidence in our clinicians, in our health services and in the department's support for those health services where additional information or support may be required.

Children's facility funding

Mrs MILLAR (Northern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development, Ms Lovell. Can the minister inform the house how the children's facilities capital program has benefited Victorian families and communities since the beginning of this month?

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development) — I am very pleased to update the house on the children's facilities capital program, and I thank the member for her question and her ongoing interest in children's facilities in Victoria and for travelling around Northern Victoria Region, which is a large region, to visit a number of these facilities. Since we last reported to the house with an update on the children's facilities capital program 13 additional children's facilities have either opened or begun.

On Friday, 1 November, together with Mrs Millar and the member for Shepparton in the Assembly, Jeanette Powell, I opened the newly refurbished Kialla Children's Centre. It was a fantastic day there, with parents who were very grateful to have received a state government grant so they could refurbish their centre. On Wednesday, 6 November, I opened the Gannawarra Shire Children's Centre in Kerang. This was a great refurbishment and has extended the places available at that facility. Also on Wednesday, 6 November, the refurbishment of the Denzil Don Kindergarten in Brunswick West was opened.

On Sunday, 10 November, it was Green Kids Early Learning in Hampton Park. Mrs Peulich opened that refurbishment, which has 36 additional places. On Monday, 18 November, Benwerrin Pre-School in Burwood East was opened by the member for Forest Hill in the Assembly, Neil Angus, providing an additional 30 places at that centre. On Wednesday, 20 November, I was accompanied by Andrew Elsbury to open the refurbishment at the Quantin Binnah Community Centre in Werribee, providing an additional 28 places.

On 20 November, together with a member for Western Victoria Region, Simon Ramsay, I turned the sod to

commence construction of two early learning centres in Ballarat. They were the Midlands early learning centre and the Miners Rest early learning centre, which is a very important centre because it will be the first kindergarten to be built north of the Western Highway. It will be a fantastic facility for that community, co-located with the primary school.

On Thursday, 21 November, I opened the newly built Toolamba Early Years Centre. This was a fantastic result for the Toolamba community. This kindergarten was destroyed by fire on 3 February 2010. The kindergarten and school were both destroyed and the former government failed to give the school any money to rebuild the kindergarten. The Baillieu government gave the school \$450 000 towards its refurbishment, and the school community is very grateful that it has a wonderful new education hub that will service the Toolamba community into the future.

On Friday, 22 November, the Belle Vue Park Kindergarten in Glenroy was opened by Craig Ondarchie, the Kinder King. That provides an additional 16 places. Also on Friday, 22 November, the member for Mordialloc in the Assembly, Lorraine Wreford, opened the Evesham Road Kindergarten in Cheltenham and I opened the newly refurbished Rutherglen Kindergarten. I was accompanied by the members for Murray Valley and Benambra in the Assembly, Tim McCurdy and Bill Tilley. That was a fantastic opening of a centre that will provide an additional 24 places. Also on 22 November, together with Bill Tilley, I opened the newly refurbished aged-care facility in Beechworth that is now a Montessori school. That was funded by the federal and state governments, and a new early learning service there is being funded by the state government. That is a fantastic result for the community of Beechworth.

Thirteen may be an unlucky number for some, but for these 13 communities it was a very lucky number. They have fantastic new facilities in their towns to service their communities into the future. The state government — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! Thank you, Minister.

East–west link

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Planning. The Moonee Valley City Council has raised strong concerns that the east–west link will increase the number of cars, pollution and flyovers in its neighbourhoods. I share these concerns. The council has said it has not as yet been able to meet with the minister to discuss these

concerns. This is deeply troubling given the significant impact the project will likely have on the municipality. The council is calling on the state government to urgently assess the impact that the east–west link will have on its community. Will the minister meet with the Moonee Valley council to discuss potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the east–west link on Moonee Valley?

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — That is not factually true. I met with the council a couple of weeks ago, and it never raised that issue with me.

Supplementary question

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — The last conversation I had with the council was that it did want to meet with the minister. I will go back and request that again. To be quite clear, I ask the minister on what date he met with the council so that I can check with it. The minister is saying the council raised no concerns. I think it is reasonable that I go back and actually ask the council. Could the minister give me the date he met with the council so that I can clarify that?

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — It is not my job to do the fact checking for opposition MPs who get their facts wrong. I simply say that I met the council a couple of weeks ago. If Ms Hartland would like me to, I will get the date for her. It was well within the time of this debate about the east–west link. The council raised a number of issues with me. It raised issues about Avondale Heights, issues in relation to residential zoning and issues in relation to activities areas. It was after Plan Melbourne, so it was certainly in the last few weeks. I say again, if members do not have their facts right, it is not up to me to answer for them.

Australian Training Awards

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Higher Education and Skills. I ask the minister if he is aware of any national events that have recognised excellence in Victoria’s training system.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I thank Mr Finn for his question and ongoing interest in our training system in Victoria. Last Friday evening in Perth the 21st national training awards were held. I am very pleased and proud to say that Victoria was well represented with finalists in all categories and with winners of 5 of the 18 awards that were presented during the course of the evening. I was particularly pleased that of the five student awards, three went to Victorian students. That is what a training

system should be all about — ensuring that there are good outcomes for students.

The first of those awards was the Vocational Student of the Year, and that category was won by a young lady called Kate Cross. Kate did her training with WorkCo at Longerenong College in western Victoria. She completed an advanced diploma of agriculture and now works in Queensland. She is a delightful young lady who won a similar award at the Victorian Training Awards earlier this year.

The Australian School-based Apprentice of the Year was also a Victorian student, Joel Schwarz. Joel is from Mildura and studied at SuniTAFE, doing a certificate III in automotive mechanical technology.

The third individual category student award was the Australian Apprentice of the Year Award, which is a very prestigious award; it was won by Patrick Janes from Ballarat. He did his training at the University of Ballarat — soon to be Federation University Australia — where he studied certificate III in engineering, fabrication and trade. There must be something about Ballarat because, if my memory is correct, there was another gold medal winning performance by Tim Taylor, a Skillaroo who also did his training at Ballarat earlier this year.

In terms of some of the other awards, I am pleased to advise that Crown Casino won the Employer of the Year Award. Crown employs some 900 people in training, and it is a very good trainer in many different categories.

Mr Jennings — Seen the ads?

Hon. P. R. HALL — Indeed, Crown college; Mr Jennings and others have probably seen that. It provides a wonderful range of opportunities for young people. Deservingly, this is the second time it has been employer of the year. Previously it had that award in 2010.

The fifth winner was in the registered training organisation award category. The International Training Provider of the Year was won by Box Hill Institute of TAFE, again a deserving winner of that particular award.

Victoria was well represented and appropriately acknowledged for the very fine training providers in this state that give opportunities to over 500 000 young students in any one year. The people of Victoria should feel proud of the award winners and the system operating here in Victoria.

DISABILITY AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Introduction

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I move:

That I have leave to introduce a bill for an act to amend the Disability Act 2006 in relation to the review by VCAT of a decision of a disability service provider to issue a notice of a proposed increase in a residential charge and for other purposes.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Before I see if leave is granted, to enable the opposition to form a view on whether leave should be granted I raise what might be a relevant consideration. I wish to make a statement in respect of the minister's motion and some subsequent motions that I understand the Leader of the Government proposes to move.

Members will recall that on Thursday, 14 November 2013, just prior to the adjournment of the Council, the Leader of the Government sought leave to introduce into this house the following five bills that are currently in the Assembly: the Energy Legislation Amendment (General) Bill 2013, the Disability Amendment Bill 2013, the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment Bill 2013, the Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 and the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Amendment Bill 2013. Leave was refused and the introduction of those bills, or the notices, could not be proceeded with that day.

In view of indications from the government, and indeed the motion now moved by the minister, that it wishes to seek leave today to again introduce those bills, I wish to clarify to the house what its powers are in relation to the introduction of such bills and the processes which would then be followed. This is not to intervene in any way regarding the right of the opposition to refuse leave.

There is no act or standing order that precludes a bill being introduced into the Council that is identical to a bill currently in the Assembly provided that the usual constitutional requirements are not breached — in other words, provided that there are no financial implications associated with the bill and the bill does not seek to impose a duty, rate, tax, rent or impost. I am assured that all of the five bills that the government attempted to introduce on 14 November 2013 and may seek to progress today would satisfy the normal constitutional requirements.

The normal procedure for the introduction of bills into the Council is to give notice. However, leave may be

sought to introduce a bill without giving notice, and if leave is refused, the request is treated as a notice. If this was to occur today, the motion for the introduction and first reading of the bill would occur on Thursday of this week and the second reading of the bill could only be proceeded with on the same day with the leave of the house. If on that occasion leave for the second reading was refused, the second reading for the bill would then only occur on the next sitting day of the Legislative Council. I note that two of the bills that were proposed to be introduced into this house on the previous sitting day in November and that are currently in the Assembly are listed on the proposed government business program in the Assembly this week.

I now ask the opposition whether leave is granted for the government to proceed with this bill.

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) (*By leave*) — The opposition will grant leave to introduce any bill that is not concurrently on the Assembly notice paper. In response to the first bill, which is on the Assembly notice paper, leave is not granted.

Leave refused.

DRUGS, POISONS AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Introduction

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I move:

That I have leave to introduce a bill for an act to amend the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 and for other purposes.

Leave refused.

ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (GENERAL) BILL 2013

Introduction

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I move:

That I have leave to introduce a bill for an act to amend the Electricity Industry Act 2000 and the Gas Industry Act 2001 and for other purposes.

Leave refused.

MINERAL RESOURCES (SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT) AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Introduction

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I move:

That I have leave to introduce a bill for an act to amend the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 and for other purposes.

Leave refused.

PARKS AND CROWN LAND LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Introduction

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I move:

That I have leave to introduce a bill for an act to amend the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, the National Parks Act 1975, the Carlton (Recreation Ground) Land Act 1966, the Land (Miscellaneous Matters) Act 1988, the Land (Reservations and other Matters) Act 1997, the Shrine of Remembrance Act 1978 and the Water Industry Act 1994 and to revoke certain permanent Crown land reservations and Crown grants and for other purposes.

Leave refused.

The PRESIDENT — Order! All five bills will now be treated as notices and will be on the Thursday notice paper, as I indicated in my previous remarks.

SUPREME COURT OF VICTORIA

Report 2012–13

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE (Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation) presented report by command of the Governor.

Laid on table.

COUNTY COURT OF VICTORIA

Report 2012–13

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE (Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation) presented report by command of the Governor.

Laid on table.

ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Regulatory impact statement process

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) presented report, including appendices, together with transcripts of evidence.

Laid on table.

Ordered that report be printed.

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

It is a pleasure to table this report on the inquiry into the regulatory impact statement (RIS) process. This is the second report of the Environment and Planning Legislation Committee. As the chair of the committee, I am pleased to table this report in the Council on behalf of the members of the committee. The Environment and Planning Legislation Committee is made up of a variety of members from within this chamber. I put on record my appreciation for their support in the development of this report. Ms Gayle Tierney is the deputy chair of the committee, Mr Andrew Elsbury is a member, as is Mrs Jan Kronberg, Mr Shaun Leane, Mr Craig Ondarchie, Ms Sue Pennicuik, Mr Johan Scheffer, and of course Mrs Inga Peulich, who was the chair until 16 April.

I also acknowledge the committee staff — Keir Delaney as secretary and Anthony Walsh as research assistant. They were very helpful in the process. I will not go through the chair's foreword, but I can say that there were three findings. Essentially the committee found that the regulatory impact analysis (RIA) system is very well regarded. It was also found that there are benefits of a regulatory impact analysis and that they outweigh the costs, but there were obviously issues about the use of consultants and the need for departments to be more actively involved.

We tried to keep the recommendations within a manageable number. There are 13 in total, broken down into a range of areas, as outlined in the report. There are essentially four components: two recommendations concern the role of the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission; a range of recommendations relate to improving the Victorian guide on regulation; there is a view about consultation and transparency; and finally there is a view about the capacity for the regulatory impact analysis to be better utilised in the public service.

In terms of the perception of the regulatory impact analysis in Victoria, it was found that the RIA system is the gold standard or the Rolls Royce model, and this was backed up by a report in 2010 by the Business Council of Australia, which rated Victoria's regulatory framework as the best in Australia. More recently the Productivity Commission benchmarking report painted Victoria in a similar light, and found that we met 11 of the 14 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and Council of Australian Governments best practice RIA principles.

