

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 11 December 2013

(Extract from book 17)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

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Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Technology and Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry	The Hon. G. K. Rich-Phillips, MLC
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Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, and Minister for Water.	The Hon. P. L. Walsh, MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and Minister for Bushfire Response	The Hon. K. A. Wells, MP
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Community Services, and Minister for Disability Services and Reform	The Hon. M. L. N. Wooldridge, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Mr N. Wakeling, MP

Legislative Council committees

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.

Participating member

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.

Economic Development, Infrastructure and Outer Suburban/Interface Services Committee — (*Council*): Mr Eideh and Mrs Peulich. (*Assembly*): Mr Burgess, Mrs Fyffe, Mr McGuire and Mr Shaw.

Education and Training Committee — (*Council*): Mr Elasmr, Mrs Kronberg and Mrs Millar. (*Assembly*): Mr Brooks and Mr Crisp.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Council*): Mr Finn, Mrs Peulich, Mr Somyurek and Mr Tarlamis. (*Assembly*): Mr Northe.

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

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

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

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee — (*Council*): Mr Viney. (*Assembly*): Ms Hennessy, Mr McIntosh, Mr Newton-Brown and Mr Weller.

Law Reform, Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Scheffer. (*Assembly*): Mr Carroll, Mr McCurdy and Mr Southwick.

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

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

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

President: The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President: Mr M. VINEY

Acting Presidents: Ms Crozier, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmr, Mr Finn, Mr O'Brien, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, Mr Ramsay, Mr Tarlamis

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Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. W. A. LOVELL

Leader of the Opposition:

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:

Mr D. DRUM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Hon. Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Lenders, Mr John	Southern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Lovell, Hon. Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP
Broad, Ms Candy Celeste	Northern Victoria	ALP	Melhem, Mr Cesar ²	Western Metropolitan	LP
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
Davis, Hon. David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Davis, Mr Philip Rivers	Eastern Victoria	LP	Pakula, Hon. Martin Philip ¹	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Petrovich, Mrs Donna-Lee ³	Northern Victoria	LP
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Elsbury, Mr Andrew Warren	Western Metropolitan	LP	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
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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Wednesday, 11 December 2013

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson) took the chair at 9.34 a.m. and read the prayer.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Timboon P–12 School

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council the critical need to value the importance of schools in rural communities and demonstrate this through the provision of 21st-century learning facilities to schools which have long been underfunded, leading to infrastructure failure and an inability to support effective teaching.

The petitioners therefore request that an allocation of \$7 million is funded in the next state budget to rebuild Timboon P–12 School classrooms. These facilities have long failed to offer a comfortable and functional environment required to support students and staff in achieving modern learning outcomes. This infrastructure failure has been clearly identified by auditors and outlined to the house in past years. A rebuilding master plan has been developed and DEECD approved. Given the state of our buildings, we now seek a commitment to the Timboon P–12 School rebuilding program in the next state budget.

By Mr KOCH (Western Victoria) (663 signatures).

Laid on table.

Abortion legislation

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council the Abortion Law Reform Act 2008:

1. allows abortion right up until the moment a child would otherwise be born;
2. allows the cruel and barbaric practice of partial-birth abortion;
3. allows children to be killed before birth on the basis of their gender;
4. denies the right of conscientious objection to medical practitioners opposed to abortion; and
5. offers no protection to women coerced into having an abortion.

The petitioners therefore humbly request the Abortion Law Reform Act 2008 be repealed, and for it to be replaced with proper legal protection and support for children before birth and their mothers.

By Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (158 signatures).

Laid on table.

Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan).

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Auditor-General's reports on —

Local Government: Results of the 2012–13 Audits, December 2013.

Managing Victoria's Native Forest Timber Resources, December 2013.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission — Report under section 31 of the Crimes (Assumed Identities) Act 2004, 2012–13.

Ombudsman — Report on a review of the governance of public sector boards in Victoria, December 2013.

Statutory Rules under the following acts of Parliament:

Country Fire Authority Act 1958 — No. 149.

Heavy Vehicle National Law Application Act 2013 — No. 152.

Magistrates' Court Act 1989 — No. 155.

Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 — No. 154.

Road Safety Act 1986 — Nos. 150, 151 and 153.

Supreme Court Act 1986 — Nos. 146 and 148.

Supreme Court Act 1986 — Open Courts Act 2013 — No. 147.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rule Nos. 146 to 148 and 150 to 154.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS**Seymour railway station**

Ms DARVENIZA (Northern Victoria) — I am very concerned about access and mobility issues associated with navigating the platform at the Seymour railway station. This is an issue I have raised in the house before.

Ms Sue Zonneveldt, team leader at Cobram Barooga Visitor Information Centre, recently raised a number of concerns regarding access at the station with the Cobram *Courier*. Ms Zonneveldt said that on Saturday, 30 November, she had a customer with chronic breathing problems who asked for assistance at the Seymour railway station for the following Monday morning. She was catching the 7.15 a.m. bus from Barooga — the only service available from Barooga each day — to travel to Melbourne. The bus terminates at Seymour, and she would then be required to pull her suitcase up the steep ramp to board the train to continue her journey to Melbourne. With breathing problems this would be extremely difficult.

When Ms Zonneveldt phoned the Seymour railway station to inquire about assistance at Seymour she was told that since there would only be one staff member rostered on at that time, they were sorry but no assistance would be available. I know firsthand the difficulty that this ramp presents because I have travelled on this line and have had to assist an elderly woman with her luggage up a flight of stairs to the coach, as there was no way she was going to be able to navigate the stairs with her suitcase or walk the extra distance up the ramp.

The Liberal-Nationals government needs to immediately find and implement a solution for this problem.

Philip Davis

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I arrived in this house on Tuesday, 21 December 2010. I was raw, I was uncertain and I was a bit like a rabbit in the headlights. It was all foreign to me, it was all new and it took my breath away. I was placed on this bench next to Philip Davis. I did not know him, I had never met him and it turned out to be a blessing. Over the next three years I found myself sitting next to a mentor, a guide, a sage, a wise counsel and a man who was absolutely committed to his fellow human beings. This man is full of integrity, he is well principled and he gets it. He has given me the occasional tap along the journey just to settle me down. He has been a critic yet a teacher.

Philip joined the Parliament in October 1992, and history and others tell me he has been a wonderful MP. He has been committed to his community through his involvement in the Victorian Farmers Federation, Sale Rotary Club, Gippsland Lakes Management Council, the Wool Council of Australia, the Rural Training Council Victoria and Gippsland Base Hospital as well as in many other things in his community. Philip Davis

will leave this chamber tomorrow afternoon. I say to Philip Rivers Davis: I wish you well, Sir. My best wishes and my prayers will go with you always. I will miss you here alongside me.

Asbestos-related diseases

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — On 29 November I attended a commemoration service hosted by Asbestoswise and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union for the lives of those touched by asbestos. Australia has the highest reported incidence of asbestos-related disease in the world, including the highest instance of mesothelioma. In the next 20 years an estimated 30 000 to 40 000 Australians will be diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease; these are not forecast to peak until 2020. This is because during the 20th century Australia was one of the highest per capita users of asbestos in the world. An estimated one-third of homes built between 1945 and the late 1980s may contain asbestos in areas such as ceilings, internal walls, roofs, eaves, external cladding, wet areas and vinyl floor tiles.

I have raised the issue of this rising incidence of exposure to asbestos in situ in public buildings, including in schools and in private homes, several times in this place because not enough is being done to prevent exposure in the community. In answer to an adjournment matter I raised on the issue, in November last year the minister stated that the Victorian government would contribute to the finalisation of the national strategic plan rather than take action that may duplicate or conflict with broader efforts. To date, Victoria is the only state not to have signed up to the national strategy. In any case, much more needs to be done in Victoria to raise awareness in the community about the danger of asbestos in situ. I would like to join with other interested and concerned members to establish a parliamentary group on asbestos-related diseases, and I will be in touch with all members shortly to get the ball rolling.

Cairnlea land rezoning

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — On 2 December I attended a community meeting held at Cairnlea Football Club, which generously provided access to its facilities for the meeting. The Cairnlea community was there in large numbers to voice its concerns and suspicions about the development proposed by the Napthine government, which is being managed by the Minister for Planning, Mathew Guy. I am not sure if Minister Guy has ever visited Cairnlea or even heard of it.

This is a development that defies logic. It is a proposal that will see unlimited industrial factories constructed on the gateway to the Cairnlea housing estate and the destruction of valuable mature sugar gum trees. It completely ignores the promise made to residents that 30 per cent of Cairnlea would remain open space. If that were not enough, the government wants to build 146 townhouses, 46 apartments and 80 commercial mixed use spaces.

I say to Minister Guy: let us get real. Listen to the people. More than 9000 people would be affected by the proposed development. I have been advised that Places Victoria has now declared that there will be no industrial sites, but it will now push ahead for a commercial 1 and general residential zone. That means it is now looking to build retail, office, and business developments and — wait for it — an entertainment centre. The residents are asking, ‘Will this mean a brothel or a night club?’.

There is so much confusion around this development that the residents who have made Cairnlea their home are questioning their decision. Can anyone blame them? They spent good money to purchase land that was not cheap because of the open space.

Stuart Rattle

Mrs COOTE (Southern Metropolitan) — Earlier this week Australia lost one of its most talented interior designers. Stuart Rattle died tragically in the early hours of Monday morning. Stuart Rattle was highly acclaimed throughout Australia. His classic style, great sense of proportion, attention to detail and ability to get colour and lighting to perfection in his work are all hallmarks of his creative work.

It is impossible to identify only one outstanding home of Stuart’s creation as they are all outstanding and have stood the test of time, as they will in the future. However, it is the home Musk Farm in rural Victoria that will be forever spoken of as a place of beauty and peace. There he created one of the most impressive gardens in Australia, was generous in sharing it with all of Victoria and in the process raised thousands of dollars for charity.

My former husband, international interior designer John Coote, said Stuart Rattle was Australia’s leading interior designer, and I know how proud he was of Stuart’s success. As a friend to my children and me, Stuart will be sadly missed. A gentle, loving, generous person and an enormous talent, the world will be a lesser place without him. Vale Stuart Rattle.

Marysville — Wish You Were Here

Mrs MILLAR (Northern Victoria) — Last week I had the pleasure of joining my colleague Mr Craig Ondarchie at the launch of an exciting new campaign, Marysville — Wish You Were Here, which was held at Federation Square. Mr Ondarchie and I joined with members of the Marysville community, local councillors and representatives of the Bendigo Bank and Federation Square to raise awareness that this amazing community is well and truly back up and running following the devastating 2009 bushfires and of the need for all Victorians to support Marysville by visiting so that they can see for themselves the rejuvenation of this great part of Victoria and support newly established businesses in the town.

Marysville has recently celebrated 150 years since its establishment and is a town that has overcome great tragedy and trials with resilience and courage. The launch included a preview of the new advertising campaign, which features the photography of Donovan Wilson — exquisite images which truly capture the beauty for which Marysville’s surrounding area is so famous. The highlight of the event was the performance of local steel band Pans on Fire, which entertained the crowd and got us all up and dancing on an otherwise cold and blustery day. We were all truly wishing that we were indeed in Marysville for the launch. All Victorians are encouraged to view Marysville — Wish You Were Here and to get inspired to visit Marysville this summer and support this wonderful community and its local businesses.

Bushfire preparedness

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My members statement today acknowledges the important investment the Naphthine government is making in fire services across Victoria and the much-needed support it is providing to our 60 000 Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers. We know it will be a dangerous fire season. We know fuel loads are high, and I congratulate the work the government is doing in strategic fuel reduction burning and its public awareness programs in both the launch of FireReady and the provider of stronger penalties for arsonists, as well as in preparing communities to take responsibility for themselves by having a fire plan and making the decision, when required, to leave and live.

This commitment to fire services was clearly demonstrated this week when I represented the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Kim Wells, in making a number of announcements. I attended the graduation of 24 career CFA firefighters at Fiskville

last Friday and saw them being put through their paces. On Saturday, again representing the minister, I officially opened the Glenlyon fire station and handed over the keys to a new Hino fire tanker. This represents a total fire services investment of over \$1 million for that small community of Glenlyon.

On Sunday I again represented the minister and handed over the keys to three new state-of-the-art Hino tankers to the brigades at Cardinia, Waubra and Burrumbeet — \$1 million in new fire tankers for the Ballarat region built by a Ballarat firm, SEM Fire & Rescue, to protect both volunteers and the greater Ballarat region.

Thirty-four more fire stations have been contracted for construction in the Grampians western region next year. This government is committed to keeping Victoria safe this fire season and to giving our CFA volunteers the very best equipment with the latest safety features to protect them as they protect us.

Western suburbs government achievements

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — In the last sitting week of 2013 it is appropriate to look back on the year with some considerable pride at the advances in Melbourne's western suburbs. The opening of the Williams Landing railway station and the improvement in bus services in the surrounding areas are one big win for Melbourne's west. The final approval for and the beginning of construction of the P-12 autism-specific school in Laverton is very exciting indeed. When this school opens next year it will be another major win for the west.

The extension to the Wyndham Harbour development with its marina and residential development was approved this year — a huge win for Melbourne's west. Construction has begun on the new Braybrook Community Centre. We have never seen anything like this before in Braybrook; this is a massive win for Melbourne's west. The go-ahead for the East Werribee employment precinct has caused jubilation, with good cause. This excitement about the future is fully justified. This is also a monumental win for Melbourne's west.

As we farewell 2013 we can look forward to 2014 in the knowledge that the Napthine government and its local representatives will continue to fight and win for Melbourne's west.

Finally, I take this opportunity to wish members, staff and their families all the very best for a wonderful, peaceful and relaxing Christmas.

Education and Training Committee music education inquiry report

Mrs KRONBERG (Eastern Metropolitan) — On Thursday, 5 December, I had the opportunity to present the findings and recommendations of the Education and Training Committee's report of November 2013 titled *Inquiry into the Extent, Benefits and Potential of Music Education in Victorian Schools* at a forum on music education. The invitation was extended by the chair of the School Music Action Group, Dr Anne Lierse, and the forum was held in the auditorium of the Kenneth Myer Building, which is also known as the Melbourne Brain Centre, at Melbourne University. In attendance was an array of leading academics, including Associate Professor Robin Stevens and Professor Emeritus Brian Caldwell. The report was very well received by these leading educationalists.

New Horizons Concert Band

Mrs KRONBERG — I congratulate Bev McAlister, OAM, board member of the Dandenong Ranges Music Council, who I met at the music forum, on bringing a music ensemble here to the Parliament last night. The New Horizons Concert Band provided a fantastic music opportunity for everybody here last evening. The band is part of an international movement for adult beginner musicians who are typically over 50 years of age. They undertake instrumental music training that leads to playing in an ensemble such as the New Horizons Concert Band.

I had the opportunity to welcome members of the New Horizons Concert Band to the Parliament last evening. Clearly playing here would be a memorable experience for these budding musicians, and they highlight what a commitment to lifelong learning can mean for individuals and the communities they serve.

Christmas felicitations

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I would like to take this opportunity to wish all MPs and their families and staff, the staff at Parliament House and their families, in particular committee staff and chamber staff, and staff from security, the library, Hansard and the dining room, a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy 2014. I also extend my best wishes for the festive season to those in the south-east and their families and friends, especially those working in a voluntary capacity to help those who are in need and are isolated. I extend our thanks to the staff and their families of our kindergartens, preschools, schools and other educational institutions, who transform

children into freethinking, educated individuals set to soar in life.

His Excellency Nelson Mandela, OM, AC, CC, OJ, GCStJ, QC, GCH, BR, RSO, NPK

Mrs PEULICH — Education is the vehicle for a better life and a more prosperous and better society. The recently departed Nelson Mandela focused on dismantling the legacy of apartheid through tackling poverty and inequality, institutionalised racism and, importantly, an emphasis on education. Having visited many schools throughout the world, Nelson Mandela helped to change our educational institutions in dramatic ways and was often quoted as saying, ‘Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world’. He also practised this approach, changing access to education and the form and content of education across South Africa and thereby the globe. To quote the great man:

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.

It is that legacy that we celebrate — the achievements of his amazing life.

Coleraine and District Hospital

Mr KOCH (Western Victoria) — I was delighted to be in Coleraine last Friday representing the Minister for Health, my colleague the Honourable David Davis, to officially open the new \$25.7 million redevelopment of the Coleraine and District Hospital, the place of my birth. The opening of these modern facilities begins a new phase in the long history of health care in Coleraine.

Along with \$600 000 from the Western District Health Service and \$102 000 from the Coleraine Bendigo Bank, the Victorian government committed \$25.2 million for the relocation and extension of health services to the Mackie Court hostel precinct and on adjoining council land. The redevelopment involved the construction of a purpose-built facility to accommodate 10 acute and 12 high-care residential aged-care beds, an additional 15 ageing-in-place residential beds and the refurbishment of Mackie Court. A range of health-care services are now located at the new centre, including emergency treatment and medical imaging facilities as well as dental and other support services. This means locals can stay closer to home and receive treatment for

a wide variety of conditions without having to go far from family and friends.

My congratulations go to the Coleraine and district community on securing these new facilities and to all those involved in the planning and construction of the redevelopment; also to staff, management and especially the hospital auxiliary, who work tirelessly in providing the highest quality health services and residential aged care to the people of Coleraine and district.