Of course like any report or investigation into matters such as this, there are opportunities for improvement. It was found that the regulatory impact statement process is perceived to be complex, time consuming and costly, and there have been times when accessibility to the broader audience can be limited by its length and style. There was also found to be a larger proportion of the use of consultants, and on that basis we believe there needs to be a greater use of government departments to do the work, as has been benchmarked around the rest of Australia. We also found that Victoria operates on a single stage regulatory impact statement process, and there are other models which we have outlined. We have also indicated our view about the RIA process being overseen by the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission in a more cooperative arrangement.

I am pleased to say that the terms of reference, as provided by the Council and agreed to on 13 November 2012, have been delivered one year and a couple of weeks out, and I am very pleased as the chair, having taken on the role from Mrs Peulich, to continue her fine work and present a very detailed report. Its content may be dry in some parts but it does add value to the broader community regulatory impact system. For those reasons I am very pleased to present the report, and I thank Keir and Anthony for their involvement and support in that process. I commend the report to the house.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — At first I was sceptical about the reference, as it had already been comprehensively covered by the Australian Productivity Commission inquiry in 2012 and the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission in 2011. However, the committee was able to review those inquiries and make some specific recommendations. I especially draw the attention of the house to recommendation 5, which is about requiring more time for complex regulatory impact statements, so as to allow stakeholders more time to participate in the process. I also draw attention to recommendation 6 regarding regulation that impacts on local government. The committee did look at the issue of when a

regulatory impact statement is required and the threshold and the use of exemptions, but it has not made specific recommendations about it. Other inquiries have looked at this issue in detail, and it is certainly an important issue.

I would like to thank all those people who submitted to the inquiry and also came to the hearings held by the inquiry for the time and effort they put into doing so. It was also worthwhile travelling interstate to visit Canberra and hear directly from the Productivity Commission. I would also like to heartily thank committee secretary Keir Delaney and research assistant Anthony Walsh for their excellent work and the chair, Mr Dalla-Riva, and my fellow committee members for a very good working relationship on this inquiry. I learnt a lot about the regulatory impact statement process, which I had had some background in before, and I commend the report to those who are interested in this important part of our regulatory system.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to speak on the tabling of this report, and I pay tribute to the committee staff, Keir and Anthony, and all the committee members. There is a saying that certain things cannot be polished, and when this reference came to the committee I actually put this reference into that category, but the hardworking staff and the committee have done a great job in proving me wrong in this regard. When I was asked to fill in on this committee I was also somewhat apprehensive due to the discussion about the way the committee had run and had interacted prior to my coming onto it.

I have to say that the interactions we have had as committee members in working with the common purpose of trying to polish the report on this particular reference have been a delight. As I said, I was a bit apprehensive about joining the committee. I am not too sure what changed, and I am not sure whether the legend around the committee was overblown or not, but I have to congratulate everyone involved in this inquiry on the effort they went to in the lead-up to the tabling of this report today.

Mr ELSBURY (Western Metropolitan) — It is my pleasure to speak today on the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Legislation Committee inquiry into the regulatory impact statement (RIS) process. Unlike Mr Leane, I might actually get into the meat of what we discussed. This report makes 3 findings and 13 recommendations about the regulatory impact statement regime employed here in the state of Victoria. The management of new regulation in Victoria is well served by having what is

regarded as one of the best regulatory impact statement systems in the country. It is not overly complex, like the federal system, which requires two stages, and it allows for regulation to be fully fleshed out and for people to have input into what the regulation will do in the real world. It is a system which allows for new regulation to be adequately scrutinised before it is implemented in order to reduce the chances of any undesired effects.

However, the system in Victoria does need some finetuning, especially in regard to the use of consultants. This report encourages departments to take a more hands-on role when developing RIS processes for regulations that they hope to implement. It is difficult to quantify the costs of a RIS against the costs that could potentially be averted by avoiding poor or bad regulations, because the process itself is intended to remove many of those problems before they can present themselves. The report also calls for scrutiny of the RIS process. The committee also recommends providing a greater role for the Victorian Auditor-General and greater responsibility for the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission. I would like to thank my parliamentary colleagues and the secretariat staff, Keir Delaney and Anthony Walsh, for their assistance in this inquiry.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Environment and Planning Legislation Committee report no. 2 of November 2013. I start by thanking the Honourable Richard Dalla-Riva for his chairmanship and stewardship of this committee, which went very well. I know others would support that statement. The functions of the committee are set out in the Legislative Council standing orders. We are asked to ‘inquire into and report on any proposal, matter or thing concerned with the arts, coordination of government, environment, and planning the use, development and protection of land’.

This is a very good report. I know others on the committee found the topic a little dry, but I have to say that when it came to debating discount rates and looking at regulatory impact statements and impact assessments, I actually found it quite exciting.

Mr Lenders interjected.

Mr ONDARCHIE — I found it quite exciting, and I thank Mr Lenders for his ongoing support.

The terms of reference were advertised in the *Age* and the *Australian Financial Review* on Monday, 4 February, and further publicised through forums like Twitter and the committee’s website. The committee received a total of 10 written submissions and held public hearings over four days, receiving evidence from

nine organisations and government bodies as well. We received briefings from the Department of Treasury and Finance, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and other witnesses as well. The inquiry was conducted with good grace and the support of all committee members. The committee came up with 13 very good recommendations that will move Victoria forward. I commend the report to the house.

Motion agreed to.

**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Alert Digest No. 16

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan)
presented *Alert Digest No. 16 of 2013, including*
appendices.

Laid on table.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Auditor-General's Report on the Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria, 2012–13, November 2013.

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 —

Minister's Order of 16 October 2013 giving approval to the granting of a licence at Albert Park Reserve.

Minister's Order of 11 November 2013 giving approval to the granting of leases at Albert Park Reserve.

Minister's Order of 19 November 2013 giving approval to the granting of a lease at Kew Recreation Reserve.

Minister's Order of 20 November 2013 giving approval to the granting of a lease at Queens Park Reserve.

Education and Care Services Ombudsman, National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioners — Report, 2012–13.

Environment and Primary Industries Department — Report under section 30L of the Surveillance Devices Act 1999, 2012–13.

Gambling Regulation Act 2003 — Amendment to the Category 1 Public Lottery Licence pursuant to section 5.3.19(4)(b)(ii) of the Act.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission — Special Report concerning certain operations in 2013, pursuant to section 162 of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011.

Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 — Notice pursuant to section 32(3)(a)(iii) in relation to Statutory Rule No. 131.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 —

Brimbank Planning Scheme Amendment C147.

Hume Planning Scheme Amendment C170.

Notices of Approval of the following amendments to planning schemes:

Ballarat Planning Scheme — Amendment C154.

Banyule Planning Scheme — Amendment C92.

Casey Planning Scheme — Amendment C168.

Frankston Planning Scheme — Amendment C93.

Gannawarra Planning Scheme — Amendment C34.

Golden Plains Planning Scheme — Amendment C64.

Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme — Amendments C169, C174 and C175.

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme — Amendment C281.

Knox Planning Scheme — Amendment C95.

Latrobe Planning Scheme — Amendment C78.

Melton Planning Scheme — Amendments C150 and C153.

Port Phillip Planning Scheme — Amendment C96.

Towong Planning Scheme — Amendment C28.

Wyndham Planning Scheme — Amendment C191.

Professional Standards Act 2003 — Professional Surveyors Occupational Association Scheme, 11 November 2013.

A Statutory Rule under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996 — No. 138.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rule Nos. 131, 137 and 138.

Taxi Services Commission — Report, 2012–13.

Proclamations of the Governor in Council fixing operative dates in respect of the following Acts:

Catchment and Land Protection Amendment Act 2013 — 18 November 2013 (*Gazette No. S398, 12 November 2013*).

Corrections Amendment (Parole Reform) Act 2013 — 20 November 2013 (*Gazette No. S409, 19 November 2013*).

Ordered that reports of the Auditor-General and the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission tabled by Clerk be printed on motion of Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS (Assistant Treasurer).

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

The Clerk — I have received a letter from the Minister for Roads, dated 10 November 2013, headed ‘Order for documents — Wallace Street, Morwell’.

Letter at pages 3793–3794.

Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

General business

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — By leave, I move:

That precedence be given to the following general business on Wednesday, 27 November 2013:

- (1) the notice of motion given this day by Ms Pulford condemning the government on its failure to reduce cost of living pressures, tackle law and order issues, maladministration of the public sector and cuts to the education and legal sectors;
- (2) order of the day 28, resumption of debate on motion calling on the federal government to secure the future of the Australian automotive manufacturing industry;
- (3) order of the day 10, resumption of debate on motion relating to the provision of the business case for the proposed east–west link project;
- (4) notice of motion 651 standing in the name of Ms Hartland calling on the Minister for Health to expand public hospital homebirth services;
- (5) order of the day 27, resumption of debate on motion calling on the government to ban unconventional exploration of gas fossil fuels in Victoria; and
- (6) order of the day 21, motion to take note of an answer given by the Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation to a question without notice relating to responsible gaming venues.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

White Ribbon Day

Mr TARLAMIS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise today to reaffirm my unwavering support for White Ribbon Day. In 1999 the United Nations General Assembly declared 25 November International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, with a white ribbon as its iconic symbol. In Australia the white ribbon campaign began in 2003. The campaign recognises the positive role that men play in preventing

violence against women. According to Amnesty International, violence against women is one of the most widespread human rights abuses. Every day thousands of women and girls are abused and murdered by their families, raped in armed conflicts and attacked for defending women’s rights. Many may think that Australia is immune to such violence. However, in this country at least one woman is killed every week by a current or former partner — an alarming statistic.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data indicates that one in three Australian women over the age of 15 reports having experienced physical or sexual violence at some stage in their lives. That is why the new awareness-raising campaign, called Australia, Land of Secrets, was launched in the lead-up to White Ribbon Day this year. As a participant in the ambassador program, which I understand is uniquely Australian, I have proudly retaken the White Ribbon oath, swearing ‘never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women’. This oath should not be taken lightly and should guide our actions every day, not just on White Ribbon Day. I urge both men and women in the strongest possible way to get on board with this commendable campaign and commit to ending violence against women.

As members of Parliament we also have an obligation to take action, as stated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, in 2009, when he said:

We must unite. Violence against women cannot be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance, by any political leader or by any government. The time to change is now. Only by standing together and speaking out can we make a difference.

Peter Smith

Hon. E. J. O’DONOHUE (Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation) — I rise to acknowledge the awarding of the Medal of the Order of Australia to Mr Peter Graham Smith of Belgrave. Mr Smith was awarded the OAM for services to the communities of Sherbrooke and Belgrave. Mr Smith was a councillor with the Shire of Sherbrooke, now the Shire of Yarra Ranges, in the 1980s; a commissioner with the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works; a representative of the Willowbrooke Aged Care Home; chairman of the bicentennial celebrations committee from 1987 to 1988; and chairman of Victoria’s 150th birthday celebrations. He is a long-term member of the Upwey-Belgrave sub-branch of the RSL, a fundraiser for Fernlea House since 2003, former president of the Belgrave Traders Association, chairman of the Upper Ferntree Gully market and member and president of Sherbrooke Apex Club from

1972 to 1974. He was previously acknowledged with an Australian Centenary Medal in 2001.

On a personal note, Pete and his wife, Chris, have been great friends and sources of advice and counsel to me. I greatly respect their passion for the community, their community involvement and, from my perspective, their longstanding and ongoing support of the Liberal Party, their tireless work for the party and their support of elected members. It is a great pleasure to recognise this well-earned acknowledgement of Mr Smith.

Plastic Bag Free Yarraville Village

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of speaking at a Plastic Bag Free Yarraville Village event. Plastic Bag Free Yarraville Village is a fantastic little campaign being run by local community members. It is great to see community members taking responsibility and acting to make their neighbourhood a better place. The campaign aims to change Yarraville Village's 'bag habits' by becoming a plastic bag-free community. They aim to achieve this through engaging and educating local schools, traders and community groups. They have been running a petition and have released a Yarraville Village calico bag designed by the winner of a local competition created by the group.

The average plastic bag is only used for 5 minutes but could take up to 1000 years to break down in the environment. Plastic bag refuse is a major problem in the west's land and waterways, including Stony Creek, the Maribyrnong River and Port Phillip Bay. A better alternative is for traders to provide reusable bags. The Queen Victoria Market, South Melbourne Market and the towns of Anglesea, Torquay and Queenscliff have already banned plastic bags. Bringing this concept to an urban village such as Yarraville is an initiative that I applaud, and I encourage other areas to join it. I am pleased to say that the group has gained the support of the Yarraville Traders Association, and I hope all traders can get on board. I wish the group every success.