Australian Greek Welfare Society

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — On 25 November I had the pleasure of attending and speaking at the annual general meeting of the Australian Greek Welfare Society (AGWS). The AGWS has played a special role in Victoria’s Greek community, providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services for 41 years, particularly in support of an ageing Greek community. It provides a range of services across the breadth of the age spectrum, including their Alpha Children’s Centre, which offers a bilingual program to encourage children to learn to speak both Greek and English, no matter their background. The society is currently experiencing a large demand for their elderly services, which shows just how pressing an issue ethno-specific aged-care services currently are, and will be in the future, in Victoria.

I congratulate Mr Anthony Misserlis on being awarded the AGWS Celestine Doufas Volunteer of the Year award for his exemplary service to the society. Mr Misserlis has been a tireless volunteer for many years, visiting the elderly at various nursing homes. I particularly enjoyed him telling us at the general meeting how he was involved in a choir that sung to elderly people suffering from dementia and how this had a huge positive impact on their wellbeing. I also congratulate all the other volunteers who support AGWS in its work. I extend my congratulations to president George Spiliotis, CEO Voula Messimeri, the other board members, staff and all the volunteers who support this very important organisation in our community.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Debate resumed from 13 November; motion of Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan):

That this house requires the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council to table in the Legislative Council on Tuesday, 3 September 2013, the business case for the proposed east–west link.

And Mr LEANE's amendment:

That '3 September 2013' be omitted with the view of inserting in its place '10 December 2013'.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Pursuant to standing order 7.12 I seek leave to withdraw the amendment I moved on 13 November 2013 to the motion moved by Mr Tee in relation to the production of the business case for the proposed east–west link.

Amendment withdrawn by leave.

Mr TARLAMIS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise to make a brief contribution by way of moving an amendment to the motion moved by Mr Tee. I move:

That '3 September 2013' be omitted with the view of inserting in its place '19 February 2014'.

This is a fairly straightforward amendment, and I urge members to support it.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — I was thrown a bit by the withdrawal of the amendment from Mr Leane, but I will now talk on the amended motion requiring the Leader of the Government to table the business case for the proposed east–west link. In doing so, I am more than happy to take the house through a little bit of the history surrounding this project and the various positions taken by members in this house and the other house. When you look at the current situation, we see that the Premier and the coalition are possibly the only constant in the whole debate around the issue known as the east–west link.

There is no doubt that Labor has been all over the place in relation to this project. The Spring Racing Carnival has just finished and on many occasions I backed the wrong horse, but I have possibly never backed the wrong horse to the extent that Daniel Andrews, the member for Mulgrave and Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, has backed the wrong horse here. When the Brumby government took Victoria to the 2010 election, it had a position in favour of the east–west link, and then all of a sudden Labor has done one of the greatest 180 degree backflips we have ever seen on a major project. This is not a backflip on an obscure policy of some non-descript project somewhere; it is on possibly the biggest project this state has ever seen. Many organisations in this state can see the benefits of an east–west link and are absolutely aghast that the opposition of the day is now doing nothing other than playing politics with possibly the biggest project this state has ever seen.

When Labor was in government it supported the east–west link proposal. Now its members say they oppose it. Daniel Andrews was quoted last year as saying that:

... every one of the projects we need escalates in price every month the government delays.

He said it was going to cost us more, but now he wants us to delay this project until after the next election. Some other Labor identities who backed this particular project are the previous Prime Minister, Julia Gillard; the current federal Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten; Brendan O'Connor; and Nicola Roxon. It had the backing of state MPs Marsha Thomson and Wade Noonan, the members for Footscray and Williamstown in the Assembly, Cesar Melhem and Adem Somyurek. There were detailed contributions on the east–west link from Mr Melhem when he was the Australian Workers Union (AWU) chief and from Mr Somyurek when he was a government spokesman.

It is quite amazing to see some of the statements that have been made. In an article in the *Herald Sun* of 16 March 2013 Cesar Melhem, then secretary of the AWU, was reported as saying that the east–west link should be a priority for Dr Napthine.

He went on to say:

The key here is to decide on a solution and go with it, get it moving, and get the Victorian economy moving.

We have steel, aluminium, asphalt and a whole range of other manufacturers who are crying out for the orders that a big project would produce.

Every order means jobs for Victorians.

In an *Age* article of 30 July 2012 Mr Melhem is also quoted as saying:

It is just crazy not to go ahead with the [east–west] project.

The beauty of this is that it comes from an individual who at the time was not involved in politics; he was not a member of the Labor Party in the upper house. In this instance he was simply looking after the interests of the Australian Workers Union.

Hon. E. J. O'Donohue — What did he say?

Mr DRUM — He said it would be crazy not to go ahead with the east–west project. In July 2008 Mr Melhem also said:

The new road link recommended by the —
east–west link —

will create a direct, connected east–west route across the city for around 150 000 vehicles per day ... It will eliminate ‘choke points’ in the cross-city road network, improving travel reliability and reducing the incentive for ‘rat-running’. The link will also provide much-improved connections for freight transport to Melbourne Airport and the port of Melbourne.

That is a glowing endorsement from someone who at that stage of his career was only interested in the workers associated with the Australian Workers Union.

Quite often we stand here on a Wednesday and accuse Labor Party members of being hypocritical because what they said and did when they had the opportunity of 11 years of government is somewhat at odds with what they are now saying, now that they find themselves in opposition. I do not think the hypocrisy we hear most weeks in this place comes anywhere near the hypocrisy of the Labor Party stance on this particular project.

Adem Somyurek has been in this house for quite a while now. Mr Somyurek said the following about this project in a submission to the Rod Eddington inquiry:

It is a simple and indisputable fact that Melbourne’s road network is not fully connected. One of the key missing links is obviously at the city end of the Eastern Freeway. Existing congestion, already an irritant for motorists, will only worsen when EastLink opens in 2008.

He obviously made these comments before 2008. His submission continues:

When EastLink opens next year, a 60-kilometre-long freeway carrying more than 130 000 vehicles a day will come to an abrupt halt in the inner suburbs of Melbourne. This is neither sensible or desirable. The queues are horrendous and will get worse. Rat-running through Fitzroy, Collingwood and Carlton will inevitably deteriorate as traffic attempts to make its way south, west and north.

Mr Somyurek is somewhat of a fortune teller, because all the predictions he made in 2007 became 100 per cent true in 2013.

Mr Pallas, the member for Tarneit in the other place, is on record as saying:

The Baillieu government must meet the pressing needs of this growing community and invest in vital transport infrastructure.

It is apparent that Melbourne’s west must be better connected with the rest of Melbourne, thus reducing the overreliance on the West Gate Bridge.

There has obviously been a very strong level of support for this project from the Labor Party. Now, all of a sudden, those members are being driven back into the box by their leader, who simply for politics sake — no

other reason — has decided he will come out and oppose this project.

There are a whole raft of third-party endorsements for this project that must also go on the record because they all add to the picture. In concert with the government peak authorities and businesses are all heading in one direction on this major project. There is just one group, the Australian Labor Party in Victoria, that is opposed to this project. Daniel Andrews continues to contradict Linking Melbourne Authority as well. In the middle of this year Bruno Aleksic, Linking Melbourne Authority’s director of planning, said on 3AW:

Linking Melbourne Authority throughout last year and the early start of this year has been involved in preparing a business case for the state government.

That was mentioned halfway through this year. Anybody who was listening to that interview or who has transcripts of it would know that the business case was prepared for government by Linking Melbourne Authority in the middle of this year. It was presented to the state government, and in turn the state government made a submission to Infrastructure Australia utilising various components of that business case. Yet we still have instances where, for political purposes, the opposition continues to say in effect that there is no business case for this project. The opposition now knows that to be untrue, but when do truth and what Labor says have anything in common? When are they ever mentioned in the same vein?

The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce ran a considerable number of advertisements about the difference an important infrastructure project like east–west link would make to our lives.

Editorials ran in various newspapers, including the *Herald Sun* and the *Age*, which is the Labor Party’s own newspaper. The *Age* editorial states:

To remove the one big transport proposal that could help ease the city’s traffic problems is a big call and, the *Age* believes, the wrong one.

...

To paraphrase a familiar road sign, go back, Mr Andrews, you are going the wrong way. You are going against what Victoria requires and, indeed, against the very notions your party once endorsed as part of a far-reaching transport policy. When the Eddington report, commissioned by the former Labor government, was tabled in April 2008, it came with a warning, ‘Doing nothing is not an option’. As the *Age* said at the time, this required a holistic approach from government that respected the two major planks of the report: the east–west link and the estimated \$9 billion Metro rail tunnel.

This was in effect the *Age* warning Mr Andrews that he has backed the wrong horse here.

Some of the other groups that have also supported this project include the Australian Logistics Council, Australian Industry Group, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, the Master Builders Association of Victoria, the Property Council of Australia, the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce and the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI). A far-reaching group of organisations has banded together to make sure that their voices are heard when it comes to supporting the east–west link.

A media statement of 22 July to the *Weekly Review Melbourne Times* reports Brian Negus, RACV general manager, public policy, as saying that the east–west link will:

... deliver substantial benefits for residents across the northern part of Melbourne by cutting congestion, reducing delays to the many tram and bus routes using north–south roads in this area, improving travel times and lessening dependence on the Monash Freeway–West Gate Bridge corridor.

On 16 July the RACV released a media statement saying:

... the first stage of the east–west link will provide tremendous benefits along heavily congested Alexandra Parade and Elliott Avenue and in Melbourne’s north.

The proposed tunnel design will take thousands of vehicles off these congested inner city streets every day, reducing delays caused by traffic for trams and buses on intersecting local roads and easing congestion at the end of the Eastern Freeway ...

In the middle of the year VECCI stated that the east–west link is:

... the no.1 infrastructure project for Victoria because, by reducing congestion, it will increase the capacity of Melbourne’s transport network, unlock productivity gains for business and improve social amenity, particularly in Melbourne’s expanding residential areas.

The construction of the road will deliver 3200 jobs, which is great news for Victoria. Obviously VECCI can, like others, see what is going to happen in this instance.

There is the myth that this project is just for the east of the city and that it will not benefit the rest of the state. There are some other glowing endorsements. The first one I refer to comes from Mary Aldred, the chief executive officer of Committee for Gippsland. This was broadcast on WIN news on 2 September. She represents the Committee for Gippsland in saying:

Our transport operators, our primary producers, our manufacturers need to be able to compete internationally and all around the rest of Australia. And to do that, we need efficient ways of getting our product to market.

Another campaign in favour of the project, backed up by the Gippsland Local Government Network, the Gippsland committee of Regional Development Australia and the Committee for Gippsland, asserts that the east–west link project will deliver major economic benefits to Gippsland businesses by providing more efficient access to market. These organisations can see that large numbers of people use the Monash Freeway as the traditional thoroughfare from Gippsland to Melbourne and that traffic flows will be greatly enhanced by the east–west link. Whenever there are accidents on the Monash, they can be bypassed quite easily. People can go from the Monash Freeway up to the Eastern Freeway and then through the east–west link tunnel. The Committee for Gippsland knows that the current situation makes it difficult for people from Gippsland to commute and that this project is going to aid traffic flow on the Monash.

It is interesting to note that the G21 Geelong Region Alliance is also in strong support of this project. It has acknowledged that there is too much traffic going over the West Gate Bridge and that the area around the Bolte Bridge becomes congested as people try to work their way over the West Gate Bridge, through the tunnel under the Yarra River and then out to the east on the Monash Freeway, or equally, through the city and out along Punt Road and Hoddle Street onto the Eastern Freeway. All that traffic will be diverted around the city, making it easier to travel across the West Gate Bridge. As I said, it is interesting that G21 has become a serious advocate for this project because a representative of G21 is a former Labor member of this house, Elaine Carbines, who is on record as saying that the no. 1 priority for Geelong is the east–west link.

Once you take the politics out of this issue, you see there are people who were saying one thing before they got involved in politics and another after. Here we have another group of people who were in politics and who are now out of it; they are now simply looking at what is best for particular industries and particular areas. Once the politics is gone, everyone is in agreement that the east–west link is a no. 1 priority for this state. It does not matter whether you are talking about Gippsland or my home town of Bendigo. People coming down the Calder Freeway to Melbourne experience traffic jams sometimes as far out as Keilor because of traffic bottlenecking around the Flemington Road area. If there is a big game of football on at Docklands at night, there is a traffic bottleneck at the junction of CityLink, Flemington Road and the

Tullamarine Freeway. Much of the traffic is trying to make its way out through to the eastern suburbs, but it is unable to do that in a timely fashion.

The benefits of this project are going to touch nearly every travelling motorist in Melbourne. The project will make travelling in and around the city much easier because there will be far less congestion in this area. It is going to make travel around Melbourne quicker and more reliable as a whole. The first stage of the project is desperately needed. We currently have a business case. The modelling we have done suggests that 80 000 to 100 000 cars a day will use the east–west link.

The Labor Party has been trying to spin the concept that if we spend \$8 billion on this project, we will not have the money to deliver other projects. Every day, as we announce more and more projects, we are proving that that concept is a fallacy. Only three months ago we announced \$84 million in funding to address the problem of the dangerous Ravenswood interchange just south of Bendigo. Labor said nothing about this project for 11 years, and it said nothing at all about it in the lead-up to the last election. In typical Labor Party fashion, it had its head in the sand. Once this project was announced by the coalition, and funding came from Warren Truss, the Leader of The Nationals in the federal government, which was backed by the state government, all of a sudden, then and only then, the Labor Party came out and said it would support the project, saying, ‘Me too’.

We have a whole raft of projects on the books. The federal coalition government is going to commit \$1.5 billion to the east–west link project. All the way along we have been up-front in saying that this project is likely to be delivered by the private sector, and we have said that tolls will be part of it. The idea that we are going to spend \$8 billion on this project is incorrect, but what is not incorrect is the fact that the project will create 3200 jobs in the construction stage. The construction industry in this state is eagerly awaiting this project.

The opposition’s criticism that we are focusing on just one project is an absolute fallacy. Time and again we have said we are looking at delivering four major projects in this state. The regional rail link is entering its final year. We are about 12 months out from a fully completed regional rail link. It is a \$4.8 billion project; the state is contributing \$1.2 billion in funding and the rest is coming from the federal government. Under our direction this project is running on time, if not ahead of schedule, and it is running on budget.

When the coalition government says this, it does not sound that great. However, the concept of the Labor Party ever delivering a \$5 billion project ahead of time and on budget just does not add up. It is something you never hear; you never hear about these types of projects being delivered on time and on budget under a Labor government. It is par for the course under the direction of this coalition government in Victoria. We still have another 12 months to go, and hopefully we will be able to finish this project; the first three years have been completed.

In relation to road and rail we have over 1000 extra metropolitan train trips each and every week and we have 3400 extra bus trips in this state every week since we came to government. We have put \$100 million into the bayside rail upgrade on the Frankston line and provided \$25 million for the Dandenong rail line upgrade. We have put more than \$400 million into removing level crossings across Melbourne. Two of those level crossings — on Anderson Road and associated with the regional rail link project — were never funded by the previous government, even though it was going to build its version of the regional rail link.

If you were to increase the train frequency along both the Ballarat and Geelong lines just south of Sunshine station, at peak times you would have the boom gates down for about 45 minutes in the hour. I am sure Mr Finn knows this area very well. This is what the Labor Party had in its initial plans when it started organising the regional rail link: it was going to leave those level crossings in place as it proceeded with the regional rail link. The funding simply was not there for grade separations at these level crossings. With increased traffic on the rail system due to the regional rail link, we would have ended up with the farcical situation of having those boom gates — only 400 metres apart — raised at the same time for less than 15 minutes in the peak hour every morning and every evening.

After coming to government we found the additional money to ensure that both of those grade separations will go ahead, that traffic will flow steadily, that the people of Sunshine will be able to get around their suburb — to get to work and get back home in the evening — and that we will still be able to greatly increase the number of rail services on those lines each and every day. It is a matter of our being able to run these projects within the budgets that have been provided, which enables us to do more, instead of resorting to ridiculous overspends, effectively not giving the people of Victoria the services they need.

We also have 15 new X'trapolis trains, with 7 already delivered and 8 on the way. We have 40 new V/Line carriages on the way — they will be rolling out very shortly — and 50 new low-floor trams on the way as well. Therefore, in relation to the idea that with \$8 billion going into the east–west link we will all of a sudden not be able to invest in other transport projects, again members simply need to look at not even what we are saying but what we are doing, and they will see there is a real benefit for all of Victoria in this project.

The main aspects of this project include that everyone will benefit from it, that it is predominantly funded by the private sector and that it will not hinder our investment in other major projects around the state. Money is going into the port at Hastings. An amount of \$50 million has been allocated to the Melbourne Metro project to ensure that we get that moving as well. We have been very clear that we are going to push through with that project and keep it going ahead; however, we are not ready. I say to anyone who wants to criticise this government for not proceeding with the metro project that we are simply not ready with the technical work that needs to be done in the planning stage of such an enormous project. We need to do more work in that area, and we will be doing work in that area. Our plan is for that project to come online towards the completion of the east–west link to give the workers involved a chain of continuity. They will be looking at that as very much a common-sense approach to this project.

The east–west link is one of four game-changing projects the government is proposing for this state. The other projects involve the expansion of the port of Hastings, the regional rail link project and the Melbourne Metro project. It is interesting that some members of the Labor Party privately support this project. Some members of the opposition supported the east–west link project before the last election. When they were in government they supported the project. Some even supported it before they were elected to this place; some support it after they have left Parliament. When in government, they support it; when in opposition, they do not. Members of the federal Labor opposition in Canberra support the project, but if you are a member of the Labor opposition in Victoria, you support it when in government and oppose it when in opposition. It is the most ridiculous form of opposition; it is simply opposition for opposition's sake.

Editorials of the major newspapers in this state have come out in favour of the east–west link project, but unfortunately in this instance Mr Andrews has backed the wrong horse and is opposing this vital project. We need to do something about the congestion levels on the Eastern Freeway during morning and evening peak

periods. As Mr Eddington says in his report, doing nothing is not an option.

I congratulate Premier Napthine, the Minister for Roads, Mr Mulder, and the government for taking the action that they have taken. It is a major step and a major decision that will be supported by the vast majority of Victorians. It is the right project to get this city and this state moving. The project will benefit all travellers and all transport operators around the state, particularly in Melbourne. As people approach this city from every direction, the benefits will start to flow. Currently traffic congestion is clogging up the eastern and northern parts of the CBD, and inner suburbs to the north and east are also heavily congested. This government will clean up these areas.

Whilst the government will not oppose this motion, it will examine in good faith the documents that have been requested and release all documents that can legitimately be released. Many projects put forward by members of the former government — such as EastLink, Peninsula Link, the Southern Cross railway station redevelopment, the Royal Children's Hospital, the Royal Women's Hospital project, the desalination plant, the regional rail link, HealthSMART and the north–south pipeline — had budget overruns to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, and no business cases were ever released to the public. This request for documents is another example of the hypocrisy of members of the opposition. They think they can say and do one thing in government, but when they find themselves in opposition, they start to call for documents that they know could be detrimental to the tender process and the granting of contracts to companies that will be coming after this work.

Expressions of interest have been received from major construction companies not only around Australia but around the world. The east–west link project is one of the world's largest projects announced in 2013 and is creating great interest among construction companies, many of which see it as an opportunity to build a game-changing project for this city and this state. Members of this government are committed to continuing to make Melbourne one of the great places in the modern world and the most livable city in the world. We plan to do everything we can to keep this state alive and vibrant.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I was expecting either a member of the Labor Party or one of the Greens would be next to speak on this motion. Obviously members of the Liberal Party feel much more passionate about the east–west link project than do the cowardly members of the Labor Party, who backed the project when in government but have played

politics with it ever since, despite the overwhelming views of a range of key commentators and stakeholders who support the project — a project which is a critical part of our transport system.

The notion is that a transport system is multimodal and does not stop within one electorate or one region; it needs to connect with other components in the system. Connectivity is important for the mobility of population and of goods and services. Various types of transport modes across our transport system need to connect not just within Victoria but Australia wide. The approach and attitude of the Leader of the Opposition and member for Mulgrave in the Assembly, Daniel Andrews, is that somehow the east–west link will serve only one part of Melbourne and not another, but that it is a very myopic view. It shows the tunnel vision and political opportunism of a Leader of the Opposition who is trying to ingratiate himself with pockets of voters here and there rather than showing the sort of leadership that his predecessors called for in backing significant projects that were important pieces of infrastructure and important for the economy of our state.

The motion will not be opposed, because it is consistent with how the government has treated these motions requesting documents — in good faith. The request will be examined, and the government will release all documents that can legitimately be released.

I did want to confine my comments to four points. Again this position of the Labor opposition as well as the Greens is very much tunnel vision. It is also hypocritical and demonstrates a lack of real leadership for the state. It certainly demonstrates a lack of commitment to a very important issue that I believe was one of the major reasons we won a number of seats in the south-east — that is, a lack of commitment by the Labor Party to invest, and a history of inadequate investment, in infrastructure. Part of that of course is a result of the Labor Party's poorer management, with cost blow-outs of projects, less funding being available, delays in bringing projects online, a driving up of cost and poor management of particular projects.

We saw that federally when the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program was rolled out as part of the economic stimulus package. The short time line meant that the cost of works and services blew out and schools were typically able to achieve 30 per cent less with the same money compared to that achieved by the independent and Catholic school systems, which were given the authority to manage their expenditure under the BER process.

Labor's track record on investment in infrastructure is poor in terms of commitment, delivery and management. Victorian voters suffer in so many ways when there is a lack of investment in infrastructure, whether it is a lack of investment in schools, hospitals or others that deliver key services. With a growing population, investment in infrastructure is critical to the future of this nation, both in terms of mobility and the provision of various services that Victorians depend on.

Equally, and I will come back to each of those points, the position taken by the opposition on this issue is bad for the south-east. I note the comments of my parliamentary colleague on the other side, Adem Somyurek, who represents South Eastern Metropolitan Region, and the very strong, cogent case he placed on record for the east–west link when in government and before the Leader of the Opposition took this silly position. I certainly concur. Adem Somyurek knows the importance of an east–west link. He knows the importance of addressing the congestion that will arise from an increase in logistics and freight transport over the next 10 to 20 years, in particular the congestion that already exists on a significant route such as the Monash Freeway, which services a large part of the south-east. He understands its importance and the importance of an effective road and public transport system. He knows the problems and angst that congestion has caused for the south-east. That was certainly seen at the polling booths at the last state election.

I also point to the very narrow, limited and restrained comments about this project that have been made by another parliamentary colleague in the south-east, Mr Tarlamis, because I imagine he also, being a sensible fellow, understands the importance of the east–west link. He is being cautious, naturally, because at the end of the day being honest and sensible is important to him, as is serving his constituency.

It is also very important for the residents of Mulgrave that the east–west link address the congestion across the south-east. The east–west link would be critical in taking away the traffic that uses the Monash Freeway, which residents do not particularly want to use because it leads to congestion in the inner metropolitan area. They would prefer to use a direct link to enable them to travel out to the west. The residents of Mulgrave will suffer if this project does not go ahead because there will be an impact on local amenity and on their ability to use local connecting roads.

The residents of Narre Warren North, the lower house electorate of the shadow Minister for Roads, will be greatly affected by this attempt to sabotage an important piece of major infrastructure. Ninety-five per

cent of city of Casey residents drive out of the city in order to get to work. That being the case, a number of considerations are being debated by various stakeholders as to how we can turn that around. As I said, 95 per cent of Casey residents drive out of the city in order to go to work, so the scaling down by Labor of the Monash Freeway from three lanes to two when it was being constructed, in order to bring it in on time and on budget, has obviously reduced the initial capacity of the Monash as it was planned. It should have been built with three lanes to cater for the growth, but it was not. Labor squibbed it, and it is squibbing it again by working against the east–west link proposal, which would actually reduce traffic on the Monash. It would certainly make it easier for families from Narre Warren North, the constituency of the shadow Minister for Roads, to get to work on a more smoothly flowing Monash Freeway.

Similarly, Narre Warren South residents have to face the same congestion on the Monash Freeway. I am not sure exactly what level of traffic would be diverted to the east–west link, but it appears in some documentation. If it were a reduction of 20 per cent, it would be a huge improvement on the traffic flow and capacity of the Monash. Cranbourne residents would also welcome more smoothly flowing and lighter traffic on the Monash.

All of those residents are being directly worked against by the position taken by the Leader of the Opposition, forcing a lot of supporters of the east–west link in the Labor Party to oppose it when it is common sense. It is also political common sense. He will ultimately pay the political price of working against improving the congestion that is currently confronting the south-east and that is set to continue should we not be able to proceed with the construction of the east–west link, especially with the development of the port of Hastings and the projected increase in logistics and freight traffic through that corridor.

By their action the members for Narre Warren North, Narre Warren South and Cranbourne in the other place seem not to care much about the residents of Casey. I wonder whether that is because none of those three members actually lives in the city of Casey and may not be affected by the congestion that city of Casey residents face each day, day in, day out.

That is very sad. It is very important for local members to live in their electorates so they can experience firsthand the challenges of a local community and have the opportunity to hear firsthand from those who have other ideas about addressing key issues and problems, such as road congestion and the need for an improved

road system. The only time we hear from members of the Labor Party is when they are in opposition; in government they go very quiet and very rarely do they raise the many issues that are important to the city of Casey residents.

Labor is all over the place on the east–west link, but I know that at some point it will backflip, because it makes no sense to stick with a policy that will hurt the party, hurt Victoria and hurt the voters. When Labor was in government it supported the east–west link; now the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Daniel Andrews, says he opposes it. Initially that came out of the left’s vitriol and hatred of anything to do with roads and transport, which Labor demonstrated as a way of improving its vote in the federal election, especially in the seat of Melbourne. When Labor lost that federal seat to Adam Bandt, Mr Andrews was not able to get off that express train on that dead-end route. It was a bad policy, he should not have adopted it for expedience and it did not deliver the results in the federal seat of Melbourne. The amenity of those in the inner city, and I would imagine also the amenity of the member for Narre Warren North in the Assembly, Mr Donnellan, who I understand is also an inner city cafe latte sipper, will be directly and negatively impacted if the east–west link is not built.

Mr Leane — Have you ever had a latte?

Mrs PEULICH — When I drink latte it is in my South Eastern Metropolitan Region electorate and not in the inner city. Labor is all over the place. Last year Daniel Andrews said that every one of the projects we need escalates in price every month the government delays. He is delaying, and therefore not only is he demonstrating a lack of leadership and sheer political opportunism but now he wants us to delay this project until the next election, when the costs of the project will rise even further.

Previous supporters of the east–west link include the Brumby Labor government, of which Mr Andrews was a cabinet minister, and former Prime Minister Julia Gillard. Even she had the foresight to understand the importance of this major infrastructure. The federal Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, supported it; Brendan O’Connor, the federal shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, supported it; former Attorney-General Nicola Roxon supported it; and state Labor MPs in the Assembly Marsha Thomson, the member for Footscray, and Wade Noonan, the member for Williamstown, as well as Cesar Melhem, who is now here in this chamber, and Adem Somyurek, who I have already mentioned, all supported it.

Labor's claims about there not being a business case are also untrue. We do not engage in desal economics. The desalination plant will cost Victorians \$2 million every day for the next 30 years whether or not we purchase a drop of water. Of course we do not currently have a water shortage. All of our catchments are 80 per cent full, and the Thomson Dam is 84 per cent full. This major project was too big. It was probably three times the size it needed to be. In order to waterproof the state the desalination plant needed to be approximately one-third of its current size and probably one-third of the price. Because of the desal economics approach of the Labor Party to major projects and there being no business case for such a significant project with such dramatic and negative consequences for Victorians, I cannot believe that Labor now claims there is no business case for the east–west link when there is and when the summary is available on the internet, including traffic projections.

The Napthine government will continue to deliver other road and rail projects as well as the east–west link. The big misnomer is that we are going to spend so many millions of dollars on the east–west link that there will be nothing left. This Premier and this government will be known for the infrastructure that they deliver for Victorians to make up for the tardy and inadequate investment in infrastructure under the 11 years of Labor. Belatedly Labor went all the way with the desal plant, which was too big and too expensive, as a way of trying to dig itself out of a political hole.

When CityLink was first discussed Labor opposed it, then it said it would scrap the tolls and then it said it would rip up the contracts. Now Victorians could not imagine their lives without CityLink, which is very significant and important infrastructure for all of us. Despite what Daniel Andrews has said, Labor seems to have learnt nothing about its defeat in the 2010 election, especially in the south-east, including the importance of roads and infrastructure.

At the April 2013 state conference Daniel Andrews said in discussing policy about setting up a body known as Infrastructure Victoria that Labor would:

... take the politics out of major projects, so we can get them built.

Mr Andrews is playing cheap politics with this important infrastructure project commitment. On radio 3AW on 10 July 2012 he said:

I do not support a tunnel. What I do support though is the position we left when we left office, and that was Hoddle Street is the problem and Hoddle Street should be the priority for government action.

Estimates for that work are multibillions of dollars, more than the east–west link.

On 16 October 2012 Daniel Andrews said to the Melbourne Press Club:

Lethargy and indecision is not leadership. Hiding under your desk is just hiding under your desk.

Starving the constructors of this state of a pipeline of infrastructure is bad for our economy, bad for confidence, bad for jobs and bad for skills.

He went on to say:

It's also ultimately bad for value — every one of the projects we need escalates in price every month the government delays.

He also said:

Let's have a bit of honesty about the fact that the only way you avoid complex projects and all their attendant risk is if you don't build any. Now, that's not leadership.

Mr Daniel Andrews should listen to his own words.

In 2008 former Premier John Brumby said:

I think what is undeniable in Rod Eddington's report is that the city does need a second east–west crossing. One way or another we have got to address this issue of a second east–west crossing.

In May 2006 former Premier Steve Bracks said:

The government will also take steps to fully explore and access options for the development of another east–west link.

Mr Pakula, the member for Lyndhurst in the Assembly, in the redistricting is soon to become the member for Keysborough, which will encompass the area in which I live. I look forward to working as hard as I can to try to make sure that Mr Pakula's seat is turned into a very marginal seat, so that he actually listens. When in government in 2008, he said:

... the Greens have told motorists in the middle and outer west to 'stick it' — no new river crossings and no new roads for them. Car drivers in the west are to be punished, sacrificed on the altar of green ideology.

Yet now it seems that Mr Pakula subscribes to this green ideology.

There are extensive quotations attributed to Cesar Melhem, who is now a member for Western Metropolitan Region, which laud the merits of east–west link, especially in relation to this state's economic activity. I will just select a couple. He said:

We are not going to live without roads and cars. We definitely need more investment in public transport infrastructure from both Labor and the coalition, but we can't do without road investment.

He went on to say:

The road tunnel has the opportunity of linking the growth in the west to the growth in the east. That will have an important multiplier effect in terms of options and choices for residents on both sides of the city. Greater access and connectivity brings more local jobs and investment.

I could not agree more. He then went on to say:

Without the east-west tunnel, the Eastern Freeway will turn into a congested car park and will defeat the purpose of EastLink.

Again I could not agree more.

I will move on to some specific comments in relation to the south-east. These are in Bill Shorten and Cesar Melhem's submission to the east-west link needs assessment — EWLNA — on 14 June 2007. The submission makes clear that the Monash-CityLink-West Gate corridor cannot sustain the massive freight task, which is forecast to double in the next 20 years. It says:

The freight and logistics sector is the lifeblood of the state economy, and yet our major east-west freight route is under enormous pressure.

Of course this has direct implications for the south-east, which is represented by the Leader of the Opposition, Daniel Andrews; the shadow Minister for Public Transport, Luke Donnellan; and three MPs who represent the Casey community, none of whom live in Casey and therefore clearly do not care about the congestion that confronts the voters of Narre Warren North, Narre Warren South and Cranbourne.

The east-west link will ensure that the industrial areas of the west, the north and the south-east of Melbourne have access both to the port of Melbourne and to a growing port of Hastings. We cannot wait with this project; we need to move on it. The largest single issue affecting freight is road congestion. There is really no alternative to road transport for freight distribution around metropolitan Melbourne. Door-to-door service requires roads, even if some line-haul tasks for distribution centres could be performed by rail.

Therefore in closing I will say that it is a silly position for the Labor Party and for those eight Labor MPs representing the south-east. Those who will be most negatively impacted on will be communities and electorates in the south-east — and of course all of Victoria. With those few words I have indicated that the

motion will not be opposed, but Labor's appalling position on the east-west link needs to be changed forthwith.

Mrs KRONBERG (Eastern Metropolitan) — As a long-term resident who has had more than 40 years experience of Melbourne's eastern suburbs and as a proud representative of the people of the Eastern Metropolitan Region, it is timely in this debate today on the motion seeking the tabling of the business case for the proposed east-west link as put forward by the Labor opposition in this house that I put the case on behalf of the people of Melbourne's eastern suburbs. I have particular insight into the traffic congestion that has steadily built since the early 1970s.

I have lived in the eastern suburbs throughout all of my adult life, first in North Balwyn, then in East Doncaster, moving then to Heathmont, Glen Waverley, Burwood East and then back to East Doncaster, where I have lived on a long-term basis since 1980. It is really important that I remind the luvvies of the Labor Party — these leftists who have now ascended a pike of their own making and are squirming on it, as they have been seen to be in cahoots with the Greens in some bizarre appeasement strategy — of the facts. We understand their thinking in attempting to win back the seat of Melbourne in the federal election, but appeasement never works. In world history appeasement has never worked, and they have actually turned their backs and become arch hypocrites in relation to what is actually needed for Melbourne.

But this is not new. Under the Cain government the Labor Party sold off the land reserve that would have seen a rail connection branching off from a median strip on the Eastern Freeway and coursing through Templestowe and East Doncaster, running alongside what is known as King Street, and having its terminus at Blackburn Road.

I am well apprised of this project. It is one of the reasons we bought land and built our home in East Doncaster. We thought that with a new railhead close to where we were building, our children, who were booked into St Kevin's College in Toorak, would be able to travel by rail with ease to that school. It was not so. The socialist Cain Labor government, with its lack of vision, sold off that land reserve. If you want to build in Doncaster now, land acquisition is an expensive proposition. Down through the decades, through the ages, what resonates is Labor's lack of vision. With short-term opportunism as a failing philosophical base, it has to grab some sort of alliance with the Greens — the luvvies of the left, with their extreme left-wing ideologies.

Has anybody asked why we are looking to extend the Eastern Freeway beyond Hoddle Street now? I can tell members why. When that freeway was first designed, the hue and cry from people protesting that no such road system should be extended into Melbourne's inner suburbs was such that the project designers and even the government of the time backed off. People of the same mindset backed off when it came to deciding what sort of a freeway system the Tullamarine Freeway should be serving in connecting Melbourne to the then new Tullamarine Airport. The approach was a complete joke at the time, in the early 1970s. The government built a freeway with two lanes. It knew as soon as it started it that it was not up to carrying the demand that already existed, without allowing for any forecast capacity requirements.