Western Victoria Region roads

Ms PULFORD (Western Victoria) — Travelling around my electorate I have seen a steady decline in the state of our roads over the years. There are of course many factors that contribute to this, from the weather to increased traffic movements and a lack of road funding, but we might as well call a spade a spade. We cannot blame the government for the weather or the increased traffic movements, but we can call the government out for its attitude to road funding. Over 2012–13

VicRoads had less funding for roads than in the previous financial year, with a combined cut of more than \$160 million across the state. In my electorate we saw a cut in spending of the order of \$37 867 000 for the south-western region and \$14 667 000 for the western region. The above cuts equate to a 21.76 per cent reduction in funding for roads in western Victoria and a 37.6 per cent reduction for south-western Victoria.

There are frequent reports of near-misses and dangerous roads. The electorate of the Minister for Roads is in western Victoria, and he should know about this. I call on government MPs, particularly those from south-western Victoria, to support Labor's Project 10 000 for greater levels of funding for regional Victoria, which will ensure better certainty for the road construction industry, better economies of scale and a better standard of road for all Victorians.

White Ribbon workplace accreditation

Mrs COOTE (Southern Metropolitan) — In my 90-second statement I put on the record my praise for the White Ribbon Foundation and the excellent work it is continuing to do across this state and indeed internationally. On Monday I had the greatest honour in attending a breakfast at Monash University together with Ian Gray, the coroner; Rod Jouning from the Victoria Police family violence unit; David Galbally, QC; and 200 Monash University staff. A quite extraordinary panel was put together to talk about this very important issue.

Vladimir Prpich, the executive director of the campus community division of Monash University, welcomed everybody and said that Monash University staff had been part of the White Ribbon accreditation pilot. He was very pleased to acknowledge that Monash University has just attained White Ribbon workplace accreditation. The people at Monash hope that their students and staff will go out into the wider community and advocate for stopping violence against women and children.

It is terrific to see this attitude, which hopefully will change the culture of our community in the future. People at Monash believe that the university is very well placed to do that. Monash University has a policy of encouraging its staff and students to understand and adhere to an antiviolence against women policy. It is very pleasing that the coalition government is a great supporter of the White Ribbon Foundation and that it has provided the foundation with \$90 million from 2012 to 2014.

Project 10 000

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — The decision by the Napthine government to proceed with its east–west dud tunnel will not only cost Victorians \$8 billion to build but will mean that many other public transport and road projects will be shelved to pay for it. The government has refused to release the business case for the tunnel and refused to tell Victorians why their money should be spent on the most expensive road ever. The Melbourne Metro rail tunnel project has ground to a halt.

In stark contrast, the Labor opposition's transport alternative, Project 10 000, will deliver better and more targeted investment in congestion solutions across Victoria. This is a plan that gets on with the job of transforming Victoria's public transport system. It will remove 50 of our most deadly and congested level crossings, including 7 in the northern suburbs: at Bell Street, Coburg; Bell Street, Preston; Camp Road, Campbellfield; High Street, Reservoir; Lower Plenty Road, Rosanna; Moreland Road, Brunswick; and Glenroy Road, Glenroy.

It will double the size of the city loop to accommodate the construction of the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel — a project that was put on the backburner by the Napthine government in favour of its \$8 billion dud tunnel despite its having already been assessed by Infrastructure Australia as economically beneficial and ready to go. Labor will take 5000 trucks off the West Gate Bridge and invest \$1 billion in our outer suburban and interface roads and a further \$1 billion in regional roads. Most importantly, Labor's plan will create no fewer than 10 000 jobs, stimulating the Victorian economy and once again placing us at the forefront of job creation in Australia.

Hepatitis B and C

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Approximately 55 000 people in Victoria are living with chronic hepatitis B and around 65 000 people live with chronic hepatitis C. These figures equate to almost 2 per cent of the population. Hepatitis B and hepatitis C are like any other chronic illness; they require management and have significant health implications. Both forms of hepatitis can lead to serious liver disease, including primary liver cancer and cirrhosis of the liver. Liver transplants, with significant ongoing health treatments, are one form of treatment for liver failure. Notwithstanding the costs to the individual with hepatitis, the total financial cost of liver disease — including productivity impacts, informal care, program

costs et cetera — was estimated to be around \$5.4 billion in Australia alone in 2012.

Hepatitis B immunisation programs commenced in Victoria in 1998 and have had an impact on protecting Victorian-born babies. However, due to our increase in immigration, rates of hepatitis remain high. Nafisa Yussuf was born in Somalia and immigrated to Australia as a child. She believes she contracted hepatitis B from her mother at birth. Nafisa is living her life to its fullest, as many people with hepatitis do. However, there still remains a stigma and discrimination within our community about carrying either virus.

On Saturday I signed up and became a Hep Hero. On behalf of the Minister for Health I launched the Hep Hero campaign at Federation Square. The Hep Hero pledge is a simple message asking everyone to speak out against discrimination, stigma and judgement; to support those affected by viral hepatitis so they can live happy and healthy lives; and to be part of the solution and help raise awareness to achieve the goal of no new infections in Victoria. I urge all members to support these efforts and also to take the pledge.

Project 10 000

Mr SCHEFFER (Eastern Victoria) — The priority that the coalition has placed upon the construction of the east–west link project has been almost universally criticised by commuters and transport planning experts alike. The east–west tunnel is seen for what it is — a poorly planned and staggeringly overpriced piece of infrastructure that does not address the real transport needs of the city or the state. The east–west link is a knee-jerk act of desperation from a government that needed to be seen to be doing something that would silence the chorus of business and industry critics on its lack of action.

What the coalition has been unable or unwilling to do from government, Labor has done from opposition. Exactly one year ago Victorian Labor published its jobs plan to counteract the coalition's savage attack on the TAFE sector, its lack of support for Victorian manufacturing and its failure to invest in jobs. Last week Labor released Project 10 000, which tackles level crossing congestion, overcrowded and late trains and the poor state of our suburban and country roads.

Labor has committed to remove 50 of our worst level crossing blockages, build the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel, expand parking facilities at rail stations, get 5000 trucks a day off the West Gate Bridge by constructing a West Gate distributor, and repair and

upgrade roads — all creating some 10 000 jobs. The response has been overwhelmingly positive and the release of the policy has generated vigorous and constructive debate. Labor's Project 10 000 resonates with everyone who uses our roads or public transport, and only Labor has a practical plan to deal with Victoria's transport problems.

Mildura region government achievements

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — Last week I had the opportunity to travel to Mildura to attend a business dinner with leading Mildura businesspeople as well as to support Mildura's own charity, Chances for Children, along with the member for Mildura in the Assembly, Peter Crisp. Having compiled notes on the projects the coalition government has invested in in Mildura since coming to office, it was staggering for me to see just how many projects there have been and the level of funding that has been put into the city of Mildura compared with what happened during the 11 years of non-investment under the Independent-Labor alliance.

The government has invested strongly in the gas augmentation project, building a natural gas capacity to take Mildura's energy needs into the future. We have invested millions of dollars in the upgrade of the police station and the expansion of the hospital and buying back the hospital building, which the Labor government sold off to superannuation funds. We have invested over \$5 million in upgrading and expanding Mildura Airport. The construction of a link between Langtree Avenue and the riverfront precinct is ready to go ahead, and once Mildura Rural City Council gets going on this project, it will join the city of Mildura to the Murray River.

Under the previous government the total investment in Mildura through the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund program was \$27.8 million over 11 years. In just three years, through the advocacy of the member for Mildura in the Assembly, Peter Crisp, the coalition government has invested more than \$35 million through its Regional Growth Fund, leveraging an amount in excess of \$220 million. It is a glowing endorsement of Peter Crisp and shows what a sorry legacy the Labor Party and former Independent member for Mildura, Russell Savage, left for the city of Mildura.

Project 10 000

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I take this opportunity to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition and member for Mulgrave in the Assembly,

Daniel Andrews, and the shadow cabinet on delivering its promise to provide Victorians with a real plan for the future of transport in Victoria. Project 10 000 will directly generate 10 000 jobs in this state — hence the name. It will double the size of the city loop by building the Melbourne Metro rail and remove 50 of the most dangerous and congested level crossings on the metropolitan rail network.

I emphasise what Project 10 000 will deliver for the west. Over the next two decades the number of commercial vehicles travelling across the West Gate Bridge is set to double. Project 10 000 will pull 5000 trucks a day off the West Gate Bridge, and the provision of a dedicated truck route to the docks will not only increase efficiency but remove trucks from inner western suburban roads. Additionally, some of the worst level crossings in the west will be removed, such as the level crossing in Main Street, St Albans.

Project 10 000 is a responsible, reasonable and requisite plan for Victoria. Yet again, it is Labor that offers Victorians a vision for the future of our fine state.

Antibiotics Awareness Week

Mrs MILLAR (Northern Victoria) — On 19 November 2013 I had the pleasure of representing the Minister for Health, David Davis, in launching Victoria's Antibiotics Awareness Week 2013 at Bendigo Health.

The overuse and misuse of antibiotics is one of the most significant health issues facing our planet. The world changed significantly in 1942 when the first patient was treated with penicillin. This miracle drug enabled many of the pioneering advances in medical treatments and surgery, including organ transplants, cancer chemotherapy and neonatal care. However, overuse and misuse of antibiotics has led to the emergence and spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, commonly known as superbugs. Judicious and appropriate use of antibiotics is the best approach to controlling resistant bugs, and Victoria is currently leading the way in the development and implementation of effective management systems for antibiotics. Victorian hospitals are currently at the forefront of anti-microbial stewardship programs in line with the new National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

I recognise the intellectual and clinical leadership of Professor Lindsay Grayson. The medical practitioners and staff of our Victorian hospitals deserve our thanks and recognition, together with the Minister for Health,

David Davis, and the dedicated staff of the Department of Health, especially Dr Kylie McIntosh.

White Ribbon Day

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — I take this opportunity to thank all the councils within my municipality and, for that matter, across Victoria for marking White Ribbon Day on 25 November as an opportunity to take a stand on violence against women and children.

White Ribbon is the world's largest male-led movement to end men's violence against women. This special day seeks to change the attitudes and behaviours that ultimately lead to violence towards women. Despite our commitments to end violence against women and children, family violence has increased significantly. In 2008 there were 720 reported cases in the Brimbank and Melton municipalities in my electorate. By 2013 this figure had increased to 1084 cases. This was also the case in the Hume, Moreland and Moonee Valley regions, where the number of incidents reported increased from a total of 730 in 2008–09 to 1103 by 2012–13. I am afraid this figure would be significantly higher if we were to consider all the unreported incidents. This is why events like White Ribbon Day are so important. I congratulate all those who took part in the day and encourage all members of the community to support this very important cause.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

References

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I move:

That under section 33 of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 the following matters be referred to the joint investigatory committees specified:

- (1) to the Family and Community Development Committee — for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 6 August 2014 on social inclusion and Victorians with a disability, and the committee is asked to inquire into:
 - (a) define 'social inclusion' for Victorians with a disability;
 - (b) identify the nature and scale of relative inclusion (exclusion) and participation of Victorians with a disability in the economic, social and civil dimensions of society;
 - (c) understand the impact of Victorian government services and initiatives aimed at improving inclusion and participation;
- (2) to the Rural and Regional Committee — for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 4 September 2014 on the opportunities for increasing exports of goods and services from regional Victoria, and the committee is asked to do this through an examination of:
 - (a) the identification and volume of Victorian agricultural, resource, manufacturing and service industry exports to overseas markets originating in regional Victoria;
 - (b) regional Victoria's competitive advantages in meeting the demands of world markets;
 - (c) innovative approaches to exporting and lessons to be shared from successful exporters;
 - (d) impediments and barriers creating difficulties for regional exporters; and
 - (e) the current and future roles of government in supporting regional businesses in their export endeavours.
- (3) to the Education and Training Committee — for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 4 September 2014 on the approaches to homework in Victorian schools, focusing on the impact on student learning, including:
 - (a) evidence supporting the value of homework:
 - (i) benefits to individual students' learning;
 - (ii) contribution to discipline and other life skills; and
 - (iii) engagement of parents in student learning;
 - (b) current approaches to homework, including application of, and access to, technology outside of the classroom/school:
 - (i) as a tool to reinforce learning;
 - (ii) differences across primary and secondary school and the sectors;
 - (iii) approaches in Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse background communities;
 - (iv) individual versus team homework;
 - (v) conceptual versus applied;
- (d) identify examples of good practice on inclusion and participation driven by local government and the community sector;
- (e) assess how the Disability Act 2006 has impacted on the social inclusion of people with a disability with respect to Victorian government services; and
- (f) recommend ways to increase social inclusion, including the roles of and collaboration between local, state and federal governments, the community sector, individuals with a disability and their carers.

- (vi) relevance to curriculum;
- (vii) integration into how teachers help students learn;
- (viii) assessment;
- (ix) reporting and feedback methods; and
- (x) best practice models;
- (c) future of homework in Victorian schools:
 - (i) balance between reinforcing and extending what has been learnt in the classroom with time to undertake extracurricular activities and to spend time with family;
 - (ii) differentiated approaches for primary and secondary schools;
 - (iii) the nature, and time dedicated to, homework to facilitate best student learning in different communities; and
 - (iv) application of, and access to, technology to assist learning.

These are three important references that have individual and particular merits. The reference to the Family and Community Development Committee is an important one. I begin by complimenting the Family and Community Development Committee on its recent report on the series of incidents that have occurred over many decades. The report will be seen as a foundational report. It has shown the Parliament at its best, particularly the leadership by the Victorian Premier at the time, Ted Baillieu, and the government and their preparedness to launch that inquiry. The report reflects the maturity, good grace and genuineness with which the committee approached its work. There were some nay-sayers, including, I might unkindly say, the deputy chair, who was rabbiting on at an early point about why the committee could not do the work, should not do the work and would be unsuccessful in doing the work, and that it was underpowered and underresourced.

In fact that did not prove to be the case. The committee had the resources and the legal support. The resources were provided by the government to the Parliament for that committee's activities. The committee went forward and did the work with, as I have said, good grace and genuineness and in a way that has led to its making a foundational report. It played a significant part in eliciting the steps that led to the royal commission at a national level and the New South Wales inquiry. I compliment the New South Wales government on its preparedness to look at a number of these difficult matters.

Ms Crozier, who is the chair of the committee, and I were talking earlier in the day with a number of other members. When remembering that inquiry — and I will put this on the record very briefly — it is important to remember that it is not just one institution that is involved here; it is a series of institutions that have been pointed to by evidence and material gathered by the committee through an exhaustive process with parliamentary privilege. It is important to see how a committee can reflect community values and community concerns and in a good and genuine way take on board facts and evidence and make a set of decisions and a set of recommendations that will stand the Parliament, the government and the community in good stead into the future.

I am, in a sense, beginning with this preamble to indicate the good work that parliamentary committees can do. From time to time we see the Parliament brought into disrepute for a range of reasons, but the inquiry that has been completed by the Family and Community Development Committee stands in stark contrast to those occasions. It stands as an example of the Parliament doing its best. In many respects joint parliamentary committees, and indeed Legislative Council committees, have the capacity to make, in a sensible way and with proper protections and support, a set of decisions on the basis of evidence that is tendered under oath. Parliamentary committees can cross-examine witnesses and be informed and learn about a particular area as they go about their work.

I note that the Environment and Planning Legislation Committee's report on its inquiry into the regulatory impact statement process was tabled today. I commend that committee on its work. As I said to somebody earlier in the day, it is a drier and more complex sort of reference but is one nonetheless that will provide important guidance to government on how to reform and improve the regulatory impact statement process.

Referring to these inquiries directly, with the disability act in place and the decisions about the national disability insurance scheme having been made by governments around the country, it is timely to look at a number of these key points. Inclusion and participation are important concepts, and ensuring that disabilities are not a point of exclusion is a significant step for our community.

Under this reference the Family and Community Development Committee will be asked to look at the central steps and at what can be done to put the state and the community in a better position to understand best practice on inclusion and participation driven by local government and the community sector, and to

recommend ways to increase social inclusion, including in the roles and collaboration between various governments and community sectors. It is an important reference. I will let the committee chair say something, but I think that committee is now well placed to undertake such a reference.

The Rural and Regional Committee will be able to look at the challenge of exports. Victoria is doing very well with its exports, particularly its exports of food — wheat, dairy products and other key exports. Food exports make a significant contribution to the state's economy. In 2012–13 they were valued at \$7.6 billion, accounting for 26 per cent of Australia's total food exports. Importantly, the food sector is also a significant source of jobs, directly employing 145 000 people, the majority based in rural and regional Victoria.

We face significant challenges. Victoria is not a state that has the immediate access to massive mineral resources that some other states have. It is unable to generate the massive royalty flows that Western Australia, Queensland or, to a lesser extent, New South Wales have been able to generate. This state needs to work hard, and we need to make sure that our investments and our focus on our industries are correct. That is where this important reference can better position the state for the future, inspiring bipartisan or cross-party support in the Parliament and in the community for directions and ways forward. That is where this important reference can better position the state for the future, inspiring bipartisan or cross-party support in the Parliament and in the community for directions and ways forward.

We face challenges, but there are also massive opportunities, and Victoria under the Baillieu and Napthine governments has been prepared to seize those opportunities and push forward. The rapidly growing middle class in Asia is a segment that we can focus on in seeking to do better with our exports, whether they be dairy, red meat, grains, horticulture or wine. There is a long list of products. These build on Victoria's strengths.

The increased international competition we face and the high Australian dollar are certainly factors, and we need to couple our productivity growth with dealing with the challenges, but this is about building markets. Victoria's food sector can also capture opportunities presented by Asia's middle class as it grows and becomes wealthier, but there are many other rural exports and regional exports that put us in a very strong position, as I said, whether they be horticulture, wine or red meat. These are key exports. The committee is well

positioned to investigate volume and innovative approaches in exporting, to learn lessons from successful exporters and to advise the government in those areas in the future.

The Education and Training Committee has been asked to look at homework. On one level this is a hoary old chestnut. I have young children and I understand the challenges parents face in regard to homework. On the weekend at a local event by chance I had a conversation with a parent who was explaining how they had instituted a homework regime. Knowing this motion was coming before the house, my ears pricked up. I think all parents will respond to this and appreciate the challenge of balancing children's sporting activities, cultural pursuits and home life with ensuring that they are able to augment and strengthen their activities at school through doing homework, which puts students in a better position individually and more broadly puts our community in a better position. The challenge is for teachers to work with our students in this way.

This is a very detailed motion, and I do not need to speak to each of the points, but I think there will be very little resistance in the community to looking at this matter in a systematic way. This is a motion for an inquiry that can elicit understandings and bipartisan or cross-party positions on these matters as we go forward. Many of these areas are best dealt with in this way, because if you can develop durable positions that have all-party support, the implementation and the longevity of programs will be much greater. We will refine what can be done and do it in a way that will deliver for families and communities into the future.

With those few words I commend these three important references to the house. I know a number of the committee chairs want to make brief contributions to this debate, but I would certainly welcome the support of all parties in the chamber for these references.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — The opposition does not intend to oppose Mr Davis's motion to refer these matters to these three committees. We are happy to see the committees do their work in the same fashion as we have previously seen them do it in relation to a number of committee references. We do not see any need to pre-empt any conclusions that may come out of these references, and we look forward to the reports coming to this chamber in the future.

Mrs KRONBERG (Eastern Metropolitan) — I take great pleasure in rising to support the motion moved by Mr Davis to refer certain matters to specified joint investigatory committees under section 33 of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003. The motion

includes a well-set-out referral to the Family and Community Development Committee with an emphasis on social inclusion for Victorians with disability. The second referral is to the Rural and Regional Committee for inquiry, consideration and report by no later than 4 September on opportunities for increasing exports of goods and services from regional Victoria. My contribution — —

Mr Leane — Acting President, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Mrs KRONBERG — In my capacity as chair of the Education and Training Committee I will emphasise during my contribution the third reference in the motion, which refers a matter to the Education and Training Committee:

... for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 4 September 2014 on the approaches to homework in Victorian schools, focusing on the impact on student learning ...

Whilst I understand that for some people outside the professional areas of education and dedicated parents, homework might look like something that has been languishing and something that might have been eclipsed by other sorts of social and sporting endeavour in the lives of students, it is important that this reference is undertaken by a bipartisan committee which can look into elements such as evidence supporting the value of homework, the benefits to individual students' learning, the contribution to discipline and other life skills, and the engagement of parents in student learning. These are really profound points and they go to the heart of successful outcomes for students through their education and their making good contributions as citizens.

The next element is current approaches to homework, including application of and access to technology outside of the classroom/school as a tool to reinforce learning; differences across primary and secondary school and the sectors; approaches in Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse background communities; individual versus team homework; conceptual versus applied; relevance to curriculum; integration into how teachers help students learn; assessment; reporting and feedback methods; and best practice models.

The third major element of this reference is the future of homework in Victorian schools — the balance between reinforcing and extending what has been learnt in the classroom with time to undertake extracurricular

activities and to spend time with family; differentiated approaches for primary and secondary schools; the nature and time dedicated to homework to facilitate best student learning in different communities; and application of and access to technology to assist learning. These are really profound things for the committee to consider.

It is important to note that this reference has been moved in the Parliament during this sitting week. It was not able to be dealt with in the last sitting week. The timing of the motion puts significant pressure on the committee for the simple reason that advice needs to go out in public forums in a timely fashion to likely stakeholders, such as primary and secondary schools; teachers and their professional associations; parents associations; academic institutions, particularly teacher education tertiary institutions; and to the students themselves for the questions to be considered in this particular reference.

By the time the request for submissions goes out there will not be a lot of time left before the close of the school and academic years. I was very pleased to hear the comment from Mr Leane earlier that the opposition will support this series of references, because they are really important. Homework is something that is essential in Victorian schools. There have been lots of studies into the efficacy of homework in improving student learning outcomes and on both sides, both negative and positive. The inquiry will look at the effectiveness of homework and the form that homework should take.

I commend this motion to the house. Hopefully the Education and Training Committee will be able to deal with its reference in a very prompt fashion as soon as the motion passes through this house.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — On behalf of the Greens, I say that we will support the committee references moved by Mr David Davis in his motion 672. The first part is to refer to the Family and Community Development Committee the issue of social inclusion and Victorians with a disability and for the committee to report by August next year. There are six aspects to that issue in Mr Davis's motion. I have consulted with my colleague Ms Hartland, who takes a very keen interest in and is our spokesperson on this issue, and she advises that the reference is straightforward. I would say that it represents a quite comprehensive coverage of the issue.

I take the opportunity to say that I agree with the Leader of the Government that the work done by the Family and Community Development Committee in its most

recent inquiry has impressed all Victorians. The members of the committee had a very difficult task ahead of them with their last reference. They carried out that task excellently on behalf of the Victorian community and in particular on behalf of the people who had been damaged by the actions committed against them over many years and often very many years ago. I have confidence in the ability of this committee to take on what I think is going to be a reference that will again raise issues that are difficult for many Victorians and that many Victorians with disabilities and their families have had to deal with in their lives. Therefore it is timely, particularly in terms of looking at the Disability Act 2006, which is now seven years old, to see how that is working or not working for the benefit of people with a disability in Victoria.

With regard to the second reference in the motion to the Rural and Regional Committee, it is very broad in scope and not very specific in terms of the five key aspects that the motion asks the committee to look at. In terms of looking at the impediments and barriers, one thing that comes to mind is the issue of freight transport, in particular the lack of progress by either government in moving freight off the roads and onto rail. That is a particular issue for regional and rural areas, so I hope the committee will look at that issue.

The third reference requires the Education and Training Committee to look at approaches to homework in Victorian schools, focusing on the impact on student learning. The motion covers three main areas with a large number of subpoints. It is worth saying that the issue of whether homework is beneficial to students or the degree to which it might or might not be beneficial to students is a longstanding debate, and there are people who do not believe that homework is of much benefit to students.

Certainly there are schools around the world that have no-homework policies. In fact just recently I read that the new French president has moved that homework be abolished in French schools. He cited the reason that it is unfair for students whose parents are not involved in assisting them with homework or taking much interest and that it was a disadvantage to them compared to the students whose parents are actively involved.

There are also the issues arising in primary and lower secondary schools about whether homework is beneficial for students; whether it is a burden on students; whether it actually assists them in learning or does not assist; whether it takes them away — as Mrs Kronberg, the Leader of the Government and others have said — from other activities such as

sporting activities, and particularly for young children takes them away from general play.

It is a longstanding debate and much has been written and said about it. It will be very interesting to see what the committee comes up with in that regard. I do not want to come down on one side or the other, although I lean toward less homework for younger students and more opportunities for them to be involved in other things, but particularly so that young students are not too tired at the end of the day to take part in other activities, including just being with friends and family.

With those few words, the Greens support these references to the relevant joint committees.