Again here we have a complete lack of vision. Labor is now squirming, and long may it squirm on the pike of its own making through impeding progress and visionary projects in this state. Frankly, we have had enough of it. The protests of the early 1970s have now led to what is like a drainpipe backing up. We are now having to deal with that blockage, and it is unpleasant. Somebody has to roll up their sleeves, make an adult decision and deliver on it.

I am proud of the Napthine government and its vision and narrative around this essential part of Melbourne's infrastructure. It has to be done. It is not a question of either/or. The government is committed to invest in essential projects from which the whole state can benefit, and our economy and the people of Victoria will thrive as a result. Our investments in public transport can be measured thus: \$4.8 billion for the regional rail link, which is coming along at a fantastic pace and will soon be delivering on that investment; \$100 million for the Bayside railway upgrade on the Frankston line; \$25 million for the Dandenong line upgrade; and \$400 million to remove level crossings across Melbourne. This investment in public transport also includes the delivery of 15 X'trapolis trains, 40 new V/Line carriages and 50 new low-floor trams.

Those opposite have been saying, 'Do not spend the money that is allocated for the east-west link; spend it on public transport'. It is a complete nonsense. What do they want to do — continue to blindside the Victorian people and promote untruths? They stand there as capital-H hypocrites and economic cripples. The phrase that has been coined in recent times for that toxic approach to the management of the economy of the state — exemplified by the poor judgement, malfeasance and overreaction regarding the desalination plant — is desal economics.

The Labor opposition has the temerity to seek the documents for the business case. I wonder what Labor members will do with them when they get those documents, because they did not see a need for a business case at all when in government. Who will they bring in to advise them? They will say, 'Hey pal, I am not sure what this means. Which way do you hold it up? Where do you start?'. If the opposition gets the business case, what will it do with it? It is like a dog barking at and chasing a car. What it is going to do when it catches the car — have a little gnaw on a rear tyre? That is a bit like Labor — what is it going to do with the business case it seeks? It certainly cannot do anything about interpreting and analysing it. It will have to buy in expertise, because there is no-one in the opposition who knows how to read a business case, let alone develop, analyse, adjudicate and criticise one. That is why Labor winged it without a business case on projects such as EastLink, Peninsula Link and Southern Cross station — oh, my goodness! — the Royal Children's Hospital, the Royal Women's Hospital and the desalination plant, the exemplar of desal economics in this state.

On the regional rail project, thank God, the Baillieu and Napthine governments have provided the leadership, stewardship and project management expertise to deliver it. Consider HealthSMART and the infamous north-south pipeline. What a knee-jerk reaction that was; what a bunch of desperados, pretending to pass themselves off as people capable of running an economy! The examples are all proof positive of how after 11 years in government Labor ran this state into the ground. I invite members to look at the cohort of people who went through the Rudd and Gillard governments. Now the Abbott government has to roll up its sleeves and clean up the mess. I often think the Victorian coalition government has had to bring in industrial clothing to deal with Labor's toxic legacy; we have to protect ourselves from all that rubbish and toxic decision making.

Labor members have not learnt any lessons. In life and in business practices people will generally forgive you for making mistakes, but what is unforgivable is when you never learn from the mistakes and continue to make them. It is the behaviour of a party that I prefer to describe as the Frankenstein model: dead body parts all stitched together trying to function as a cohesive unit. We know Labor is far from cohesive and that a lot of these decisions are based on a loose coalition, this Frankenstein model of dead body parts stitched together at the time for some convenience and spin — goodness me!

I will go back to my experience of driving into the Parliament yesterday and today. The situation as I travel along the Eastern Freeway is thus: heavy traffic from where I get on at Blackburn Road, heavier traffic for the exit at Bulleen Road and very heavy traffic for the two lanes of vehicles queuing to do a left turn to get off at the Chandler Highway. When you pass the Chandler Highway off-ramp, traffic comes immediately to a complete standstill. There are four lanes of densely packed traffic to Hoddle Street, with no space in between, including the transit lane designed to allow people freer passage down the freeway when there is a driver and at least one other passenger.

Knowing I was going to make a contribution to this motion today, I almost got out my iPad to video this traffic and show it to my parliamentary colleagues on the other side of the house, especially members of the Greens, but also the Labor opposition, because I am convinced the Greens have never gone east of Hoddle Street. I am convinced they have not a clue as to the traffic volumes that come down through EastLink.

As my colleague Mrs Peulich mentioned, in terms of the impact of the dillydallying to get improvements to the Monash Freeway with the growth of the south-eastern suburbs, those people need an alternative means of moving around the eastern suburbs. We are so pleased with what EastLink has done for people in the south and south-east of Melbourne's metropolitan area. However, when we go beyond EastLink and get onto the original Eastern Freeway and that T-intersection at Hoddle Street, there is an extraordinary volume of traffic impacting on people. When I have the opportunity to travel in cars with people who have come back to this country after three or four years away, they say, 'This is a joke! How did you allow Melbourne to become a victim to gridlock?'. It is the luvvies of the left who would like to perpetuate that. It is not a question of road systems or public transport. We need both.

Since 2007 I have had the pleasure and privilege to live, on occasions for several weeks in a row, as a Londoner. I am thoroughly apprised of the mix of public transport infrastructure there: the London Underground system, the Docklands Light Railway, the overland rail system, the bus system and even the Emirates Air Line cable car across the River Thames from the Docklands. We all revere and applaud the transport system in London and all of those fantastic and visionary people for the momentum they have provided for the extension of the London transport system.

If people say, 'Let us have a comparative analysis with what we have here in Melbourne and what London has

got', we have to remember that this year, 2013, London celebrates 150 years of the start of the London Underground system — 150 years! We know what the London Underground did to save lives during the Blitz, because Londoners had to live underground when the bombardments were under way. The important thing to remember is what London's transport system has been through to get to where it is today, serving a population of 8 million people. Melbourne's population is forecast to rise to 8 million by 2056, so it is relevant to look at the London of today to see the Melbourne of tomorrow.

The London transport system was 150 years in the making, with London's population being fed by the might and abundant riches of the British Empire. I do not need to mention the fantastic system of parliamentary democracy that we inherited from Westminster. In spite of 150 years of the might of the greatest empire that has ever existed investing in London's underground and public transport system, London is still perfecting its underground system. Yet the luvvies of the left who do not believe in capitalism and who have not got a clue as to how to attract investment, let alone how to actually manage a project and deliver it on time and on budget, are saying we should be like that.

It is very important that my colleagues on the other side of the house read a little bit and think outside the square so that they learn the lessons of history. Their appeasement of the Greens at the moment is their bitterest experience, and it is not working because the Greens probably think that they do not have any credibility either.

I turn back to the Eastern Freeway. All I can say is, God bless the Napthine government, the Baillieu government before it and the Abbott federal government, which has pledged money for the building phase of this project. We know that private enterprise will invest in this project. Those opposite are holding up this ephemeral figure of \$8 billion as though that will be the total expense of this project. We know that sum is going to be shared by the private sector and the federal government. Those opposite should climb down from that figure; it is absolute nonsense.

The end of the Eastern Freeway courses through Alexandra Parade in North Fitzroy and on through parts of North Carlton before it reaches the Melbourne University precinct. During the Kennet era there was a hue and cry about proposed development in that area from activists who lived or couch surfed in that vicinity. They were not necessarily property owners; they were not necessarily the sorts of people that any landlord would give a lease to. Landlords must have been pretty

worried about what might happen to their properties and to rent owing. The people who claimed some sort of a lifestyle in this area probably did not even live there. It is unlikely that they owned property there or would ever be able to own property, yet on behalf of property owners and investors they sought to claim some sort of moral authority.

Let us look at what actually happened to the end of the Eastern Freeway during the Kennett era. Alexandra Parade needed to be widened. The issue was that in order to widen the road some of the reserve in the middle of the road had to be acquired. There was a hue and cry about our parkland being sacrificed. Ever since then I have watched what has happened with that parkland. It underwent some landscaping. New lawn was brought in. I remember there was a very sad Canary Islands palm tree on the corner of Brunswick Street and Alexandra Parade. It was interesting to see people who were supposedly concerned about the environment, trees and the preservation of the natural environment in general nailing protest banners to this poor, sad palm tree — I suppose it was fair game because it was not an indigenous offering. Nevertheless, the palm tree was pretty much crucified by all the protest banners during the Kennett era.

I watched to see who was going to use this land reserve when it was completed. At a huge cost the government imported advanced trees to provide canopy, shade and amenity. We know that advanced trees can cost \$10 000 each, so the government made a huge investment in order to give people more than they had ever had before, which was just a median strip of mowed paspalum weeds.

I invite other members to observe this land reserve, over which there was such a hue and cry during the protests of the 1990s. The protests of the 1970s worked by making it stop at the T-intersection; the protests of the 1990s certainly did not achieve much, but they are indelibly ingrained in my thinking. I have not seen anybody on that grass with a frisbee, a cricket bat or a picnic basket. I have not seen anybody just walking with their children, looking at the birds in the trees, observing how trees change from season to season, from bare branches during winter, to new buds in spring, to shade in the summer and colourful leaves during autumn. I have not seen any of the left-wing luvvies from that precinct visiting the reserve given to them at great expense by the Kennett government so they could have a beautiful natural environment as compensation for the widening of the road. No-one uses that green space. Where are they? I should imagine they are sitting cross-legged, investigating the plumbing of their bongos.

Let me come back to the present situation. I used to provide expert advice to the corporate sector. I am not going to provide expert advice to opposition members; I will continue my criticism of them, coming together, as they do around this particular issue, to say the east–west link should not go ahead. The people of the lower house seats of Ivanhoe, Eltham, Bulleen, Doncaster, Warrandyte, Bayswater, Mount Waverley, Ferntree Gully and Box Hill and the new seats of Croydon and Ringwood cannot wait for this project to be completed.

We talk about having a balance between public transport and road systems, and we need to appreciate this. The people who criticise road systems seem not to have an understanding of why traffic needs a road in the first place. First and foremost, the sedans people drive could be company vehicles given to them by their employers so they can call into the home base before going out to the wider metropolitan area to visit clients. The tyranny of distance prevails in metropolitan Melbourne; it is a real issue. Nobody who has an office in the city and must visit clients in, for example, Braeside, Derrimut, Craigieburn, Kilsyth and Laverton can rely on public transport to get to their client base. They need a motor vehicle. This is common sense. Have those in opposition never gone out to visit a client base? Opposition members have come to this Parliament from the trade union movement and after working as advisers of other members of Parliament. They have no cognisance of how private enterprise works.

If we look at the movement of freight, we see that freight needs to move by rail. I support the movement of freight by rail, and I applaud improvements in intermodal connections. We all know that intermodal change — that is, the moving of something from rail to ship or from road to ship — is the big expense. We need to make these connections as smooth as possible to reduce the cost of transporting freight in this state.

On visiting the bold and prosperous Canadian city of Toronto, my observations were that over time some visionary people had the wisdom and did whatever it took to bring about a road network that spans the industrial might and offering of Toronto, which is in the province of Ontario. They offered Toronto's industrial might to the global marketplace. They did this by laying down all over Toronto freeway systems of 8 lanes in each direction — 16-lane road reserves were put aside. This was an absolute miracle in terms of its vision. When using this road system you can see the smooth passage of people and goods.

The province of Ontario gives priority to freight movements over commuter movements. This is all about jobs for Canadians. I know this is a very sensitive issue for Victorians in particular and Australians in general, but in Toronto it is going so well that — guess what? — they have five car plants. One of the reasons for this is the fantastic investment over time in infrastructure that facilitates the movement of freight. Five car plants in Toronto — that is something to envy and applaud. This muscular city is the powerhouse of North America and one of the direct contributors to the decline of cities such as Cleveland and Detroit. The vision and planning that has gone into Toronto's infrastructure has delivered the economic success of that Canadian city. It is home to 6.5 million people, which is where Melbourne is forecast to be by 2025.

In summation, the government will support this motion. However, it is important that the Labor and Greens opposition invest some time and energy in finding out how an economy works, what is needed to create jobs to serve the people of Melbourne and what is needed to provide an effective link from one side of Melbourne to the other so that people might move around unimpeded by horrendous traffic jams that keep them trapped at the T-intersection of Hoddle Street for anything up to 1.25 hours when traffic is at a standstill and they are lucky to be turning their wheels at 3 to 5 kilometres an hour. It is a tedious exercise and very time consuming. It is a bad habit, especially for people who, by the time they get to that point, have already travelled a great distance along EastLink and the Eastern Freeway.

This is an opportunity to deliver something very special for the people of Melbourne's east. It is reasonable for me to say, having spent so much of my adult life in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, that it is our turn. Other areas have been well served by infrastructure, with road and rail systems that are coming on, but it is our turn in the eastern suburbs. With the rail link to Doncaster not available to us at the moment, this is the only way to ameliorate the frustration and the traffic congestion — and actually provide clean air for eastern Melbourne. It is our turn; it is the turn of the people of Melbourne's eastern suburbs — the people I so proudly represent.

With those few words, I will close my contribution today. In doing so I reinforce that it is the turn of the people living in Eastern Metropolitan Region and Western Metropolitan Region. It is the turn of the people I represent. As for that Frankenstein model of a political party, with all its dead body parts stitched together, I say they should get out of their burrows, have a look at how an economy works and stop impeding people who are investing, creating and making jobs for Victoria.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — It is an honour to rise today on the 11th day of the 12th month of the 13th year of the century to speak to this motion from the opposition which asks the government to produce documents associated with the east–west link. From the outset I say that the government will not be opposing this motion. It will examine in good faith the request for documents and commit to releasing all documents that legitimately can be released.

This gives me the opportunity to talk about the east–west link itself. In my very first few months in this job I met with community groups in Parkville, Carlton, Fitzroy and Clifton Hill. They talked about the traffic on Alexandra Parade, they talked about the traffic around Cemetery Road and they talked about the traffic on Macarthur Road and Elliott Avenue. They spoke about the difficulties in driving past the zoo, day after day after day. It was the same thing from them all. Generally they asked if we could get cars off their local roads, away from their homes, schools and shops. They complained about breathing in carbon monoxide fumes every single day, about the traffic hazards, pedestrian hazards and risks associated with having that much traffic around their homes and local areas. They asked if we could get the traffic off their roads.

A few months into my journey here Mr Barber walked across the chamber and sat down next to me and said, 'You know, a lot of your local community groups in the inner north are worried about all that traffic on their roads'. And I agreed with him. Trying to get from the end of the Eastern Freeway through to the other side of the city to join CityLink is a nightmare; you have to battle Alexandra Parade, Cemetery Road, Macarthur Road and Elliott Avenue. I know Mrs Kronberg has talked widely about how it affects those travelling east to west and west to east. It is a nightmare trying to get around there. This government has provided a solution to the issues people have raised. Yet it is those same groups that come before us today and other days and ask us why we are building an east–west tunnel and this link that takes the traffic off their roads. The answer I give to them, as well as to the Victorian Greens and the Labor Party, which support those community groups as we do, is that we are doing it because they asked for it; they asked us to get that traffic off their roads.

However, I am a bit confused about why the Labor Party is opposing the east–west link. I am confused about why Daniel Andrews, the Leader of the Opposition and member for Mulgrave in the Assembly — known to some, though not to

many — opposes the east–west link project. This is a very important project for Victoria; it is a game changer for Victoria. Interestingly enough, Daniel Andrews does not support it and those opposite do not support it, despite the fact it is supported by the Labor-aligned Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. It is also supported by the Labor-aligned Australian Workers Union. It is supported by the Electrical Trades Union and the Australian Logistics Council.

The east–west link is supported by the Australian Industry Group, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, the Master Builders Association of Victoria and the Victorian division of the Property Council of Australia. The RACV supports the east–west link, as does the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce — that is David Purchase and his people. All these groups support the construction of the east–west link. The Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry supports the east–west link, as does the Committee for Melbourne and the Committee for Gippsland. Why then will Daniel Andrews not support the east–west link?

It is not just those groups that support the east–west link. Previously, when they were not playing politics, the project was supported by the Honourable Bill Shorten, MHR, who is the federal leader of the Australian Labor Party. It was supported by Cesar Melhem, MLC, Adam Somyurek, MLC, and Marsha Thomson, MP. These are people who were behind this project. Why will Daniel Andrews not support the east–west link?

This project, in addition to the many other projects that the Napthine government is progressing, will create thousands of jobs and thousands of opportunities for Victorians. We have a very defined route for the east–west tunnel. We know where it will start and where it will finish, and how it will progress traffic across Melbourne. We know that, but Labor is all over the place on the east–west link. When Labor was in government, its members said they supported the east–west link; now Daniel Andrews opposes it.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr ONDARCHIE — In addition to the people I have mentioned — and I support Mr Ramsay’s view that opposition members need to get on board — the Brumby government, of which Mr Andrews was a cabinet minister, as forgettable as that is, supported this project. Former Prime Minister and member for Lalor Julia Gillard supported it. Brendan O’Connor, the

federal shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and member for Gorton, supported it. Former Attorney-General and member for Gellibrand Nicola Roxon supported it. Wade Noonan, the member for Williamstown in the Assembly, supported it. Labor members do not know where they are on the east–west link, because they are trying to play politics as they claw their way, bit by bit, towards the next state election, trying to hang on to the seat of Melbourne.

The Greens claim they oppose this project, which does exactly what they have asked us to do — get the traffic off those inner city roads. They are putting politics over people.

Labor’s strategy is straight out of the John Brumby anti-CityLink playbook. When CityLink was first discussed, the Labor Party opposed it, saying it would scrap the tolls and rip up the contracts. It also talked about the east–west link. I know my colleague Mr Ramsay will remember this. Labor also talked about removing the tolls on the east–west link. The Bracks-Brumby-Lenders governments did exactly what they said they were not going to do.

I ask Daniel Andrews and the Australian Labor Party whether Sir Rod Eddington was wrong. If opposition members think the east–west link is no good, they should tell us that Sir Rod Eddington was wrong, because he recommended this project under the previous government. Here is the chance for Labor members to tell us it is wrong. On 15 August 2008 then Premier John Brumby said:

I think what is undeniable, in Rod Eddington’s report, is that the city does need a second east–west crossing ...

So, one way or another we’ve got to address this issue of a second east–west crossing ...

In May 2006 Premier Steve Bracks said:

The government will also take steps to fully explore and access options for the development of another east–west link.

Members opposite are playing funny games with the people of Victoria. They have supported this project in the past. It was topical, it was expedient, it was trendy and it was appropriate to build an east–west link. Today they are using those same adjectives to say they do not want to go ahead with this project. Where are they on this policy?

Cesar Melhem, who is now a member of the Legislative Council representing the people of the west and is a former state secretary of the Australian Workers Union for Victoria, is quoted talking about the

east–west link in the *Sunday Herald Sun* of 17 March 2013, which is not that many months ago; it was St Patrick’s Day this year. With the luck of the Irish, Cesar Melhem said the east–west link should be a priority for Dr Napthine. He said:

The key here is to decide on a solution and go with it, get it moving, and get the Victorian economy moving ...

We have steel, aluminium, asphalt and a whole range of other manufacturers who are crying out for the orders that a big project would produce.

Every order means jobs for Victorians.

Today Mr Melhem and his colleagues stand opposed to jobs for Victorians, and I find that incredible.

Let us take Mr Melhem back a little further. He is now a member purporting to represent the people of the west. If you want good representation for the people of the west, you should look no further than Mr Finn and Mr Elsbury, who stand up for their constituents and stand up for improvements for them. Mr Melhem, who now purports to represent the people of the west, said in the *Age* newspaper of 30 July 2012, when he was the state secretary of the Australian Workers Union:

It is just crazy not to go ahead with the [east–west] project ...

We are not going to live without roads and cars. We definitely need more investment in public transport infrastructure from both Labor and the coalition, but we can’t do without road investment.

I will take Mr Melhem even further back to July 2008, when as state secretary of the Australian Workers Union for Victoria, he made his submission to the east–west link needs assessment study. In that submission he said that the new road link recommended by the east–west link needs assessment study:

... will create a direct, connected east–west route across the city for around 150 000 vehicles each day. It will provide an additional high-capacity river crossing and an alternative to the M1. It will eliminate ‘choke points’ in the cross-city road network, improving travel reliability and reducing the incentive for ‘rat running’.

When he refers to rat running, he is talking about driving around inner city suburbs. In my first few months in this job, many people in those areas asked me to get the cars off their local roads. In his submission to the east–west link needs assessment study, Mr Melhem also said:

The link will also provide much improved connections for freight transport to Melbourne Airport and the port of Melbourne.

He went on to say:

The road tunnel has the opportunity of linking the growth in the west to the growth in the east. That will have an important multiplier effect in terms of options and choices for residents on both sides of the city. Greater access and connectivity brings more local jobs and investment.

Mr Melhem supported the east–west link in July 2008, on 30 July 2012 and on 17 March 2013. What happened? He stood up in this place with his colleagues and opposed the east–west link. He went through some sort of metamorphosis when he walked through the doors of the Parliament. He forgot about what he really believed in and decided he was just going to play politics in this place.

Ms Crozier — He knows it is good for jobs.

Mr ONDARCHIE — He does know it is good for jobs. He knows it is good for productivity, and he knows it is good for the health of the economy in this state, and now he opposes it. Given it was St Patrick’s Day, maybe there were too many Guinneses on board — who knows? But he was in favour then and he is against it now.

Adem Somyurek, a member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region, in his submission to the east–west link needs assessment in 2008, wrote — —

Mr Ramsay — Acting President, I wonder if you could ask Mr Melhem to remove some propaganda from his suit. I understand that under the standing orders it is not allowed.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! I have a clear recollection that the President has previously ruled on that. I cannot see what it says, but I ask Mr Melhem to remove the badge he is wearing.

Mr Melhem — If Mr Ramsay had asked me, I would have been more than happy to remove it. It is a — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! I just ask Mr Melhem to remove it. We do not need to discuss it. I thank the member very much indeed.

Mr ONDARCHIE — I could not see the badge Mr Melhem was wearing either, but it could say, ‘East–west link — I’m not really sure’. As his colleague Mr Somyurek wrote in 2008:

As the Eddington study is clearly focusing on a much-needed alternative to the Monash-West Gate corridor, including the possibility of a tunnel from the end of the Eastern Freeway ...

Mr Somyurek wrote that he wanted to address some comments to that issue in particular. He wrote:

It is a simple and indisputable fact that Melbourne's road network is not fully connected.

Mr Somyurek wrote about the queues and horrendous traffic around Fitzroy, Collingwood and Carlton. He wrote about the desire to get the traffic out of that area. It is a desire the local residents also have. They did not want that traffic, and they still do not want it. They do not want to walk around it, they do not want to breathe in its fumes and they do not want their kids affected by the amount of traffic in inner Melbourne. We have a solution. It is called east-west link. We know that deep down — deep, deep down in those places Labor Party members do not talk about — many of them support the east-west link. We know that, deep down, ALP members in those pubs in West Melbourne and in union headquarters support it. Today is their chance to put their hand on their heart and go, 'Yeah, you're right. We do support it'. But they will not, because consistent with Labor Party politics, this is politics over people.

The wonderful Minister for Roads and Minister for Public Transport in this state has been a marvellous advocate for the east-west link — as have most Victorians — but those on the other side of the chamber just do not get it. It is time for the Australian Labor Party to come clean. It is time for the Victorian Greens to come clean. It is time to come clean and say, 'You know what? We'll get behind this because it's a great project for Victoria. It's a game changer. It's going to help people in the west and in the east'.

Ms Crozier — And we have support from the federal government.

Mr ONDARCHIE — And we have support, as Ms Crozier rightly reminds the chamber, from the Abbott coalition government to make this happen. It is going to make travel quicker and more reliable. It is going to provide that crucial connection in Melbourne's road network. It is going to benefit drivers from all over Victoria. The average travel time saving for trips across the north of the CBD will be 20 minutes. On key arterial roads it will reduce traffic volumes by more than the reductions that occur in the school holiday periods. East-west link will see traffic on roads such as Bell Street, Coburg, which is soon to be in my electorate, fall by about 10 per cent.

Mr Finn has been very active in the areas of Pascoe Vale and Coburg in trying to reduce traffic. Here is the solution. This is the solution to the issues out there. Why will the ALP not get on board? We support this motion because it is all going to come out.

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — This is the third day we have debated this motion, and we have heard

speaker after speaker on the opposite side going on and on, trying to convince themselves that somehow this project is a good one. They have been trying to convince the community that this is a good project.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TEE — Going on and on! It is very clear that they are not listening. If those opposite were listening to the community, they would understand that this project is not what the community wants. What the community wants is public transport. What the community wants is a solution to congestion. What the community wants is a government that does not put all of its eggs into the one basket. If those opposite were listening instead of going on and on, trying to convince themselves, they would hear the community's concern about this dog of a project. They would hear the community's concern that this project is no good.

You cannot build a road to solve congestion. You need to get the balance right. You need to put your money into public transport and into roads.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TEE — Do not hock everything on this one project. Do not sell not just this community but your children and your children's children out on this project.

This project is going to cost \$8 billion, and it is going to put the next generation up to their necks in debt. That is what those opposite are doing; they are committing not just this generation but the next generation to debt. That means there will be no money for public transport, there will be no money for housing, there will be no money for schools and there will be no money for health, and that is the concern of the community out there.

It does not matter how many speakers those opposite line up and how many days they take; they are not going to convince even themselves that this project is a good idea. Those opposite should accept that they made a mistake, that they chased a handful of votes in the eastern suburbs at the behest of Tony Abbott, that it was a dog of a plan and that they need to rethink.

As everything else has that has come out about this project, these documents will —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TEE — You are going on about Sir Rod Eddington. What Sir Rod Eddington said is that every

dollar put into this project gets less than 50 cents back. That is what he said.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr TEE — No, he was not wrong. What he said was that for every dollar you put in you lose 50 cents.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr TEE — I tell you what: if you go to the pokies — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! A little bit of decorum in the house would go a very long way just at the minute.

Mr TEE — If you went to the pokies, you would get a better return than the return the community will get on this project, because every dollar put into the pokies gets 87 cents back, but every dollar put into the east–west link project will get back less than 50 cents. The east–west link project is a dog of a project. I welcome the government’s support of this motion because I think the more we find out about this project and the more informed the community is, the more everyone will understand that this government has made the wrong call and that the community will pay the price for some considerable time.

But it is not too late. The Labor Party has an alternative, and I urge members of the government to pick up that alternative and take a look at it, because our alternative gets the balance right. Our transport plan has the right mix of public transport and support for roads. Our plan does not put all our eggs into the one basket. It will make a difference to people’s lives by reducing congestion, which is what people out there are asking for. I welcome the support of those opposite for this motion, and I urge them to have the courage of their convictions and release these documents.

What I do not want to have — and what the community would be pretty disgusted by — is members of the government coming back here in February with some willy-nilly excuse for not releasing the documents, which is the form of members of this government. They can be all preachy here and now — ‘Yes, we will get the documents to you’ — but having put their hands on their hearts, come February they will have some lame excuse for not releasing these documents. I urge members of the government not to adopt that approach. I urge them to maintain the courage of their convictions. If they think the east–west link project is as good as they say it is, they should release the documents so we can have a frank and open debate. That is all that members of the opposition are asking

for. I thank government members for their support of this motion, and I urge them to deliver on that support.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

That this house —

- (1) notes that the November 2010 how-to-vote card of Ms Dee Ryall, MP, included the following election promises —
 - (a) provide 1600 new hospital beds;
 - (b) work to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020;
 - (c) provide two new rail stations at Southland and Grovedale;
 - (d) slash hospital waiting lists;
 - (e) provide more support for Victorian teachers; and
 - (f) provide a rail service linking Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo;
- (2) condemns the Napthine government for failing to deliver on its 2010 election commitments; and
- (3) calls on the government to fix the problems, as promised, and build the future.

Of course the last part refers to the catchcry of members of the then Baillieu opposition — that is, that a Baillieu government would ‘fix the problems’ and ‘build the future’. If that was their genuine goal, then it would be fair for all of Victoria to rate members of this government as having failed terribly.

Let me be clear: I understand that the how-to-vote card of the member for Mitcham in the Assembly is the same how-to-vote card used by Liberal candidates across the state for the 2010 election. The how-to-vote card I am referring to at the moment was mailed to all residents of Mitcham, Ferntree Gully, Kilsyth, Bulleen and every other electorate in the state. This particular version was mailed out in a two-page format. I must give credit to the Liberal Party, because when we open it we see that the first page says, ‘Your handy guide to the 2010 state election’. The first thing you think is, ‘Here’s a handy guide; someone has mailed me a handy guide to the 2010 state election’, but it is a how-to-vote card for the Liberal Party.

Hon. M. J. Guy interjected.

Mr LEANE — The how-to-vote card includes such promises as 1600 new hospital beds, Mr Guy. This

how-to-vote card, which you would have been handing out on election day — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! It would be very helpful to the Chair if Mr Leane would direct his comments through the Chair, and it would also discourage interjections.

Mr LEANE — I am delighted to direct my contribution through the Chair, Acting President, because the how-to-vote card says ‘work to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020’. This was a commitment on every Liberal Party how-to-vote card — ‘work to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020’. As we have found out since this government was elected on this promise, we have a pro-carbon government. We listen to contributions made by certain members of this chamber who proudly wear badges of honour proclaiming they are pro carbon. They do not want to reduce carbon. They think we should choof out more of the carbon is a good thing; it is not pollution; carbon feeds everything and carbon — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! It being midday, I regrettably must interrupt Mr Leane and move to questions without notice.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Adult Parole Board of Victoria restructure

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. In today’s *Age* the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court criticised the state government over its treatment of the Adult Parole Board of Victoria, saying that when questions were asked of individuals as to whether there was confidence in the adult parole board, the question was either ignored or else answered in the negative. Does the minister share the concerns of the chief justice?

Hon. E. J. O’DONOHUE (Minister for Corrections) — I welcome the question from Mr Tee. This is a very important matter, and I do not necessarily agree with the way Mr Tee has characterised the commentary from the chief justice. The chief justice has given a very wide-ranging interview to the *Age* and has made some comments about the parole system. Let me be very clear about this. The Premier, other members of the government and I have been very clear; there was a failure in the parole system, a system which we inherited. I note that in the Assembly *Hansard* Ms Hennessy, the member for Altona, and Mr Pakula,

the member for Lyndhurst, have also referred to system failures.

What we have done is get on with the task of improving the system. I commissioned former High Court judge Mr Callinan to provide a very comprehensive and thorough report on the parole system. This Parliament has passed legislation enshrining community safety as the fundamental consideration when it comes to parole. We have made breach of parole an offence. Importantly, we have provided additional resources to the Adult Parole Board of Victoria. The parole board has now been resourced to have four full-time members, as opposed to one under Labor. This coalition government has recruited and employed 150 additional community corrections officers.

We understand as a government and I understand as the minister that the parole board has a very difficult job. I appreciate the way that Justice Curtain, who became chair of the parole board shortly after I became the minister, has tackled the job of change. She has tackled the job of working with the government to deliver the reforms as recommended by former High Court judge, Mr Callinan.

This has been a very difficult time for Corrections Victoria and for the adult parole board. It has been a very difficult time for the entire Victorian community, because we know about the background to these changes, the tragic events and the heinous and terrible crimes that were committed. This coalition government is absolutely committed to delivering its reform agenda when it comes to the parole system and its law and order agenda more broadly. Again I acknowledge the very difficult circumstances for everyone involved, whether that be the parole board, corrections or the Victorian community. We have all been touched, the families of the victims have all been touched, by the circumstances that sit behind this. We are committed to delivering a reform in this area.

Supplementary question

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — The minister criticised my characterisation of the question, or at least of the article in the paper. I quote directly from the chief justice, who is reported as saying:

There were occasions when questions were asked of individuals whether there was confidence in the adult parole board, and the question was either ignored or else answered in the negative.

I want to give the minister the opportunity to unequivocally state his position. Does he have confidence in the adult parole board — yes or no?

Hon. G. K. Rich-Phillips — On a point of order, President, Mr Tee is effectively seeking an opinion from the minister as to his view of the adult parole board. I would put to you that it is not appropriate to seek an opinion from the minister as to his view of the adult parole board.

The PRESIDENT — Order! That is an interesting point of order. Obviously Mr Rich-Phillips is right to the extent that seeking an opinion from the minister during question time is not within our standing orders. A minister is expected to answer questions with respect to his or her knowledge of matters and, if you like, those answers are to be based on a factual position rather than some hypothetical position, which is where an opinion might well go. In the case of this particular question, however, I believe that it is in order for a member of the house to ask a minister whether or not the minister has confidence in an agency or individuals within the jurisdiction of their portfolio. In my view the question of confidence is not a question of opinion, and I think the question is in order.

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE (Minister for Corrections) — This government has provided additional resources to the adult parole board. It has provided the adult parole board with more full-time members. We have toughened the parole system, we have given clear, legislative guidance to the parole system and the parole board's transparency has been increased through the implementation of measures recommended by Mr Callinan. The answer is an unequivocal yes, I do have confidence in the adult parole board.

Prison capacity

Mr ELSBURY (Western Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Corrections. Can the minister update the house on the progress this government continues to make to increase capacity in Victoria's prison system?

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE (Minister for Corrections) — I thank Mr Elsbury for his question, and I know that Mr Elsbury and Mr Finn understand the benefits that the Ravenhall prison project will deliver to Melbourne's west with the ongoing jobs and economic activity it will create. Of course Mr Finn and Mr Elsbury also understand that the Labor Party was told on three separate occasions that it needed to build this prison — three separate times. Mr Lenders said no. We are getting on with the job of fixing the legacy the Labor Party left us.

Members of the Labor Party may scoff at the jobs that prison expansion may deliver; they may scoff at the concept of building infrastructure to support community safety initiatives. I know that Mr Elsbury does not scoff. He understands the important measures this government is taking to address the legacy it inherited from Labor. In addition to the prison we are committed to building, which the Labor Party should have built and would be opening about now if it had taken the advice it was given, I was very pleased to join Mr O'Brien last week at Ararat. If there were ever an example of the fact that the Labor Party cannot manage money and cannot manage projects, it is the Ararat prison project, a project that should have been completed late last year. It was a bungled and botched project that the Labor Party put together, and it fell over.

I would welcome an interjection from Mr Lenders; he has gone quiet while we been talking about the botched and bungled Ararat prison project. No doubt his fingerprints were all over those contracts.