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — I too join with the Leader of the Government, Mr David Davis, in support of his motion 672 relating to referrals to three of the parliamentary committees of their next investigatory inquiries. The Family and Community Development Committee is to inquire into, consider and report by August 2014 on the issue of social inclusion for those Victorians with a disability. It is timely that we look at what is defined as social inclusion. That debate has been raging since Parliament examined the disability legislation in about 2003–04 and rewrote the act, but there is the whole concept of closing down institutions, putting people in community residential units, working out what would be the correct number of residents and whether we can take people out of, say, Kew Cottages, and simply assimilate them into the community. Parents, guardians and carers have been very concerned about making sure that policy exactly reflects the various capabilities of people with disabilities and does not place them in situations where they are clearly unable to be assimilated.

The whole concept of social inclusion is critical when it comes to creating the best and most productive lifestyles for our Victorians with disabilities. It is great that we take people who may suffer from disabilities which are not profound, as we do now, and try to train and educate them, and continue to do so way beyond the normal education years. We are putting in place a lot of work opportunities to ensure that they maximise their potential. Both sides of Parliament and both sides of politics are working on trying to maximise the input for people with disabilities. This inquiry by the Family and Community Development Committee into social inclusion for people with a disability will be very timely.

Looking at ways to try to increase social inclusion, the various roles and collaboration between local, state and federal governments is absolutely critical because with

this particular issue we find that quite often the joint funding models do not work and do not give everybody the services they require. We are all looking forward to the introduction of the national disability insurance scheme when we hope many people with disabilities will be able to access, as of right, the services they need, as that certainly is not the case at the moment.

The second part of the motion relates to a referral to the Rural and Regional Committee, of which I am a member and a former chair. It looks to be an outstanding reference because we all know how important it is for Victoria to build upon its exports in goods and services. We understand that in 2012–13 the total amount of exports from Victoria amounted to over \$7.5 billion, which is over a quarter of the total amount of exports of food from Australia.

We also understand that there is a growing middle class in Asia and the statistics show that we are looking at a number in the billions by 2030. We will have in the vicinity of 3 billion people in the consumer class in Asia within about 17 years. At the moment that figure is around 200 million to 300 million people. We have the opportunity to be the beneficiaries of this huge, burgeoning market for our goods and services, including food and fibre.

All of Victoria now realises how prophetic the previous Premier, Ted Baillieu, the member for Hawthorn in the Assembly, was in organising the super trade missions to India, China and the United Arab Emirates. This work has since been continued by Premier Napthine. A range of ministers — including Peter Walsh, the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, Louise Asher, the Minister for Employment and Trade, and Richard Dalla-Riva, the former Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade — have led delegations from Victorian businesses to these overseas markets.

I know from recent conversations with the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security that millions of dollars in contracts with overseas companies have come about as a direct result of the trade missions facilitated by the coalition government. It is something we should all learn from. At some stage or other Labor will again be on the government benches; I hope it is a long time into the future. However, we hope when it happens Labor's efforts in bringing Victorian businesses face to face with overseas markets will be a hell of a lot better than they were during its last attempt at government. In this area the current government, under Premier Baillieu and Premier Napthine and the various trade ministers, has shown not just the Labor Party in Victoria but everybody else in Australia a clean set of heels. The

delegations to overseas markets are giving the export numbers of this state an enormous boost.

The Rural and Regional Committee will look into this area in terms of resources, manufacturing, food and fibre, the competitive advantages this state has over some of the others and what innovative approaches can be implemented to get even more successful exporters into the field. The committee will also look at the impediments and barriers that are currently acting as a handbrake on our businesses and export dollars from those overseas markets.

It will be a very interesting inquiry. I look forward to being part of the inquiry. It will be a great opportunity to come up with recommendations to help the government further enhance its reputation for having first-class relationships with our overseas markets and doing everything it possibly can during times of a high Australian dollar, high labour costs and cheap imports competing against businesses in this country and in this state. In this background of extremely tough trade indicators it is great that this government and its various ministers can hold their hands up and say they are doing everything they possibly can to influence markets, create new markets and bring burgeoning businesses in Victoria to the next stage and the next level.

In relation to the third inquiry, into homework, Ms Pennicuik mentioned that how much homework our children should do, the type of homework they should do and the various benefits of homework to individual students is an age-old debate. It is a contentious issue. People fall on both sides of this argument and have for many years. In terms of an initial rule of thumb, Ms Pennicuik mentioned the French President saying he was not keen to see some students disadvantaged because their parents were not engaged in their children's learning and homework. If that has been put forward as a valid argument — —

Ms Pennicuik — I wasn't putting it as a valid argument.

Mr DRUM — No, I am just saying that if the French President is going to put that forward as a valid argument, I would love to argue against it.

Hon. G. K. Rich-Phillips — I suspect he will not make a submission.

Mr DRUM — He may not make a submission in the first round, Mr Rich-Phillips; however, you never know.

As a society we have to wind the clock back and encourage parents to take a greater interest in their children's education. We should not take the easy way out and ban all homework because we do not want to discriminate against the few children who are being left behind. I know it is contentious. It is an issue that desperately needs this inquiry. It would be great if one of the recommendations could be in relation to ways to further encourage parental participation in homework. The Education and Training Committee is well situated to find a better balance that will lead to better educational outcomes.

This motion is timely. These inquiries will potentially be the last that these committees will complete in this term of Parliament, and I am looking forward to playing a role on the Rural and Regional Committee with the member for Rodney in the other place, Paul Weller, as chair. I look forward to seeing the recommendations from each of the three committees as a result of these references.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I join colleagues in the chamber in supporting the references being referred to the three committees identified in the motion moved by Mr Davis. It would come as no surprise that I have a particular interest in the terms of reference given to the Parliament's Education and Training Committee for inquiry into a whole range of aspects of homework. As other speakers have said, homework has been surrounded by controversy and inconsistency at the school level and also at family and parental levels.

Homework guidelines were issued by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development back in the year 2000, and there has been very little alteration to those guidelines since the then Minister for Education, Mary Delahunty, established them. It is worth mentioning a few aspects of them because I am sure they will become an important focus for the committee's work. The guidelines assign responsibility to school councils to determine homework policy for use at each school but also give further guidance to school councils as to what they need to be aware of when setting a homework policy for their schools. For example, they suggest that for prep to year 4 students homework should be not seen as a chore. It should enable the extension of classwork by practising skills or gathering extra information or materials. It should mainly consist of daily reading to, with and by parents, a carer or older siblings and should generally not exceed 30 minutes a day or be set for on weekends or during vacations. Those of us who have had children should perhaps reflect on whether our children were

working within the parameters suggested by the department.

For years 5 to 9 the guidelines suggest that homework should include daily independent reading, it should be coordinated across subjects in secondary schools to avoid unreasonable workloads for students, it may extend classwork, projects and assignments, essays and research, and should generally range from 30 to 45 minutes a day in year 5 and 45 to 90 minutes a day in year 9. These guidelines suggest a framework for school councils to use in setting their school policy. When discussing years 10 to 12 the guidelines suggest that homework will generally increase and require from 1 to 3 hours per weeknight with up to 6 hours on weekends during peak Victorian certificate of education periods.

I will not dare to pre-empt what the committee might consider in regard to these guidelines because the point of the terms of reference is that the committee receive input into what the community thinks is appropriate in terms of homework, but as others have suggested in contributing to this debate it has been a somewhat vexed question over a period of time. I too noticed that it was only a little over 12 months ago that President Francois Hollande of France abolished homework in French schools, which created vigorous debate all around the world about whether that view was appropriate in other communities and cultures. Indeed it prompted the publishing of a book called *Reforming Homework — Practices, Learning and Policy*, by Richard Walker and Mike Horsley, who work out of Sydney University. I simply mention that as a possible reference that the committee might want to have a look at. I have not read it myself, but I am sure it would be a useful document for the committee to consider.

When the current guidelines were established in 2000 Parents Victoria made a submission, dated September 2000, to the department titled *Reporting and Homework in Victorian Government Schools*. Having flicked through the document, I know some comments made by Parents Victoria would be relevant to the committee's work. Our committees consult widely and embark upon a program of consultation right across the state. The work undertaken is generally good, positive work, and we see good outcomes from it. I was a member of the Education and Training Committee in the last Parliament, and the work we undertook involved a great deal of consultation and invitations to people to make submissions to inquiries. I believe homework is an area on which many people have a view, and the work of the committee will be long and very interesting.

Ms Pennicuik — Will they be able to solve it?

Hon. P. R. HALL — I think the important thing is that the responsibilities and wishes of parents and school communities towards homework will be of paramount interest to those concerned with this inquiry. As I said, the guidelines go back to suggesting that school councils should set homework policy for their particular schools. I think that is appropriate, but I do not want to pre-empt any recommendations the Education and Training Committee might make to Parliament. However, I wish committee members well in their endeavours and support the motion before the house.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to speak to the motion that has been moved by the Leader of the Government. Three very important references are outlined in this motion. The first is to the Family and Community Development Committee, which I presently chair, for inquiry, consideration and reporting no later than 6 August 2014 on social inclusion and Victorians with a disability. The committee is asked to inquire into a number of areas that have been previously outlined by the minister. The motion also makes references to the Rural and Regional Committee to inquire into a number of areas relevant to that committee and to the Education and Training Committee to investigate other areas.

The reference to the Family and Community Development Committee is another very important reference. In the last sitting week I tabled the report of the child abuse inquiry and thanked members for their support for and comments on the work of the committee. It was a significant inquiry, as members are aware. We dealt with some very difficult and challenging issues. Likewise, this reference requires inquiry into difficult and challenging areas concerning some of our most vulnerable community members.

I put on the record that the Minister for Disability Services and Reform, Ms Wooldridge, along with the Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Community Services, Mrs Coote, have done an extraordinary job in the consultation they have undertaken throughout Victoria. The act requires that a disability action plan be prepared every four years.

The government launched the Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016 as required by that act. I know Mrs Coote undertook an enormous amount of work in working with various groups and putting together that plan. It is an important plan that looks, as I said, at some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The plan will incorporate the goals and

principles of the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) and those reforms which are going to service the system under which the state disability plan will operate, giving greater choice, enabling greater control and access to services for people with a disability, and complementing the proposed reforms under that national scheme.

These are complex matters. As I said, the minister has undertaken a significant amount of work on this, and I commend her for her work particularly in relation to the NDIS. We know there are a number of issues in relation to social inclusion, particularly in Victorian government services, and that is what this reference is about. I note that the disability plan has a whole-of-government and interdepartmental committee on disability looking at four key areas. This reference will enable us to see if those issues are being looked at adequately, and I am sure the committee will undertake the work as has been requested.

In relation to the reference to the Rural and Regional Committee, the recently announced food and fibre results have broken historical records. That goes to show just how important our export markets are to this government. We have had record exports to various parts of the world. I particularly commend the government on its trade missions — the delegations it has taken to Asia and the Middle East. Those results will go towards ongoing export opportunities for our rural and regional industries.

The final reference, which is to the Education and Training Committee, is about approaches to homework. As we have heard from various speakers, this can be a vexed subject. I was interested in Ms Pennicuik's comments, and other members have taken up the issue of what France is doing. The French President has his views. I suppose that should not be so surprising, given that his is a somewhat socialist government. In relation to Mr Hall's comments, as he is a former teacher, he will know the importance and benefits of homework. I would have to say that the benefits far outweigh the negatives when it comes to homework and improving student outcomes.

These are three very important references that have been given to the committees. They will all undertake their inquiries in a timely fashion, as they have been requested to do, and will report back to government according to the normal process. I commend the motion to the house.

Motion agreed to.

ROAD LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 14 November; motion of
Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS (Assistant Treasurer).**

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — What a delight it is to rise today, on what has been a very sombre and boring day in Victoria's Parliament, to speak on the Road Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. The bill is primarily concerned with new provisions relating to the demerit points scheme. It accommodates multiple sanctions arising from the rapid accumulation of demerit points in a clear and linear manner. The bill also makes minor technical amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Application Act 2013 and the Road Safety Act 1986 for the purposes of statute law revision and minor technical amendments.

Drivers who incur sufficient numbers of demerit points may elect to go to an extended demerit point period. During this period the driver must not incur any further demerit points or his or her licence or permit will be suspended for double the time that would have applied if he or she had not elected to take the extended demerit point period option. The ability of a driver to accumulate high numbers of demerit points in a short period of time through the automated traffic camera system means that a driver may be on a number of overlapping extended demerit point periods at any one time. The bill will ensure that these extended demerit point periods can only be served one after the other, not at the same time and not overlapping with each other.