This government has fixed that project. It is back on track, and we have up to 600 people on site each and every day delivering the 350 additional prison beds that will be operational once the project is completed. Those 350 prison beds should be open now and would have been open now if the previous government had been able to manage money or manage projects. This government is not only delivering additional capacity at Ararat and delivering on the Ravenhall project but it is delivering additional capacity across the system. We have delivered 740 new prison beds since coming to government and, including those projects I have mentioned plus others, there are 2500 additional beds in the pipeline.

This is not just about community safety; it is about economic activity and jobs.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE — I note the scoffing from Labor and from the Greens. They may think the jobs that are created — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The minister, without assistance!

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE — The opposition and the Greens may scoff at the 1100 additional ongoing jobs to be created as part of this investment. They may scoff at the 1700 construction jobs that will be created as part of this investment. This government understands

that these are real and tangible jobs. Often they are jobs in country Victoria and in communities that have faced some challenges due to the changing economic environment. These are real jobs, and as a coalition we are proud to be delivering this additional investment.

Adult Parole Board of Victoria restructure

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. I thank the minister for his last answer and his unequivocal confidence in the Adult Parole Board of Victoria. One of the issues that the Chief Justice of Victoria raises in an article in today’s paper is that the parole board relied upon advice from Corrections Victoria. My question is: does the minister have confidence in the advice provided by Corrections Victoria to the parole board?

Hon. E. J. O’DONOHUE (Minister for Corrections) — Since coming to office this government has facilitated the employment of 150 additional community corrections officers to supervise parolees in the context of the reforms that former High Court judge Mr Callinan has recommended. I do have confidence in Corrections Victoria. I note the changes this government has delivered as part of the Callinan recommendations in addition to the additional resources to Corrections Victoria and the 150 additional community corrections officers who are supervising parolees. We know the number of parolees has decreased because of the toughening of the parole system. We have more community corrections officers and fewer parolees, and what does that mean? There is better resourcing for the supervision of parolees and those on community correction orders.

That is coupled with the changes we have made to the parole system, including the facilitation of a full-time chair and appointing people such as a former deputy commissioner of police, Kieran Walshe, as a community member to the parole board. As I flagged with Mr Tee in response to one of his questions yesterday, I look forward to making more announcements about new members of the parole board in the very near future. In the context of the reforms that this government has made to the system, the decisions this government has made and the additional investments it has made in community safety, the answer is yes.

Supplementary question

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — The chief justice is obviously very concerned about the operations of the adult parole board and about the level of government support for the board. My supplementary question is: in

terms of those concerns in relation to government support, does the minister share any of the concerns with her?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I ask Mr Tee to repeat his question.

Mr TEE — The minister has stated that he has confidence in the parole board and the advice the board has received. The chief justice is concerned about the lack of support the government has given to the adult parole board, and my supplementary question to the minister is: does he share the chief justice’s concerns about the level of support received from the Victorian government?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I will allow the minister to answer, but this supplementary question skirts much closer to opinion than the previous questions. Mr Rich-Phillips’s earlier point of order is more relevant to this supplementary question. He clearly anticipated this supplementary question, because this one skirts very close to requesting an opinion from the minister rather than having the minister give to the house an assurance of confidence, as was the subject of the other questions. Bearing in mind that I am concerned about opinion on this one, I invite the minister to make some response to the supplementary question.

Hon. E. J. O’DONOHUE (Minister for Corrections) — Thank you for your guidance on the matter, President. All I can do is to reiterate what I have said to Mr Tee previously during question time. We have made the parole system in Victoria the toughest in Australia. We have given much clearer guidance to the operation of the parole board. We have increased the transparency of the parole board, and we have increased the resources available to the parole board. As a result of those changes that we have already implemented, as a result of the additional resources this government has provided and as a result of the clearer guidance about community expectations, we have improved the parole system. We have made significant changes to the parole system, and I believe that as a result of those changes the parole system has been significantly improved.

Ambulance officers enterprise bargaining

Mrs KRONBERG (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is directed to the Honourable David Davis, the Minister for Health. Will the minister inform the house of recent developments concerning the paramedics enterprise bargaining agreement, including developments on social media?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — The chamber will be well aware that there is an ongoing enterprise bargaining agreement process under way between Ambulance Victoria and the ambulance union. People will be aware that the ambulance union has prosecuted in the first instance a case for more than \$1 billion in additional funding, and that is obviously a very significant call by any ambulance union. The government and Ambulance Victoria have put an opportunity in front of the union. A couple of weeks ago a very significant pay offer was made to ambulance paramedics around the state of 6 per cent up-front, a \$1500 sign-on bonus and two further tranches of 3 per cent, with the opportunity to debate further matters, negotiate and ultimately arbitrate on those additional matters.

But the arbitration or any other process of negotiation is not standing in the way of the pay rises that paramedics would well be able to receive. I note that the doctors are just about to get their pay rise. Although the Fair Work Commission still has a few ticks to make and some process to go through, I have requested that the department seek that where possible health services pay for the increases for doctors before Christmas so that they will in effect get a significant tranche of additional funding before Christmas.

Of course that would have been available to the paramedics, and I would encourage them even now to work with Ambulance Victoria to reach a conclusion. I understand there will be a further process at Fair Work tomorrow, and I would encourage them in that process to negotiate in good faith. It is a conciliation process, but the government and Ambulance Victoria's offer to paramedics is on the table and is a fair offer.

Mr Drum interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — It still keeps all the conditions, as Mr Drum is outlining — a whole series of additional conditions.

I was concerned to read on some social media sites a focus on journalists who might write stories that the ambulance union might not like. In those cases a pattern is developing on social media and other sources of the ambulance union trying to intimidate or pressure journalists. I will read from some material of recent days. Sarah Walton said:

Matthew Johnston has replied to a fellow paramedic's email stating he will be at the rally tomorrow. We shall see.

What does he look like so we know who to direct our queries to?

This is all very interesting, and then later they start to publish photographs of journalists. There is a pattern here that we have observed around the state. Wherever anyone writes something that the paramedics union does not like, it starts to intimidate them. Bullying of people is not satisfactory. People need to be careful. People need to conduct themselves in a proper way.

Mr Jennings interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I have to say that the ALP has been in receipt of more than \$1 million over the last decade — \$1.1 million in the last 11 years.

Mr Jennings interjected.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Jennings is being too loud, too often. The minister should be mindful of not debating this response.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — Enterprise bargaining agreements need to be conducted with a level of dignity and without intimidation or threats. Unions cannot be seen to be singling out individuals either in the workplace or elsewhere, and those who may be reporting matters need to treat these things with fairness. The facts are that many of our paramedics would be on a very good wicket if they accepted the payments that are on offer from Ambulance Victoria.

TAFE Structural Adjustment Fund

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Mr Hall. I refer to the government's tenders for a financial viability assessor and a project feasibility assessor for the TAFE Structural Adjustment Fund, which have mysteriously disappeared from the government contracts website. Can the minister advise to whom these tenders for time-sensitive works have been assigned?

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I know that proper process has been observed. We have been particular in going through proper process for the awarding of those tenders. The exact person or company that has been awarded that tender slips my mind at the moment, but I will find out and get back to Mr Lenders with that information.

Supplementary question

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for advising the house that the tender has been issued to someone. That alleviates part of my concern. My supplementary question then goes to the minister's answer. Why has government procurement

policy not been followed — that those tenders stay on the web?

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — As Mr Lenders knows, this function is undertaken by the department and, as I have said, to my knowledge all proper procedure has been followed. He has asked a supplementary question relating again to the procedure. I will also provide him with an answer to that question as part of taking this question on notice.

Geelong training initiatives

Mr O'BRIEN (Western Victoria) — My question is to Mr Hall in his capacity as Minister for Higher Education and Skills, and I ask: can the minister advise the house of any recent initiatives by the Napthine-Ryan coalition government to improve job opportunities in Geelong?

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I thank Mr O'Brien for his question. It seems like Geelong has been almost second home to me over the last couple of years in that every other week I have been down the highway to visit the great town of Geelong, and I have enjoyed those visits. The last occasion that I visited was last Wednesday, exactly a week ago, when I was joined by Mr Ramsay and Mr O'Brien at a function that followed up on one of the Skilling the Bay initiatives. Members will know that I have spoken about the Skilling the Bay program in this house before. It was a \$1.8 million project that started in April 2011 following some industry redundancies in the Geelong area, and there have been a number of milestones throughout this project's career where we have seen some significant announcements and assistance provided to meet the needs of and improve employment opportunities for people in the Geelong area.

The function in Geelong last week was to release the *Skilling the Bay Priority Actions Report*. That priority actions report flowed from a jobs summit held earlier in the year, which was attended by me, the Premier and the Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade. As part of that priority actions report there were four specific initiatives, which were new commitments by this government to provide opportunities that young people and people who are currently seeking retraining could take advantage of. I was pleased to announce this \$4.6 million commitment by this government over a period of four years.

These initiatives cover four programs. The first of those was to expand the Geelong Tertiary Taster Program. Currently in Geelong the Newcomb Secondary College

and Gordon Institute of TAFE have a program whereby 120 year 9 students from Newcomb Secondary College have an opportunity to taste various trades one day a week over a 10-week period. The concept is to engage these students early in trades which may be of interest to them and ultimately lead to careers. As a result of this announcement, that particular program will be extended to four secondary colleges across the Geelong area.

The second of the initiatives we are supporting is the Future Industry Pathways program, where sectors like health, community services and advanced manufacturing have been identified as areas where effort will be focused to encourage training and education, because there are good employment opportunities in the Geelong region flowing from those industry sectors.

The other two initiatives are the extension of funding to existing programs — the Northern Futures partnership and the Whittington Works Alliance partnership — which respectively encourage people in the northern and eastern areas of Geelong, particularly the targeted group of the long-term unemployed or people at risk of unemployment, to engage in training that will improve their employment prospects.

I might add that we were joined on this occasion by the member for Lara in the Assembly, John Eren. That was pleasing because John has indicated to me that he was involved in setting up the Northern Futures partnership in the Geelong region. Credit where credit is due, I think it is a great initiative and we have been able to extend it with this program.

We have made a \$4.6 million commitment over the next four years to these four programs, which will improve the opportunities for people, both young and old, in Geelong to access training and ultimately employment in areas where there are skills needs and where there are employment vacancies. I was proud to make that announcement on behalf of the government last week.

Family and Community Development Committee child abuse inquiry

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development. I refer the minister to the *Betrayal of Trust* report tabled recently in Parliament, which I welcome. I take this opportunity to thank the Family and Community Development Committee for its groundbreaking report and I especially thank the victims and survivors who came forward. The

government has now had a month to reflect on that committee's recommendations. I refer the minister to recommendation 12.1 of that report, which recommends that the Victorian government review its contractual and funding arrangements with education and community service organisations that work with children and young people to ensure that they have a minimum standard for ensuring a child-safe environment. Will the minister commit to implementing this specific recommendation?

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development) — I point out to the member that it is only one month since that report was tabled, and there is a royal commission that is continuing to inquire into the issues surrounding children who were in care. The government has already made some announcements around the grooming of children. That is our first response and there will be many others to follow. The government will consider the report as a whole and table a response.

Supplementary question

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — I note that on 13 November the Premier said in the other house:

... I can advise the house that the government is not going to wait that long before acting on this report.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms MIKAKOS — The committee noted that under the national regulations that apply to long day care, family day care, kindergartens and outside-school-hours care services:

There is no requirement for early learning and child-care services to have a child abuse prevention framework in place.

In respect of the services subject to the Victorian Children's Services Act 1996 and regulations the report found that there was no:

... positive obligation for services to develop and maintain policies and procedures to prevent physical, emotional and sexual harm from staff and visitors.

I ask the minister: will she act expeditiously to rectify the deficiencies identified by the committee?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am not sure that the minister was able to hear all of that supplementary question because — —

Hon. W. A. Lovell — It's all right. I have heard enough.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am not sure I was able to hear it either, and I am not sure I heard enough. Can Ms Mikakos give me the source documents for the quotations?

Ms MIKAKOS — I refer the minister to volume 2, page 283 of the *Betrayal of Trust* report, which referred to the national regulations that apply to long day care, family day care, kindergartens and outside-school-hours care services. The committee found:

There is no requirement for early learning and child-care services to have a child abuse prevention framework in place.

I ask the minister whether she will be acting expeditiously to rectify these deficiencies.

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development) — It is extremely disappointing that an inquiry that had the support of all four parties in the Parliament and was done in a spirit of cooperation to achieve the best for our children is now being used as a political tool by Ms Mikakos. We will provide a considered, thoughtful, whole-of-government response to the recommendations of this report.

Ms Mikakos interjected.

Hon. W. A. LOVELL — As always happens when I am answering a question that this member has asked, she is having conversations around the chamber. She is not interested in the best outcomes for the children of Victoria. She is only interested in her own political games.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The minister does not need to make an ongoing commentary because everybody else is.

Building industry reform

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Planning, Matthew Guy, and I ask: what action has the government taken to wind back red tape in the building industry?

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — I thank Mr Drum for a very straightforward and sensible question about ensuring that Victoria has the best building industry in Australia. In fact we are winding back red tape to ensure that the building industry in this state is efficient, manageable, straightforward and has building regulations that are not cumbersome, are easy to understand and advantage our industry in Victoria as opposed to other building systems around Australia.

I inform the chamber that recently I signed off on what is called VC99. This is a change to the Victorian planning provisions to amend the laws in relation to building practices and will look at things such as reforming the heights on wall boundaries, laying waffle pods for new homes, raising ceiling heights without planning permits and allowing garages to be constructed under the same rooflines as homes.

This might seem technical to some, it might seem minor to others, but it is a very giant step forward — a great leap forward, if you like — for our building industry, which sees these reforms as long overdue reforms to put Victoria's building industry at the leading edge in Australia. They are reforms that many in the building industry have been asking for for more than 10 years. They are reforms that have been asked for over a long time. In fact when I saw the new chief executive officer of the Masters Builders Association of Victoria, Radley de Silva, about two months ago, he again reminded me that this was a key issue that the building industry was looking for reform in.

This government acted upon those requests very quickly. We believed it was important to show the building industry a sign that this government believes in reducing red tape and will act upon it. As I said yesterday in this chamber, there are governments that promise; there are governments that talk; and there are governments that review, examine, look in the mirror but never do anything. This government, particularly in planning, has got on with the job of ensuring that we act upon all those recommendations and all those avenues that will reform our planning and building sectors to make them the best in Australia. I was proud to sign off on VC99 to ensure that these reforms complement a number of other reforms in the planning portfolio.

The zone reform was promised, talked about, committed but never enacted by past governments, particularly during the decade of the Labor government. There was a decade of promises but no action. It took this government to enact zone reform, involving three clear residential zones to cut red tape. We also introduced VicSmart, with code-assessed planning to ensure that councils can have a codified model of planning to cut back one-sixth of the permits out of the entirety of the planning system. It was promised, committed to, discussed, examined and reviewed by plenty of governments in the past but enacted by the coalition government for the first time.

We have also introduced panel reform to put time limits on our panel system so that when a panel starts people know when it is going to end. Under the previous government panels were taking longer than the

gestation of a child. Today I say happy first birthday to my little boy, my youngest son. Under the previous government, panel reform took longer than his gestation. The gestation of young Alexander Guy is no longer going to be measured by the previous government's panel system, because we have placed limits on the panel system through reforms that were enacted by this government but promised by many others. This government is getting on with the job of reforming planning and cutting red tape once and for all.

Prison capacity

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections, Mr O'Donohue. It pertains to the plan announced by the government to house minimum security prisoners in shipping containers — which I note he did not mention in his answer to the Dorothy Dixer from Mr Elsbury about prison overcrowding — and plans by Corrections Victoria to operate work camps where rotating teams of minimum security prisoners will work on conservation and general maintenance projects in regional areas while living in the community for seven days in temporary accommodation, such as vacant community halls. My question to the minister is: is it just a coincidence that these two plans were announced in the same week or are they related, and does it indicate that the majority of the 11 per cent jump in prisoner numbers is occurring in minimum security prisons?

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE (Minister for Corrections) — I welcome Ms Pennicuik's question and the opportunity to talk about these matters. I have said in this house on many occasions — and I am happy to say it again today — that this government has a focus on prisoners doing work in the community. We think that is good for prisoners. That is why we continued the Landmate program so that prisoners from Beechworth Correctional Centre and Dhurringile Prison can go out and do work. The work camp concept is an extension of that. Prisoners have done such work before after floods, fires and other natural disasters.

We think the work camp concept — doing community work out in the community for the community — is a good one. It helps local communities through environmental work and the rebuilding of community buildings and other infrastructure. It benefits the local community and it is good for the prisoners, because they learn new skills and gain satisfaction from repaying their debt to the community in a real and tangible way. That is an initiative I am keen to see advance and keen to see continue.

Ms Pennicuik also raised the issue of alternative accommodation. Tonight in mine sites across the length and breadth of Australia thousands of miners — many of them Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union members — will go to sleep in temporary accommodation; indeed so will prisoners in New Zealand, South Australia and Western Australia. We wish to deploy this type of alternative accommodation to Dhurringile Prison initially — we have plans for up to 100 prisoners at Dhurringile — and then to other prisons, Beechworth Correctional Centre and Langi Kal Kal Prison in particular, next year. This is a responsible, reasonable way to deliver additional accommodation to the prison system, and I look forward to it progressing.

As Ms Pennicuik suggested in her question, these two matters are related because they are subject to discussions and negotiations with the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU). They have been raised by the commissioner for corrections in correspondence with the CPSU, and negotiations have been taking place with the union. I hope the CPSU and Corrections Victoria can come to a mutually agreeable position in relation to these matters, because they are important and sensible initiatives that will help prisoners — particularly with regard to work camps — and add additional capacity to the prison system.

We understand and acknowledge that there has been pressure on the system, not the least of which has been on police cells. Adding additional capacity at Dhurringile Prison with this new accommodation and putting prisoners out into the community to do community work will help the community and help the prisoners and also relieve some of the pressure on police cells. We know that the number of prisoners in police cells has been trending down in recent weeks, and that is a positive, because we have added additional capacity at Langi Kal Kal Prison in the last couple of weeks, with the new 44-bed unit, and we have added additional capacity at other locations. This additional capacity will take further pressure off police cells, so I hope the CPSU and Corrections Victoria can come to an agreement to make these things happen.

Supplementary question

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — The part of my question that the minister did not get to was about the percentage of the increase in prisoner numbers occurring in minimum security prisons, but he did indicate that somehow this plan has something to do with reducing the overcrowding of police cells. However, the minister has confirmed the essence of my question, so my supplementary question is: with regard to prisoners being housed in temporary accommodation

either on prison land or off site, does Corrections Victoria have minimum standards for temporary accommodation, and if so, can the minister provide me with a copy of those standards?

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE (Minister for Corrections) — As I said, this accommodation we are looking to deploy at Dhurringile Prison is the same sort of accommodation — or very similar to it — as that which currently exists in the New Zealand corrections system, the South Australian corrections system and the West Australian corrections system. It is similar to where thousands of miners at mine sites right across the Pilbara — across northern and western Australia — will go to sleep tonight. The accommodation is suitable. It has the required amenities and the required facilities.

In addition, Ms Pennicuik's supplementary to the substantive question raised a question about minimum security, and I have responded to that. I also should make the point, so there is no misunderstanding, that we are adding additional capacity to the medium security environment, as I referred to earlier, with 350 beds at Ararat prison. The new Ravenhall prison will be medium security. We are adding capacity across the security classifications, right across the network.

Olympia housing initiative

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Housing, the Honourable Wendy Lovell. Can the minister provide an update on the progress of the coalition government's Olympia initiative, which is improving housing outcomes in Heidelberg West, Heidelberg Heights and Bellfield in my electorate of Northern Metropolitan Region?

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Housing) — I thank the member for his question and his ongoing interest in our Olympia housing initiative, which as he says is providing great outcomes for public housing tenants and also for private home ownership across three suburbs in his electorate. The Olympia initiative is an exciting 10-year project that will see more than \$160 million reinvested into these suburbs. We are working to improve the standard of housing by replacing old, outdated homes that were originally built as temporary athlete housing for the 1956 Olympic Games. They have served this state well for the last 57 years but have now reached the end of their usable life span.

We are also better aligning public housing in the area to the needs of the local community and to the needs of our current tenant make-up. We are also making it easier for older tenants to age in their own place by

providing them with homes that are more conducive to their needs. We will have 30 new social housing properties built and tenanted by this Christmas. That is 30 families in brand-new homes who were once living in old, outdated homes. A further 200 homes are in the planning and construction stages, and we are on target to deliver 600 brand-new public housing properties and provide 300 affordable housing opportunities in the private market. The project will be delivered without any net loss of public housing.

There is strong support for this project from the local community; 378 public housing tenants have chosen to be part of the program. This is a great time for change in the Olympia housing area, one which has been described by one local councillor as the most exciting development to happen in the area since the Olympic Village opened 57 years ago. There is only one person who is opposed to this project, and that is Anthony Carbines, the member for Ivanhoe in the Assembly. I have to say that members of the community in his area have expressed to me their disappointment in Mr Carbines's attitude towards what is a fantastic initiative. He should get on board.

I am proud of our efforts to date, and I look forward to seeing this important project roll out the benefits that it will bring into the future. The Napthine government is getting on with the job of delivering for vulnerable Victorians. We are building new homes, a better community and a new future for the people in the Olympia housing area.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I have answers to the following questions on notice: 8595, 8969, 9478, 9523, 9784, 9835, 9841, 9843, 9848–51, 9856, 9908, 9909, 9914, 9917–28 and 9937.

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — I have a number of outstanding questions on notice that have still not been replied to, and I would like to go through them. Question on notice 8510 to the Minister for Planning for the Minister for Public Transport is from 27 March. I have checked with my office regarding this question. On 16 September we contacted the Minister for Public Transport, and on 25 November we contacted the Minister for Planning. Question on notice 9096 for the Minister for Housing is from 11 December 2012, and we contacted the minister's office on 16 September. Question on notice 9288 to the Minister for Planning for the Minister for Roads is from 21 February. We contacted the Minister for Roads on

16 September, and on 25 November we contacted the Minister for Planning. Question on notice 9829 for the Assistant Treasurer is from 22 August, and we contacted his office on 25 November. I have asked for responses to these questions on notice on a number of occasions, and three of those responses have been outstanding for a year.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I indicate to the member that on each occasion that she has raised questions about outstanding responses to questions on notice I have specifically followed up each and every one of those. I will do so again on these questions on notice and seek to get as much movement on them as I can.

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — This is now the third time I have raised that responses to particular questions on notice have been outstanding for one year. I keep on being reassured. I contact the Leader of the Government's office, and the Leader of the Government says he contacts the ministers. Yet I am still not able to receive answers to questions that have been outstanding for one year. I am looking for advice. Do I just come here week after week and continually ask for responses to the same questions on notice that the government does not seem able to supply answers to?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — As I indicated previously, I have followed up those questions on each occasion. I will do so again by seeking further responses from the relevant ministers.

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — I also have a number of outstanding questions on notice. I refer the Leader of the Government to outstanding question on notice 9532, which is directed to the minister in his role as Minister for Ageing. I previously wrote to the minister on 29 October and have raised this outstanding question on numerous occasions.

I also have a number of outstanding questions on notice addressed to the Minister for Housing, Wendy Lovell. They include questions 8476 to 8484, 8993, 9285, 9286, 9253, 9525, 9551 to 9558 inclusive and 9840. I wrote to the minister on 29 October. I have raised these outstanding questions on notice on numerous occasions. Like Ms Hartland, some of these go back a considerable period of time.

I also raise with the Leader of the Government an outstanding question on notice, 9533, which was directed to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith. I wrote to the minister on 29 October about this question and have also previously

raised it. I ask for a response in relation to all these matters.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I can indicate that there are some answers for the member coming from my department — —

Ms Mikakos — You always say that, but I never get them.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — That is actually not true. The member has received large tranches of answers. In terms of the other questions, including those for ministers in the other place, I will follow those up by seeking responses for the relevant members.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Debate resumed.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Before question time I was dissecting the commitments made on the Liberal Party's handy guide to the 2010 election, which was basically a how-to-vote card. I got up to point 1(b), which referred to a commitment on the how-to-vote card that read:

... work to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020 ...

That election commitment lasted a couple of weeks, if that.

Mr Lenders — It went up in hot air.

Mr LEANE — Yes. This commitment was on every Liberal Party how-to-vote card, including the ones that would have been handed out in Scoresby. Yet when asked by a journalist about this election commitment a couple of weeks after the election, the newly appointed Treasurer, Mr Wells, said, 'No, we didn't promise that'. The promise was on his own how-to-vote card, yet Mr Wells said, 'No, we didn't promise to do that'.

Since those opposite came into government they have not only backed off on that election commitment they have thumbed their noses at it. As we can see, when it comes to reducing carbon emissions, the clear spokesperson for the government in this house is Mr Finn. On behalf of the government Mr Finn has articulated that reducing carbon emissions is — I am trying to think of a word that is parliamentary — a load of rubbish. None of his colleagues counter Mr Finn when he makes these contributions about what he and his party think about reducing carbon emissions on a regular basis. Even though it is pretty much the same

speech, it is entertaining; I will give him that. Instead they actually applaud him and cheer him on. They 100 per cent cheer him on.

Many things can be said about Mr Finn, but one thing that no-one can deny is that he never leaves you wondering what he thinks. Mr Finn would have been handing out this how-to-vote card at whatever Assembly seat he volunteered at on the day — —

Mr Finn — Three or four. Busy day!

Mr LEANE — Four different electorates — that is fantastic. On the how-to-vote cards that Mr Finn handed out in four different electorates there is a commitment that if the coalition formed government, it would reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent. I am surprised Mr Finn did not instantaneously combust when he was handing out this how-to-vote card which contained a commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent. It is absolutely amazing. The government hoodwinked the electorate by saying, 'We're pretty green and we're prepared to reduce carbon by 20 per cent by 2020. Vote for us. Trust us'. As I said, that lasted all of two weeks.

In the handy guide to the 2010 state election distributed by the Liberal Party there is not only a dot point including a commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020, but there are also dot points under the heading 'Fix the problems. Build the future'. The first point reads 'More jobs'. That has not occurred. The second point is 'Safe streets'. Crime rates are up. The third point is 'Reliable, safe public transport'. Public transport has become less reliable. The fourth point is 'Quality country roads'. Country roads are terrible under this government due to the funding cuts to VicRoads. The sixth point is 'A planning system that works'. That is debatable. The seventh point is 'Better access to hospitals'. Access to hospitals has been horrendous under this government. The eighth point is 'More support for schools and teachers'. I do not think teachers felt very supported after the government reneged on the promise it made to them. The ninth is 'A healthy environment'. This is from a government that is pro-carbon.

Under the tenth and last point the how-to-vote card says, in bold, 'A government you can trust', underneath which there is signed picture of Mr Baillieu, the then Leader of the Opposition. Just a couple of years later Premier Baillieu found out that even he could not trust his own government.

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.03 p.m.

Mr LEANE — I am pleased to continue my comments on my motion regarding the 2010 Liberal how-to-vote card which made a lot of promises and commitments that have clearly not been delivered on. Given that it promised them the world but has been lucky to deliver Mud Island, this government has let down the people of Victoria.

Coalition members did not think they would actually win the 2010 election, so they were able to go out and make a lot of big promises. But they did win the election and form government, and they should be held to account for their election commitments, because people would have voted based on certain commitments outlined on this how-to-vote card, copies of which were distributed at least across Eastern Metropolitan Region. I hope that Mr Dalla-Riva will be queuing up to defend the how-to-vote cards. Mrs Kronberg, another member for Eastern Metropolitan Region, will also be queuing up, I am sure. We might get to hear about that back pocket who played for St Kilda for about 40 games in the 1970s, Mal Feces. We hear a lot about Mal Feces in Mrs Kronberg's speeches.

This is a particularly generic how-to-vote card for Ms Ryall, the member for Mitcham in the Assembly. There were some variations on some of the commitments. The member for Kilsyth in the Assembly made the commitment to eliminate graffiti, which he has obviously not done.

Mrs Peulich — He's still got another 12 months to go.

Mr LEANE — He has 12 months to go on that. He might have to start on the ambulances first, but he will get there. A how-to-vote card for the member Doncaster in the Assembly, who was the member for Doncaster in 2010, had the commitment that if a coalition government was elected, that government would build a rail line to Doncaster. Mr Tee remembers that well. That has not happened.

Overall, if big commitments and promises that attract votes are going to be made, those votes should be conditional upon the coalition delivering. The coalition has obviously not delivered. It has been very disappointing, and it will be judged at next year's election. Those opposite will not be able to put out how-to-vote cards with similar big promises, because the electorate will just laugh at them. They have boxed themselves into a corner. We will wait and see how they go next year.

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise in the chamber this afternoon to talk on the motion moved by Mr Leane. It is interesting to note that Mr Leane has failed to note paragraph 3 of his motion, which is that this house:

- (3) calls on the government to fix the problems, as promised, and build the future.

We went to the election with a commitment to fix the problems and build the future, because the previous government left us with an enormous number of problems. At the 2010 state election the people of Victoria saw fit to vote the then opposition coalition into power, because they believed a whole range of matters needed to be dealt with. It was not simply a list of four or five items, as Mr Leane is trying to level at us; there was a litany of issues across a whole range of areas that we could talk about.

If we look at the policies we took to the election, we can see that many were around law and order issues. We made a very clear commitment about increasing the number of protective services officers, but I do not see anything in the motion about that. We have delivered on that commitment and are continuing to deliver on it, as we are continuing to deliver on a whole range of other matters.

I do not propose to talk for long on this motion. Every Wednesday the opposition raises issues in the chamber, but the matters are very seldom finally dealt with. One only needs to look at the orders of the day remaining on the notice paper to see that many issues have been debated but nothing has been resolved. Listed on pages 16 and 17 of today's notice paper are motions that have been continually raised but that do not seem to have any theme or structure. I have said this about opposition business in previous weeks, that matters are frequently left in abeyance and are not debated any further.

In the motion we are debating Mr Leane is having a go at the hardworking member for Mitcham in the other place, purely for political purposes and without realising that the broader policy outline we took to the last election has been delivered, and is continuing to be delivered.

Mr Leane's motion includes some interesting elements. I will run through them briefly, because it is important to note that the government has been getting on with the job of working through a whole range of issues. In terms of the issue of the reduction of carbon emissions, the government holds the view expressed in the *Report on Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in*

Victoria, which was released in 2012. The report recognised that Victorian weather and climate can change due to a wide range of natural and human factors.

In March 2012 the government tabled its response to the independent review of the Victorian Climate Change Act 2010. The independent review found that there was no compelling case to maintain Victoria's 20 per cent emissions reduction target due to the establishment of a national 5 per cent emissions reduction target which has bipartisan support. Whilst the government recognises the symbolic importance of the target to some Victorians, the review found it would not drive any significant additional emissions abatement once a national scheme was in place. Moreover, duplicating the emissions efforts being led by the commonwealth would require Victorian taxpayers to spend an additional \$2.2 billion through to 2020. Hence the issue is better suited to a national framework than the policy suggestions made by the former government. The now opposition may wish to take that position to the state election late next year.

In terms of hospital beds, the government will continue to increase health funding. It has been increased by \$2 billion since the government came to office. We have spent a record \$14.3 billion on health. In the financial year 2013–14 the health budget increased by \$661 million or 4.8 per cent on 2012–13, and I have mentioned that many times during debates on other motions. In terms of our bed commitment, it is important to put on the record that the government met its commitment of delivering 100 beds across the Victorian public hospital system by the end of its first full financial year in government, which was 2011–12.

Mr Leane — Name them!

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA — I will get to Mr Leane's point, because it is an important one that he is making.

The *Australian Hospital Statistics 2011–12* report shows an average available bed increase of 184 beds from the 2009–10 baseline. In November 2011, during the commitment period, Victorian health services managed bed closures of up to 969 beds due then to the Australian Nursing Federation union industrial action. Of course this had an impact on the average beds available. We were on track to meet the 2012–13 commitment until a national issue arose, which was the commonwealth funding cuts made by the former federal government. It cut funding to health services by \$15.3 million per month.

I will give some examples of the impact. In November 2012 there were 106 additional beds in the system compared to the same month the year before, but by December 2012, once the cuts had started taking effect, there were 346 fewer beds in the system compared with the same month the year before. The average available bed count at the time of the commonwealth funding cuts between December 2012 and June 2013 was 224 fewer than over the same period the previous year — namely, December 2011 and June 2012. As well as beds being closed, the revised statement of priorities showed that the \$107 million commonwealth funding cut added 2370 Victorians to the elective surgery waiting list. We found that fewer Victorian patients were receiving surgery because of the significant cuts.

Mr Leane raised a point by way of interjection, and I will get to it. It is important to remember that there are no absolutes in relation to bed numbers. The number of beds goes up and down, day to day and hour to hour, depending on demands. The bed count does not take into account all bed types or reflect the amount of care being provided.

I say to Mr Leane that it is very clear: I have countered his argument, and I say that we are on track and we would have been on track had it not been for the significant funding cuts that have been made. It is erroneous to suggest that we were not going to deliver them, because we were. I have outlined and argued that we were not on track because of the commonwealth funding cuts, which have been discussed by the Minister for Health in this chamber many times. In responding to the first point in Mr Leane's motion, I say that we are on track, but we have had some issues that have affected us in that area.

In terms of building hospital capacity, we are putting more money into the system and we are focusing on assisting patients in elective surgery. We are getting on with the job. We are fixing the problems, including the problems in the health system, and we are building for the future. We are building capacity so that people in the Victorian community can get the hospital beds they need.

I will leave the matter of the new rail stations at Southland and Grovedale to Mrs Peulich, who will most likely cover it in her contribution, because it is more relevant to her electorate.

In regard to the issue of providing more support for Victorian teachers, I have to say that we have been very supportive of Victorian teachers. Mrs Peulich is a former teacher, and she will have something to say

about that. I know that my colleague Mrs Kronberg will also be touching on that area. We are getting on with the job. We are working towards fixing the problems, as promised, and we are building for the future.

To condemn the Napthine government for failing to deliver on its 2010 election commitments is mere political posturing by the member opposite. Mr Leane's rhetoric is part of a Labor preselection process that is coming up for him in the immediate future. This is not about the hard work Dee Ryall has been doing in her electorate of Mitcham. She has been working very hard in her electorate. Like me, Mr Leane represents the Eastern Metropolitan Region, of which Ms Ryall's electorate is a part, so he knows about the hard work that she has been doing. Mr Leane should stand up and talk about the great amount of work that Dee Ryall has been doing. The member for Forest Hill in the Assembly, Neil Angus, has also done fantastic work, along with the other members of the Legislative Assembly whose electorates lie within in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Mr Leane — Name them.