The bill means that international or interstate drivers who incur enough demerit points will be issued with notices banning them on all Victorian roads, where before they could incur a significant number of demerit points and receive no punishment whatsoever. This bill will enable VicRoads to require interstate or overseas drivers to take a fitness test. I mean a fitness test in relation to their capacity to drive, not a fitness test that they might take otherwise — one which I would struggle with, I suspect. The regulations will remove the driver's authority to drive in Victoria in the event that they refuse or fail to take this specific fitness test.

The bill also states that once a person is issued with a Victorian drivers licence or learners permit, his or her authority to drive will stem from that licence or permit whilst it is current. Therefore, upon the issue of a Victorian licence or permit, any overseas or interstate licence or permit that the driver may have will have no effect for the purposes of allowing them to drive in the

state of Victoria. The bill will also make it an offence for a driver to produce an interstate or overseas licence rather than his or her Victorian licence when asked by a police officer or other authorised officer to produce the document that authorises the person to drive in Victoria. This has been a scam for a long time. People have been picked up on Victorian roads who, when asked to produce a licence, have produced an interstate licence. We know this is happening, and Victoria Police knows it is happening. Now drivers are required to produce a Victorian drivers licence.

Ownership of registration number rights should not be lost simply because a vehicle's registration has been expired for 12 months. This bill will amend the act to ensure that registration number rights are not lost due to the expiry of the vehicle's registration. This is a small, minor technical amendment. The bill will also make other improvements to the licensing and registration provisions of the Road Safety Act 1986. For example, the bill will enable VicRoads to disqualify a person from obtaining a drivers licence or learners permit if VicRoads has already cancelled the person's licence or permit. This bill and these laws will ensure that those who incur demerit points will not get off lightly but will suffer the full punishment possible for their transgressions.

Many Victorian drivers step slightly over the limit and get caught. I have done it too. I have received demerit points when I drove slightly over the speed limit, and I am not proud of that. I copped my fair whack for it. Ensuring that offenders receive full punishment for these offences is particularly important. Drivers who incur a significant number of demerit points are obviously driving recklessly, which means they are much more likely to be involved in a serious road accident. The evidence suggests there is a trend: the more demerit points a driver has, the higher their risk profile.

This bill brings Victoria into the reality of the present. Automated cameras mean that many more demerit points are incurred and licences are suspended. Since 1989 road tolls have more than halved. A long line of laws targeting road safety have played a major role in this reduction of fatalities on our roads.

However, it is clear that the Speed Kills message has not got through to some in our community. I have spoken about this before in this house, but I well remember that in 2009, not far from where I live, five people were killed in one vehicle on Plenty Road, Mill Park. These were young people, and this was a tragedy. Some of those children were known to my children and to the local sporting club for which I coached. These teens got

into a car after a party with a driver who was facing court and was also limited to carrying not more than one passenger. The driver was doing speeds of nearly 150 kilometres an hour on a road with a speed limit of 70 kilometres an hour. He ran red lights and had no regard for the safety of those in his car. He eventually lost control, and the car was wrapped around a tree. Five young Victorians died. These kids were well known in my community, and it is a shame to see such lives wasted.

This type of tragedy can be avoided in the future, because repeat bad offenders will not be able to serve their licence bans concurrently. Hopefully this legislation will mean that dangerous young drivers will have their licences suspended for significant, meaningful, send-a-message periods to make sure they cannot harm themselves or others on the road.

Last weekend in a 24-hour period we lost seven lives on Victorian roads. I see the minister responsible for the Transport Accident Commission nodding in agreement about what a tragedy that was. That is seven lives too many lost on Victorian roads. It is seven people who will not be there around the Christmas table. It is seven families, plus others also affected, who will miss their loved ones around the Christmas table. Presents have been purchased for Christmas which will not be able to be delivered to these seven people.

This is a tragedy, but it is timely that a message be sent from this Parliament to all Victorians. It is time to get serious and drive carefully on roads. The school year is almost finished. Year 11 and 12 students have finished their exams and they now have recreation time. There are more kids around, people are in holiday mode and conversation around water coolers at workplaces is about what people will be doing for their holidays. People have stopped concentrating and they are starting to think about what they will be doing with their recreation time. I implore Victorians, and I implore drivers on roads — my message to them is: it is time to stop being in holiday mode. It is time to get back to concentrating on your driving. Stop using your mobile phones while you are driving; stop texting, Facebooking, twittering and checking your emails while you are driving. A 2 second distraction can be fatal. This is an important bill, because it sends a message.

A branch of the Bendigo Bank in my electorate, the Doreen and Mernda Community Bank Branch, has taken it upon itself to help to create a safer community. The money raised at the Doreen and Mernda Community Bank Branch of Valley Community Financial Services is being put back into local clubs and

organisations and into initiatives such as the Greenlight Youth Driver Education program. The Doreen and Mernda Community Bank Branch has provided funding for eight young drivers to attend a two-day Greenlight Driver Education course, allowing the participants to improve their driving skills and develop the ability to deal with risky road situations. Young people are overrepresented in road trauma figures. I hope this program, sponsored by the Doreen and Mernda Community Bank Branch, will make our local roads and our young drivers that little bit safer.

On that note, I commend the chairman of the Doreen and Mernda Community Bank, Barry Henwood, and his other board members — Malcolm Hackett, Ingrid Crichton, Daryl Brooke, Stephen Bennett, Hugh Stublely, Phil Marendaz, Carole Bury, Carol Jenkinson and John Bot — for their leadership in our community. It takes a whole community to save lives. Drivers need to be responsible, and communities need to tap drivers on the shoulder and say, 'Hey, mate, it's time to slow down'. This government is working tirelessly to save Victorians on our roads. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr O'BRIEN (Western Victoria) — It is with great pleasure that I also rise to make a contribution on behalf of the government and The Nationals to debate in support of this important piece of legislation, the Road Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I commend the contribution that the chamber has just heard from Mr Ondarchie. He has made numerous passionate contributions on this critical subject during his time in this place, and I commend him for his continued commitment to this cause and other worthy causes. It is an important subject matter, and I note that the minister responsible for the Transport Accident Commission, the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips, is in the chamber.

The legislation contains a number of amendments that are designed to strengthen laws relating to interstate, overseas and unlicensed drivers and to make other improvements to the driver licensing and registration process, as well as, importantly, enacting new provisions in relation to the demerit point scheme, particularly in relation to multiple sanctions arising from the rapid accumulation of demerit points so that it is done in a clear and linear manner. I will turn to that shortly. I also wish to take up the commitments that were identified by Mr Ondarchie in his contribution, relating to the government's commitment across the whole of government to road safety. I too would like to extend my endorsement of not just the state government's commitments to road safety but also the initiatives that have occurred in the community and in

my electorate as well. I note that Mr Drum is here, and I note his commitment to this important subject matter as well.

The particular initiatives I would like to identify are part of a longstanding campaign, supported by the government and the Premier as the member for South-West Coast in the Assembly, in the Warrnambool and south-west areas of western Victoria. They involve a well-documented campaign called Talk the Toll Down. An important initiative and part of this campaign that picks up matters relevant to the subject matter of the bill, as well as relevant to the contribution made by Mr Ondarchie, has been the Warrnambool road safety challenge for under-25s, which I had some pleasure in participating in by mentoring some of the young leaders who were voluntarily giving up their weekends to help devise grassroots responses for that important under-25 generation to which this bill is targeted. As Mr Ondarchie has mentioned, under-25s can be particularly and tragically subject to the distractions of mobile phones and issues in relation to speeding, hoon driving, drink driving and other drugs, which can tragically bring their lives either to an end or result in disability and cause consequences for other, innocent road users in those tragedies.

We know the tragedies that have affected Western Victoria Region in recent years. Two in particular have occurred in very close proximity to our farm, and I know that both of the victims, the emergency services personnel, the hospital personnel, the ambulance personnel, the communities themselves and also the locations where the road accidents occurred are still deeply affected. That is why this important piece of legislation will assist in reinforcing the message of the government in relation to the importance of road safety, and particularly it will do so in relation to the demerit point scheme.

For those who are not aware, the current Victorian demerit scheme operates in relation to certain road traffic offences which incur demerit points. Presently when a driver reaches 12 demerit points, or 5 if they are a probationary driver, they have an option: to have their licence suspended for 3 months or to spend 12 months being allowed to drive but during which time they must not incur further penalty. I should disclose that I have been a driver who has incurred demerit points and engaged in such a choice. Thankfully during my further 12 months I did not engage in further infractions. This is an extended demerit period, and it is similar to a 12-month good behaviour bond period. If a driver commits an offence during this good behaviour bond period, his or her licence will be suspended for double the time that would have applied if he or she had not

elected to take the bond-period option; by that I mean that they will get a suspension period of six months rather than three months.

Since the introduction of traffic cameras and speed zones of greater frequency it has been possible for drivers to incur a large number of demerit points in a relatively short period of time, and this means that a driver may end up being on a number of overlapping bond periods. This bill will ensure that the bond periods are served one after another, consecutively — not at the same time. That is an important reinforcement of the government's message in relation to the importance of road safety.

In mentioning the Warrnambool road safety challenge for under-25s, I should commend some of the participants who gave up their time, because they made up a cross-section of the community from law enforcement right through to council and other community leaders. Three teams — involving Assistant Commissioner Robert Hill, road policing command; Jack Blaney, western region command; and Tracey Linford, intelligence and covert support command, who has twice been elevated since she served and led the Warrnambool area — put in particular time and support for this program, along with human resources director Andrew Loader and Acting Superintendent Don Downs, who has divisional command of the western region, division 2. The project was initiated by a local community activist, Ross Goodear, whom I know personally and who is passionate in the various projects he puts his mind to, including Peter's Project and other cancer fundraising activities, as well as work for veterans.

The three groups in these programs for under-25s participated in and produced TV ads, radio ads and social media campaigns. There was also an interesting project they called Project X, which was in fact a car wreck that has been displayed at various points around the Warrnambool and south-west area, including Cannon Hill, in front of the Magistrates Court and at other places, to remind under-25s of some of the consequences. I commend, amongst others, Edward Mahoney, a local Allansford boy who is also a part-time electorate officer of mine. Edward did a lot of work in relation to that project and is continuing to work on other community initiatives.

The importance of road safety is something the government has committed to, both in relation to infrastructure campaigns and to funding for the frequently cited difficulties for local councils in securing adequate funding. That is particularly so in relation to outer Western Victoria Region state

government roads. That is why this government has initiated programs such as the safer road infrastructure program, where the government has committed to spending \$1 billion over 10 years on safer road infrastructure, with \$3.5 million to be expended on improving road run-off and intersection crash sites in western Victoria until the end of June 2014.

There is also the country roads and bridges program. I know that Mr Drum in his capacity as the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development frequently receives important feedback on this program from councils he visits, particularly the smaller regional councils. Many of them were subject to the Whelan report and continually complain about the funding shortfall that is a basic result of the size of the electorates that they have to serve versus larger farm sizes with a smaller ratepaying base. They are increasingly subject to rate burdens to fund these projects. This important project, another 2010 coalition election commitment, is a \$160 million program where the 18 municipalities in western Victoria each qualify for a maximum of \$1 million per year for four years. They have been putting that money to good use, not to replace existing programs but to supplement them.

We have also seen significant funding provided by this government for roads as part of the flood recovery funding. That has been provided through various portfolios, including regional development, local government, water, environment and roads. It has resulted in significant improvements — in some cases the bringing forward of infrastructure — and has ensured that these flood-affected communities have had jobs and commitments to infrastructure in the wake of those tragedies.

Some rather mischievous media releases put out by the Labor Party recently relating to these programs have sought to exclude them from descriptions of the road funding that has been provided by the government. I think those matters have been corrected. They will continue to be corrected and confirm that the government has put more money into roads than ever before, and will continue to do so, particularly in the areas of western Victoria that are affected by flooding and those impacted by developments, wind farm applications, timber needs, dairy needs or the needs of mining. They ought to be funded and they are being funded, and that will ultimately lead to safer situations important for delivering fewer road deaths and reducing the number of other accidents.

Among other important initiatives that have been well documented is that of the Princes Highway west overtaking lanes. The government has committed

\$15 million to the construction of six overtaking lanes between Colac and the South Australian border. Two lanes near Port Fairy and Yambuk were completed in November 2012. Lanes at Terang and Lyons were completed in May 2012 and March 2013 respectively. Lanes at Greenwald and Rosebrook are under construction and are expected to be completed this year. There is also the Ballarat-Buninyong Road, a \$6.5 million project to improve traffic flow through Mount Clear and Mount Helen in the city of Ballarat. Construction commenced in April 2012 and will continue through to 2014.

Another aspect is the government's commitment to various bike paths and other alternative means of transport. I had the pleasure of opening a further extension to the celebrated Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail, which is another important initiative that has safety benefits for young children and families and health benefits for the community. It integrates the various schools that operate under the collegiate Woody Yaloak Primary School structure, where four towns are linked through various activities principally by the physical construction of the rail trail and other bicycle activities.

With the new federal coalition government, the government has committed to important funding for the Great Ocean Road improvements which were announced on 20 August. That includes a \$50 million investment over five years to upgrade the Great Ocean Road. I should disclose that I live on the Great Ocean Road, but the policy is a very important commitment that was lobbied hard for by all the members of the government. I note in particular the activities of the newly elected federal member for Corangamite, Ms Sarah Henderson, who has made it a significant federal coalition commitment. I was not aware the announcement was going to be made, so I am very comfortable that I had no undue influence on it.

Along with 7 million other visitors, I enjoy the Great Ocean Road as one of the great Victorian tourist attractions. It opens up the coastal part of, yes, the electorate I serve, but also, and importantly, Victoria's great south coast. It links various western Victorian towns — including Port Fairy, Hawkesdale, Macarthur, Hamilton, Peshurst and Dunkeld — to the Grampians and then is completed by a leg back to Melbourne. It creates an excellent road circuit for tourism and other activities, including bike riding. I note the Mildura to Moyne bike ride is another important tourist event that is also a matter of road safety.

Commitments have been made to other upgrades, including road maintenance and the Western Highway duplication. There was a \$50 million contribution in

2011–12 to the duplication of the Western Highway between Burrumbeet and Beaufort and a further \$42.2 million in 2012–13 to duplicate the Western Highway between Beaufort and Buangor. The government has also committed \$9.4 million for capacity and safety improvements on the Western Highway from Stawell to the South Australian border. Work has been undertaken by a panel on the Western Highway bypass for Horsham. Members for western Victoria, including me, are continuing to lobby for funding for planning bypasses for Beaufort and Ararat.

These important funding initiatives match the road safety initiatives that are part of the bill and will continue to be rolled out with the very important safety messages that the various responsible ministers encourage all our constituents to bear in mind at this time of coming into Christmas. The road toll is down currently, but only this weekend we again saw some tragic accidents. We need to continually remind ourselves to be careful as drivers, because as MPs we do a lot of driving. We need to be careful and to take that little bit of extra time in our own driving activity, as do all Victorians. There are punitive sanctions with driver suspensions and demerit points, of course, but more important than that, there is the need to consider not only oneself but all the other road users who share the roads over this intensely busy period.

With those words, I commend the bill to the house and I commend the minister for his continued activity in relation to the road safety message.

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — It is an honour to be able to speak in the debate on the Road Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I concur with the other speakers who have said that road safety is something on which we must have a bipartisan approach. We must have the approach that the next fatality could be one of our own. It is something that sheets it home when, as happened only two weeks ago, you meet with members of Road Trauma Families Victoria, an association set up by families who have suffered loss in road accidents. It is quite shocking to see members of families trying to come to terms with losing a child, a husband or a wife. That knowledge drives us all to do whatever we can to make roads safer for drivers in this state. As I said, it is important that we have a bipartisan approach to road safety.

The bill strengthens laws relating to interstate, overseas and unlicensed drivers. It also makes improvements to the driver licensing and registration process. Some new temporary licence fee increases have been introduced. The bill makes permanent the interim licence fee hikes that were to expire on 30 January. The bill makes minor

amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Application Act 2013 and the Road Safety Act 1986. The bill also makes some changes to the demerit point scheme in relation to when a driver has accumulated 12 demerit points. Whilst I have not been in that place, at various stages I have been in that neighbourhood. That has always been a concern, and it certainly is a message to make sure that you pull your head in, drive more slowly, and hopefully over time, as has always been the case for me, get your points back. Changes are being made to how a driver can get over an extended demerit point period when there is more than one extended demerit point period.

Overseas and interstate licensed drivers will be required to undertake a fit to drive test, which will effectively put them in the same position as Victorian drivers. All Victorians would be reasonably comfortable in the knowledge that people who have been licensed overseas or interstate will have to prove that they have the basic capacity to get behind the wheel of a vehicle and drive around our state.

The overarching driver of these changes is that we must do everything in our power to continue to bring down the road toll. The road toll for 2013, compared with the toll at the same time last year, is tracking very well. There is less tragedy, but it is very hard to be excited about less tragedy than more tragedy. We must continue to use the road toll as motivation to do everything we can to try to bring the figure down even further. It is worth noting that the road toll in 2012, the lowest on record, was five fewer than for the same time in 2013. We are continuing to bring the road toll down to new record lows. That is something from which we can all take solace. Hopefully everyone understands that this is the one and only driver that the government has for introducing new road safety regulations.

It is also worth noting that one of our key commitments for regional Victoria was the \$160-million country roads and bridges program for local governments which we identified while in opposition. Over the years we had spoken to many local councils, and we realised it was impossible for them to maintain their road asset base without assistance. In opposition we formulated the policy whereby we would give our 40 smallest councils \$1 million each per year for four years. That \$160-million program has enabled our smaller councils to get on top of their road maintenance program for the first time since I have been a parliamentarian, which is close to 11 years.

Small councils have been given the opportunity to maintain and upgrade their C-class roads across the state. It is something that we are proud of. If councils

have not been able to immediately undertake that maintenance work, they have for the first time a credible plan in place for the next two years for road maintenance, bridge maintenance and bridge upgrades. If this type of state government assistance continues, we will get to the stage where most councils will be on top of their local government road maintenance program.

It is also worth noting the funding the coalition government has put into the Transport Accident Commission to enable it to continue its hard-hitting campaigns which target dangerous driving behaviour. We are now moving to the issue of drivers being distracted by texting. We are trying to get the message out that if you are caught with a phone in your hand while driving, you will incur three demerit points and pay a hefty fine for that lapse of concentration caused by checking text messages while driving. We will try to eradicate that driver behaviour around the state. The Transport Accident Commission has also introduced the Talk the Toll Down program, which is about making sure that everybody starts to talk the toll down. People at barbecues, dinner parties and sporting functions — wherever people are — are being encouraged to bring the road toll into mainstream conversation so that everybody is talking about what they can do to drive more carefully.

Another type of program which targets parent education is VicRoads Lessons from the Road, an online resource to support parents in educating young drivers. Parents take an active role in giving young learner drivers 120 hours of driving experience. This was a fantastic initiative of the previous government. It pushes the idea that young drivers need to undertake that 120 hours, because during the first 12 months of driving drivers are twice as likely than at any other time in their driving career to have an accident. It is not about the age of the driver; it is about how much experience they have. If we compare first-year drivers — an 18-year-old from Victoria to a 16-and-a-half-year-old from South Australia or a 17-year-old from New South Wales — we see that there is no variance in driver accidents in that bracket. They are all the same. The age of the driver does not matter; it is about how much experience they have had. The 120 hours initiative has been a positive step towards making sure that young people are getting that experience with their parents before they become P-platers.

There is also the campaign of limiting the number of friends or peers P-platers can have in the car so that a P-plater with only a couple of months experience does not fill his car with mates who egg him on to go a bit

faster or to drive a bit more dangerously or in a more exciting manner. Further to that, we are asking parents to play an active role and to stay involved in the next phase of a young person's driving experience by continuing to talk about road safety and wherever possible putting 18-year-olds in the driver's seat so that they can continue the education process. Young people need to hone their driver experience. Parents can continue to teach young people the positive aspects of driving and hopefully try to minimise bad behaviours and habits that may creep into young people's driving behaviour, such as using a phone while driving and not maintaining their concentration or being as attentive as they need to be.

It is worth noting that when Premier Baillieu first came to office one of the first policies he put in place was hoon legislation to make sure that anybody in Victoria who thought it might be funny to do burnouts on the main street, take corners at excessive speed or drive in a dangerous manner got the message that Ted Baillieu was going to take those cars away from their owners and that he would —

Hon. P. R. Hall — Crush them.

Mr DRUM — He was going to crush them. Initially he was going to take those cars away and put them in a compound, which would make it very difficult for young hoons to get their cars back. That is exactly what would happen on their second offence; their cars would be crushed.

We have also moved — with what is most un-Nationals-like legislation — to prevent anybody drinking alcohol while driving. We have cut the 'roadie' out of what is legal practice. That again shows how seriously we take driver behaviour. Even though many people would argue that they can have one or two drinks and still be well under the limit, we have moved down this path to send the message that it is not normal behaviour to drink while you are behind the wheel.

There is a whole range of programs and priorities, the emphasis we have placed on advertising and the introduction of the Road Safety Camera Commissioner to effectively make sure that the debate about 'whether the road safety cameras are put in a place for road safety or put in certain spots for revenue raising' goes away once and for all. Under the leadership of the Deputy Premier and former Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Peter Ryan, early in the government's term we got rid of that conversation altogether by putting in place an independent Road Safety Camera Commissioner whose role is to make sure that all the cameras are working accurately, that

they are located in the dangerous spots where road safety needs to be improved and that they are 100 per cent about road safety and have nothing to do with revenue raising.

We hope and pray that the trend in the road toll continues to diminish, because losing somebody in this way is an agony we do not want any family to go through. However, I think all Victorians would look at the roles and responsibilities of and actions this government has taken and say that at this stage those actions and changes to legislation and regulations are in fact working. We need to keep going along the track we are on to try to drive the road toll lower in the future years.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — By leave, I move:

That the bill be now read a third time.

In so doing, I thank all members for their contribution and support for this important piece of legislation.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Southern Metropolitan Region level crossings

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — Throughout my electorate of Southern Metropolitan Region there is a series of rail crossings that are causing angst. In previous adjournment debates I have referred to the dilemma we will have if the Premier's folly of radically bringing forward the port of Hastings project without the infrastructure were to go ahead and what we would do on the Dandenong line. I have talked before of crossings at Grange Road, Carnegie; Koornang Road, Carnegie; Murrumbeena Road, Murrumbeena; and Poath Road, Murrumbeena, where at the moment the gates are down for half an hour in the hour during peak time. I must say that I actually misled the house. I previously said that 246 trains a day went

down that line; it is actually 257 trains a day that currently go through those — —

Hon. P. R. Hall — Are you misleading the house now as well?

Mr LENDERS — President, I say to Mr Hall that I corrected the number at the first possible opportunity and that I underestimated the number of trains causing congestion on the Dandenong line. It is actually 257 per weekday, before, if the Premier brings it forward, the port of Hastings adds — and I quote a source none other than former member for Caulfield in the Assembly, Helen Shardey — at least another 16 trains a day.

The point I want to make is that in addition to the issues of those level crossings that I have raised in the house before — at Burke Road, Glen Iris — I also draw the attention of the house to those at Charman Road, Cheltenham; North Road, Ormond; and Toorak Road, Kooyong, all in my electorate. What all these crossings have in common, other than being burdened by congestion, is that they are in Project 10 000, Labor's plan for greater investment from a long-term lease of the port of Melbourne in dealing with Melbourne's most congested and dangerous level crossings. All of these are commitments by Labor to be dealt with in its first two terms, should it be gifted with that.

The action I seek from the current government is more than just some works in the never-never for North Road, Ormond, about which there is much fanfare at the moment from Elizabeth Miller, the member for Bentleigh in the Assembly, who has put brochures out all over the electorate about the great things that are going to happen at some stage in the government's second term. What I call for from the Minister for Roads is direct action to match Labor's commitment to fix these level crossings through its Project 10 000, to reduce congestion on these roads — an important thing for the triple bottom line — and to enable more trains to run through the crossings.

As I said, at the moment 257 trains a day run on the Dandenong line through my electorate just north of Bentleigh. In that particular area you cannot put more trains on unless you fix the congestion, or it would gridlock the roads completely. Particularly with reference to the bill this house has just passed and the comments from members on road safety, dealing with these level crossings will improve safety on the roads. I call on Minister Mulder to act with the courage of Daniel Andrews with his announcement.

Sunbury municipality

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Local Government in another place. It concerns the recent vote by the people of the city of Hume on the municipal future of Sunbury and surrounds. I am sure many members of the house would be aware that a vote was recently taken throughout the city of Hume to decide if Sunbury was in a position to leave that city and establish its own municipality. I am pleased to say that as a result of that vote it is clear that the people of Hume — and I am delighted to say the people right across Hume — are very supportive of the move for Sunbury to go it alone.

This has of course been a very long and hard battle. I remember that in 1999, when I was the member for Tullamarine in another place, the Labor Party promised a referendum or vote on the Sunbury-out-of-Hume issue. That did not happen; it never happened. It did not happen in all those years of Labor government, but the coalition government has granted the people of Sunbury and indeed the people of Hume a vote on this particularly important issue — as we promised before the 2010 election we would.

I give particular praise to a former colleague, Mrs Donna Petrovich, who did a great deal of work on this issue. It is a great pity that her opponent in the last federal election did not take the hint, because he was one of the people who was very much opposed to the Sunbury-out-of-Hume push, as indeed were the members for Macedon and Yuroke in the Assembly, Joanne Duncan and Liz Beattie, and Cr Anne Potter from the City of Hume. All of those Labor people were opposed to the yes vote on the Sunbury out of Hume issue, but of course they were overwhelmingly defeated on that issue.

The reason I raise this tonight is the people of Sunbury are now asking the very obvious questions, 'Where do we go now, and what is the next step?'. That is very much up to the minister. I understand that a panel needs to be established to implement the wishes of the people of Hume and in particular the wishes of the people of Sunbury. This is something that, given the longevity of the battle, given the fact that we have had to wait so long for a decision, should not be put on the backburner for any length of time at all. I ask the minister to, as a priority, establish the panel to implement the Sunbury-out-of-Hume result in this vote of the people and ensure that Sunbury is well established in its new municipality and its future.

Portland North Primary School

Ms TIERNEY (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Planning, Matthew Guy, and it is in relation to Portland North Primary School and in particular the old schoolhouse on its grounds. I understand from constituents that they have sent correspondence to the Premier on this issue but are yet to receive a reply.

The old schoolhouse was built in 1878 and obviously has considerable heritage merit. It is currently being used as a music classroom, with students enjoying those activities in the space. However, parents have become aware that the old schoolhouse is to be demolished, and they are particularly concerned that it may be demolished as soon as the end of this term. The demolition is a result of the tied-funding arrangements that are in place in relation to old buildings with high maintenance requirements. When you are successful in gaining funding for a new building, a new facility, it is often the case that an existing building needs to be demolished.

I do not believe that would have been the intention of any person involved in developing the tied-funding arrangement, regardless of whether a Liberal or Labor government was in office at the time it was developed. I do not think anyone would have intended that a heritage building would be demolished to make way for a new facility, particularly when, as in this case, there are a number of portable buildings towards the back of the grounds that could be demolished and the new creative arts and performance space envisaged for the school could be built there.

The action I seek is for the Minister for Planning to work very quickly and cooperatively with the Glenelg Shire Council, which has also only just become aware of the situation and is undertaking a heritage assessment. As I understand it, the schoolhouse has not been in a heritage overlay or included in any heritage asset audits because it was on education department land, so it has really slipped through the cracks. This is a genuine issue that has the community quite concerned, and I ask that the minister urgently do whatever he can. I also encourage the Premier to address the correspondence that has been forwarded to him by constituents.

Motorcycle safety campaigns

Mr ELSBURY (Western Metropolitan) — The matter I raise this evening is for the attention of the minister responsible for the Transport Accident Commission, the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips,

and it relates to my role as a member of the Road Safety Committee, a joint parliamentary committee. The first reference to the Road Safety Committee in this Parliament was about motorcycle safety. In the report that it handed down the committee made several recommendations in relation to better communication between the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and motorcyclists in order that a less blame-driven and more conciliatory style of education of motorcyclists might be undertaken by the TAC.

I would like to at this point congratulate the TAC on its latest campaign, the Perfect Ride campaign. This campaign highlights to motorcycle riders the risks they need to consider when they are on the road, including loose rocks, inattentive drivers and driver errors, which can have a detrimental effect on them because all it takes is a slight moment of inattention by a car driver or even a truck driver for the motorcyclist, as a vulnerable road user, to suddenly and very definitely come off second best.

The Perfect Ride campaign is complemented by a YouTube-based series of videos. There is one called *Before the Ride*, which includes information on planning your route and working out when you will have breaks, knowing the weather conditions, checking your bike over and making sure you are wearing the correct safety gear.

The next video is about coast riding, so motorcyclists can be prepared to go down the Great Ocean Road or some other similar road. That video talks about picking a lead rider, strategies for keeping safe on the road with other road users and correct speed on corners.

The series finishes with a video called *Heading Home*, which talks about taking it easy after a long ride, taking care to not get into blind spots in traffic, understanding the different riding styles needed in country and city areas as well as gaining the experience you need to deal with certain situations that may occur on the road. Again further internet resources are available at spokes.com.au — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am a little concerned that Mr Elsbury is delivering a set speech. Can he come to a point where he is looking to bring something to the minister's attention or asking a question of the minister? The adjournment does not provide for a set speech. I was worried before this, but when we start to include things like website addresses and so forth we are pretty much reading out a future press release.

Mr ELSBURY — Thank you, President. At this juncture I ask that the minister work with TAC to

continue this style of campaign and continue to work on dialogue with motorcyclists who have felt aggrieved in the past about the way that they were treated by TAC. The feedback I have been receiving from motorcyclists has been positive, and they believe this campaign has had an effect on the road toll when it comes to motorcycle accidents. We are four down on last year. It is good that we have fewer road deaths, but it is something we need to continue to work on.

Mildura region transport infrastructure

Ms BROAD (Northern Victoria) — The adjournment matter I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, who is also the Minister for Roads. I refer to recent communications from the mayor of Mildura Rural City Council, Cr Glenn Milne — and I take this opportunity to congratulate him on his re-election to the position of mayor — in which he identifies urgent transport infrastructure needs for the region covered by Mildura Rural City Council. In particular he refers to matters requiring urgent attention, including the upgrade of the existing rail line for safe and efficient freight transportation and the need for passing lanes on and upgrades to the Calder Highway north of Bendigo.

I also refer the minister to Labor's Project 10 000 transport alternative, which includes a commitment of \$1 billion for country roads. I call on the minister to match that commitment and address these urgent matters, which have been identified by, to take but one example, Mildura Rural City Council in relation to the area it represents. I support the council's call for urgent attention to be paid to these needs. There is no doubt whatsoever that every time there are difficulties with the existing rail line we see freight being pushed onto the Calder Highway and motorists and visiting tourists having to mix it with even more trucks on the Calder north of Bendigo, which is of great concern to residents and visitors alike. There is also the matter of the condition of the surface of the Calder, because when that sort of truck traffic is pushed onto the Calder, it causes the surface to deteriorate even faster than it otherwise would, causing safety concerns.

Labor has put forward a clear transport alternative, including the \$1 billion commitment for country roads as part of Project 10 000, and it is very much in the Napthine government's court to indicate what it is going to do in relation to these urgent transport needs.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am in a quandary here about two of the adjournment items that have been raised, and I have had the opportunity to speak with one of the members who raised an adjournment matter. I

refer to the adjournment matters of Mr Lenders and Ms Broad. In both cases they have premised their adjournment matters on the basis of a released policy of the opposition and have in effect called on the government to match that policy. On the surface there is nothing wrong with either of those adjournment items as such, but the concern I have as the Presiding Officer in this place is that it makes it very difficult for a Presiding Officer or Chair of any proceedings in this place to then say to government members that they are unable to criticise the policies of the opposition. In other words, if the opposition in an adjournment debate relies to a large extent on a policy it has released and then immediately seeks that the government match that policy, it is a quite different thing from raising a matter of government administration on what the government ought to be doing. It is trading off an opposition policy.

As I said, in itself that is not a problem for members, but members of the opposition need to understand the implications of that going forward, with government members then being able to overtly criticise and take issue with opposition policies released as matters on the adjournment. They would obviously refer to the minister in terms of what they might do with the government administration matter but then come back and say, 'Are you going to reject this?', or, 'Can you come up with some sort of dismissive media release or whatever of that opposition policy?'

That is the quandary I am faced with. On this occasion I will allow the two items to stand. I am not establishing a precedent by allowing these two items to proceed this evening. The opposition needs to consider its position and whether it wants to go down this road, because there is some risk in it.

Responses

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I have written responses to adjournment matters raised by Mr Tarlamis on 5 September, Mr Melhem on 15, 16 and 29 October, Mr O'Brien on 17 October, and Mr Eideh, Mr Elsbury and Mr Lenders on 30 October.

There were five adjournment items raised tonight. I will group together the two that the President has singled out — that is, the matters raised by Mr Lenders and Ms Broad. Both members referred to some transport infrastructure needs in their respective electorates. Mr Lenders's matter was about rail crossings in his electorate, and Ms Broad's matter was on both rail and road needs in her electorate. Both members sought a commitment from the Minister for Public Transport, who is also the Minister for Roads, for the government

to match the opposition's policy with respect to those matters. I will convey both requests to the minister, and I am sure he will respond fully.

However, I make the point that without a fulsome debate and evaluation of the merits of the government and opposition policies on those matters, it is difficult for me to respond other than to simply pass on the request, because to make the commitment that is being sought might well undersell those areas. Those adjournment matters warrant a full debate by the chamber. I dare say we might get the opportunity to debate those future policy matters. Nevertheless, I will pass on those requests to the minister.

Mr Finn raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Local Government regarding the outcome of the minister's local government poll in Sunbury. He posed the question, 'Where do we go from now?', which is the information being sought by his constituents in that area. The member was quite correct in saying that the process now requires the establishment of a panel to give further advice to the government on how the will and wishes of the people of Sunbury can be implemented. I know the Minister for Local Government is on top of that issue. I know she is keen to act swiftly, and I am sure that in the very near future we will see some action in that regard. I will ask the Minister for Local Government to give particular attention to the wishes of the member representing those areas.

Ms Tierney raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Planning. She described the issue as relating to the heritage classification of the old schoolhouse on the grounds of Portland North Primary School, which has seemingly slipped between the cracks in that a heritage building has been earmarked for demolition because it is on government school ground rather than on freehold land. Therefore it has not been captured by the same heritage protection measures. It is a genuine issue, and I will ask the Minister for Planning to look at it with a sense of urgency to ensure that the issue is addressed before the matter becomes irreversible.

Mr Elsbury raised a matter for the attention of Mr Rich-Phillips as the minister responsible for the Transport Accident Commission. He highly commended the commission for its recent advertisement campaign regarding motorcycle safety. Mr Elsbury, as a member of the Road Safety Committee, has a particular interest in this matter. He has raised these matters previously in the chamber, if I recall correctly. Mr Elsbury encouraged the minister responsible for the Transport Accident Commission to

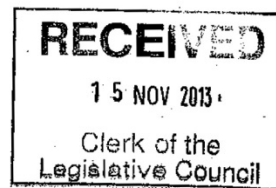
continue with the current campaign style given the effectiveness of it. I will pass those views on to the minister on behalf of Mr Elsbury.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 5.52 p.m.



**Minister for Public Transport
Minister for Roads**



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Dear Mr Tunnecliffe

ORDER FOR DOCUMENTS – WALLACE STREET, MORWELL

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 12 June 2013, seeking the production of documents in the following terms:

"That this house requires the Leader of the Government to table in the Legislative Council—

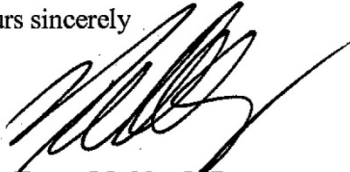
- (a) On Tuesday, 25 June 2013, a copy of the independent site assessment updates referred to in the former Premier's response to the adjournment matter raised on 14 November 2012 regarding flooding in the lands between the Princes Freeway and Wallace Street, Morwell, tabled in the Legislative Council on 19 March 2013;*
- (b) Any brief from VicRoads to the consultants engaged to assess the relevant site or any correspondence detailing the scope or expectations of the investigation;*
- (c) The original report of investigations into this site undertaken by GHD for VicRoads on 24 March 2011, including the brief or other documents that detailed the requirements of that investigation; and*
- (d) Any correspondence or briefs between VicRoads, the minister for transport or his office, the Premier or his office and the member for Morwell about this site in relation to flooding, or the requests for action that were raised in adjournment debates by the member for Eastern Victoria Region Mr Matt Viney, MLC, on 14 August and 14 November 2012."*

The Government has conducted a thorough and diligent search to identify the documents relevant to the Legislative Council's resolution.

I enclose with this letter all of the relevant documents that have been identified by the Government.

Some of the enclosed documents contain personal information, such as the names and contact details of individuals. In the interest of personal privacy, and in accordance with normal practice, these details have been excluded. I respectfully request that the Council not insist on the production of this information.

Yours sincerely



Hon Terry Mulder MP
Minister for Roads

10/11/2013