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA — Would you like me to name each and every one of them, Mr Leane? There is David Hodgett, the member for Kilsyth; Heidi Victoria, the member for Bayswater; and Kim Wells, the member for Scoresby. The list goes on. The region has been recognised as being committed to Liberal values, and it is committed to providing opportunities for aspirational individuals in our community. While I am speaking about the Eastern Metropolitan Region, I thank the newly elected federal member for Deakin, Michael Sukkar. He is doing a fantastic amount of work, and I hear he had a fantastic campaign manager! I say that with tongue in cheek. It was a very hard-fought campaign.

I know Mr Leane has the best of intentions with this motion, but the fact of the matter is that the government cannot support it. We think it is flawed. We are getting on with the job of fixing the problems. We are building for the future, and we are delivering what is right for the people of Victoria.

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — While my comments will be rather brief, I do not want them to take away from my admiration for Mr Leane, because he always does intellectual and funny things in this chamber. Unfortunately this motion bears an uncanny resemblance to several others we have debated in the last few weeks, and because my colleagues Mr Barber and Ms Pennicuik have made fantastic contributions to

those other motions, I am not going to make an elaborate contribution today.

However, I would not mind taking up one or two comments made by Mr Dalla-Riva about getting on with the job et cetera. I live in the western suburbs, and while Mr Finn and Mr Elsbury might think that a lot is being done there, I do not actually see a lot happening. We are still somewhat neglected, but that will be a motion for another day.

Mrs KRONBERG (Eastern Metropolitan) — I welcome the comments of Ms Hartland when she pointed out that Mr Leane is pursuing a theme. As the Labor opposition languishes in the doldrums, it is hard for it to come up with new ideas. It is possible that this Frankenstein model of a political party, which is dead body parts all stitched together, is somewhat distracted by the preselection processes it is going through at the moment. It is hard for Labor to come up with new material, let alone get any clear air or traction to promote any worthwhile ideas or provide any sort of contest, really, for the government.

Mr Leane, as the mover of the motion, is paying a lot of attention to the debate. As he steps out of the chamber we note that the Acting President is the only member of the Labor opposition present in the chamber. I place on the record the fact that the Labor opposition is somewhat distracted at the moment with its preselections and other matters. Mr Elasmarr, a member for Northern Metropolitan Region, who is sitting in the chair and serving so well as the Acting President —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order! I ask Mrs Kronberg to return to speaking about the motion.

Mrs KRONBERG — I will return to the motion, and I thank the Acting President for his direction. It is a pity there are no members of the Labor opposition here to support Mr Leane's motion, as he peeps around the shell structure that encompasses the chair that our Acting President is seated in. Once again the Labor opposition and the Greens are missing in action, literally, as we see the state of the chamber now, and metaphorically for all time, in terms of being ideologically bereft.

I think it is a great pity in some ways. We come back to the notion of how important it is to learn the lessons of history. Mr Leane has used a blunt instrument in extracting elements from the how-to-vote card of the very capable, hardworking and completely committed member for Mitcham in the other place, Ms Dee Ryall, someone I regard as a very good friend and admire as a

colleague for her hard work and commitment to the people of Mitcham. For Mr Leane to use what was set out in a 2010 election how-to-vote card is to use, as I said, a very blunt instrument.

I wonder why Mr Leane did that, when the Labor Party has such an appalling track record of misuse of how-to-vote cards, including the fraud attached to Labor's misuse of how-to-vote cards in the 1985 Nunawading by-election. Of course, the person who was the state secretary of the Labor Party, none other than Peter Batchelor, was involved in a scandal surrounding how-to-vote cards in the Nunawading by-election. What happened was that Mr Batchelor was thinking of adding a few elements to the how-to-vote card, which were interpreted as misleading the voting population. He was responsible for the distribution of how-to-vote cards on behalf of the Labor Party that claimed to relate to votes for nuclear disarmament. This was out in the public domain, and it was the finding of people who adjudicated on it that that led voters to conclude they were voting for the Nuclear Disarmament Party in 1985.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mrs KRONBERG — He was caught out on that in his capacity as the state secretary of the Labor Party. Interestingly enough his sins and transgressions, as those of a member of the Socialist Left faction, were clearly forgiven, as he went on to represent the good people of Thomastown from 1990 until his retirement in 2010. He also became the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Energy and Resources and the Minister for Community Development. I will just say OMG — oh my God! No wonder our transport system was in the state it was when the Baillieu government came to power. I have to say another acronym, QED, *quod erat demonstrandum* — that which was to be proven.

I say to Mr Leane, let us have a look at some facts. I know Mr Leane has to be seen to be gainfully occupied, but I do not know why he continues to expose himself and give us the opportunity to savage him and discredit all the points he makes, because none of them are correct. On the subject of the reduction of emissions by 20 per cent, the Victorian government recognises there are risks associated with the changing climate and the need to support national and global action. The Victorian government released a report on climate change science and greenhouse gas emissions in Victoria, which included a synthesis of scientific observations of changes to Victoria's climate and the impacts of those changes. The report recognises that the Victorian weather and climate can change due to a wide variety of natural and human factors.

I could go on at great length about Victoria's role in climate change policy, but I would rather look at the point of our reference to increasing the capacity in the health and hospital system in our state. Mr Leane will not like this — it is a bitter pill for Labor to swallow — but no matter which way you look at it, you see that the Victorian coalition government has increased health funding by \$2 billion since coming to office, and the health funding that is now emerging due to the skills and budgetary excellence of the coalition government has reached a record \$14.3 billion. So what is Mr Leane talking about? In the 2013–14 health budget there was an increase of \$661 million or 4.8 per cent relative to the budget allocation of 2012–13.

In terms of the government's commitment to deliver 100 beds across the Victorian hospital system by the end of its first full financial year in government, 2011–12, the average available bed increase of 184 beds is up from the baseline of 2009–10, when Labor was in power. I ask Mr Leane to not rely just on facts that predate the coalition government having assumed its responsibilities as an adult and responsible government in Victoria. I suggest to Mr Leane that perhaps next time he look at wider research and do wider reading and that he ask, if he needs to, some of his colleagues to help him synthesise the results of that wider research and reading endeavour so that he can come up with some up-to-date numbers.

We could talk about the fact that the Victorian government has put up more than \$4.5 billion worth of health infrastructure, and that the building of that health infrastructure is under way. Just last Saturday morning, as was reflected in some of the responses to questions made by the Minister for Health in this chamber yesterday, the minister was able to announce the removal of the cranes from the Box Hill Hospital project. That is quite an exciting stage and turning point in bringing a hospital online.

I commend the Minister for Health on steering the Box Hill Hospital project to this stage. The 2013–14 budget commits an extra \$629.4 million to capital works programs in hospitals. Is Mr Leane listening to these new numbers? No. I can see that he is holding his colleagues in thrall as he spins a yarn. I am sorry that his attention span is a short one.

The biggest rural and regional hospital project in Australia's history is the \$630 million Bendigo Hospital, which will provide 252 additional beds. I know this project gives great joy to the Minister for Housing and a member for Northern Victoria Region, Ms Lovell, who is in the chamber at this moment.

Next I refer to the Monash Children's hospital in Melbourne's rapidly growing south-east. I know this project provides great joy to my colleague Mrs Peulich. It is a project that was ignored by the previous Labor government for 11 years. Labor members avoided eye contact on the subject for 11 years. It takes a particular skill to avoid eye contact on making a commitment to extending paediatric services to the children of Victoria in a rapidly growing corridor. How do Labor members do that so consistently? We all heard their trumpeting and their words, but in their heart of hearts how did they look people in the eye? They showed such hypocrisy, and I remain dumbfounded by their boldness.

I turn to the scale of the Monash Children's hospital, which will have 230 beds when it is completed; with 74 additional beds. All of us who have been touched by cancer will recognise that the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre is a most moving project. I also refer to the redevelopment of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. I was a patient at that hospital in the last 12 months, so I know that there is room for improvement there. It is a very crowded space, much of which has aged over time. Of course no initiative was taken by the former Labor government to remedy that situation.

The redevelopment project at the Box Hill Hospital is a \$447.5 million project. The redevelopment of the Frankston Hospital is a \$76 million project, and there is funding of \$15 million to expand the intensive care and maternity services at the Sunshine Hospital, as well as \$29 million to expand the Northern Hospital and \$50.2 million for a new community hospital in the growth area of Waurin Ponds. Even though I live in Melbourne's east, my son lived in the Waurin Ponds area while he was studying at Deakin University's Waurin Ponds campus, so I have a full appreciation of the need for a hospital in that growth corridor. I have done some arithmetic for Mr Leane, so I know that the government's total program will add 1000 additional beds to the capacity of the system.

Mr Leane also spoke about new railway stations. Even though Southland is outside my electorate, I will touch on the fact that the coalition government has fully funded the construction of the Southland station in the 2013–14 budget. Members of my family live and shop in that area, so I understand the importance of that project and how the government is delivering on its promise.

There is funding of \$25.9 million for planning, land acquisition and construction of the Grovedale railway station. The rollout of funding for the planning started

in 2011 and support for the project continues in the current budget. Despite Mr Leane's short attention span, I will refer to some specifics of that project. The Grovedale railway station will include a new 180-metre single-face platform, 200 free commuter car parking spaces, a V/Line booking office, staff at the station from the first to the last train each day, along with landscaping, bicycle racks and taxi and bus bays. The people in and around the Grovedale area and its catchment have a lot to look forward to.

On the notion of providing a rail service linking Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo, the coalition government promised to commission a feasibility study and to return the V/Line passenger trains and cross-country route between Geelong, North Geelong, Meredith and Ballarat, the existing passenger rail line to Maryborough, and then — via a reopened line through Newstead to Castlemaine — the last bit of track, which would be shared with the Victorian Goldfields Railway, from Maldon Junction to Castlemaine, and then on to Bendigo. The Rail Revival study is now complete, and the government has met its commitment.

I think Mr Leane is a nice man, but I am worried about his attention span and about his preparedness to keep abreast of the new flow of information. I know he tries hard, and I will try hard not to patronise him, but there are lessons to be learnt from history. I recommend that before Mr Leane again starts talking about how-to-vote cards, members of the Labor Party collectively should look at how they blotted their copybook, particularly with the history of the 1985 how-to-vote card scandal. Clearly Labor members learnt no lessons, because Mr Batchelor went on to be a minister of the Crown, holding three different portfolios during his 20-year career in this Parliament. I will leave those statements dangling in the air so that the people of Victoria can draw their own conclusions on why members of the Labor opposition should learn the lessons of history and understand the dangers and the quicksand associated with how-to-vote cards and their content. Now they try to use that history as a blunt instrument to find some oblique but threadbare way with zero leverage to criticise a government that is delivering on its election promises. I rest my case and say that, although Mr Leane is a nice man, he needs to work harder.

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — I follow Mrs Kronberg in the debate on Mr Leane's motion that this house take note of the November 2010 how-to-vote card of Ms Dee Ryall, the member for Mitcham in the Assembly, including the election promises. Ms Ryall's how-to-vote card was virtually identical to those Liberal Party how-to-vote cards used in all 88 Assembly electoral districts. We have been asked to

take note of Ms Ryall's how-to-vote card, and I note that at the end of his motion Mr Leane suggests a couple of actions the house could take. One is that we call on the government to 'fix the problems', as promised, and 'build the future', and we condemn the government for failing to deliver on its 2010 election commitments.

I will not speak for long, because I will concentrate on a few parts of the how-to-vote card. I must admit that Ms Ryall's card was handed out, as I said, in an identical format to those used in other electorates, other than her section on how to vote for both houses in the electorates of Bentleigh, Burwood and Prahran — areas in which I have a great interest.

Firstly, I will rebut Mrs Kronberg contribution. She almost said, 'What have the Romans ever done for us?'. She talked about the promises that Team Baillieu made in 2010 for the Monash Children's hospital, and her implied tone was that Labor did nothing.

Let us just leave aside the fact that both parties made commitments — Labor's commitment was for a quicker build of the hospital. Let us put all of that aside and go to the history for one moment. I have heard Mrs Kronberg today in two debates tell me of her extensive knowledge of and history in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. I would invite Mrs Kronberg to reflect back to December 1985. For those who are wondering what I mean when I talk about December 1985, that was when former Premier John Cain opened the Monash Medical Centre in Clayton. For the first time since the exponential growth of Melbourne began under Henry Bolte, we had a Labor government that moved some resources out of the Royal Women's Hospital but more significantly moved resources out of Prince Henry's Hospital to where the population was in Clayton.

Just for Mrs Kronberg's edification and in response to her question, 'What have people ever done?', the most significant boost to medical services in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne since Melbourne grew to absorb market towns like Oakleigh, Clayton and various others was building the Monash Medical Centre. That was an election commitment of the Cain government in 1982, which was delivered in December 1985.

After this massive move to the new hospital more was needed, so another Labor government did all the planning work — which the Minister for Health, Mr Davis, goes on about endlessly as if it were his idea — and started the process. Then it was a contest of ideas, which the how-to-vote card touches on, as to who

was actually going to do this. Let us be charitable to Mrs Kronberg and say there was a contest of ideas. Let us not go and rewrite history and say, 'Labor neglected hospitals', because in December 1985 the Monash Medical Centre was built. There was no planning by the Hamer-Thompson governments. It was an election initiative of and a policy delivered by the Cain Labor government. Babies were born in December 1985 at the Monash Medical Centre. I had the great joy of being there when my first child, Rachael, was born at that hospital two weeks after it was opened by the Cain government, so let us just have a little bit of perspective on who has built hospitals in those areas.

Let us just dwell for a moment on the how-to-vote card and the 1600 new hospital beds. Mrs Kronberg, while addressing Mr Leane, was saying she had done the maths which would show that all of these beds were being built or delivered. They were Mrs Kronberg's maths calculations. I just hope she shows them to the Minister for Health. In this house — and I am picking a figure; I have not actually counted them, but I would say it is in the dozens by now — my colleague Mr Jennings has asked the minister on numerous occasions to name just one new hospital bed that has been opened under the Baillieu-Napthine government.

It is not for me to say nice things about Mr David Davis, but I imagine that if he could have identified even one, we would have heard it in this house. We would have seen it on YouTube and we would have seen it in full-page ads in the newspapers. I note that Mr Davis is in the chamber. I am just so pleased, because if a single hospital bed, one of the 1600 promised here, had been delivered, Mr Davis would have trumpeted it not just in question time but on YouTube, in notices of motion, in ads in the paper — in every possible area. But he did not. This is much like that great episode of *Yes Minister* where the minister — admittedly he was the minister of administrative services, not the minister for health — was talking of the great hospital with the machine that went 'Ping'. I recall the episode vividly. It is as though Mr David Davis had a role in a re-enactment of that episode. It was about the great hospital — the biggest ever. It had the best contract, it had the best design, it had a helipad that was hidden somewhere, but did it have a patient? No.

I would say to Mrs Kronberg that if she has done the maths that shows that hospital beds have been delivered in Victoria, even one of the 1600, she should have the courtesy to share that with the Minister for Health so he can tell this house, put it on YouTube and put full-page ads in the papers.

It is interesting that the Minister for Corrections will come into this house and talk about 1000, 10 000, 100 000 or whatever prison beds he has built. He has hulks in Port Phillip Bay, containers, dongas — you name it — for prisoners to go in, and you will hear about that, but do you hear —

Mr Finn — There's a thought!

Mr LENDERS — I will not take up Mr Finn's interjection on the grounds that it might become government policy, but there is a thought. We have the Minister for Corrections proudly boasting about all of these prison beds and we have the Minister for Health unable to name a single hospital bed. I would put it to the house that when these how-to-vote cards were put into the hands of hundreds of thousands of Victorians on that very wet day in November 2010 when they went into a polling booth, none of them would have been told by a single Liberal Party person handing out the cards, 'Guess what? We'll overdeliver on prison beds, but we won't deliver a single hospital bed and we won't have a minister who can point to a single hospital bed staffed by a single member of the Australian Medical Association, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, the ambulance union or whatever other union he wishes to demonise.

An honourable member — The HSU.

Mr LENDERS — The Health Services Union, which this minister came into this house and boasted about having an enterprise bargaining agreement with.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LENDERS — I note that the member refers to slush funds. Perhaps he is referring to ones that paid a few legal bills a year or so ago for a minister, but we will let that pass.

Paragraph (1)(a) of the motion reads, 'Provide 1600 new hospital beds'. I think any of the voters who were given this delightful picture of Mr Baillieu and all the little pictures and promises would have been surprised that three years into the four-year period the minister has not been able to name 1200 beds, he has not been able to name 12 beds — he has not been able in this chamber to name the location of a single new hospital bed. Mr Jennings would have given him that opportunity on dozens of occasions. He has not taken it.

I will not touch on the work to reduce carbon emissions, because my colleague Mr Leane did it far more eloquently than I could ever dream of doing. Let us just say that if it was an Olympic event in diving, former Premier Mr Baillieu and Premier Dr Napthine

would have got gold medals, and I will leave it at that for dodging and weaving.

I will now refer to item (c) of the motion, which refers to two new rail stations at Southland and Grovedale. I mean no disrespect to the rest of the state when I focus on the one in my electorate, which is Southland. When we talk about a Southland railway station, the closest we have seen to it is a tweet from the member for Bentleigh in the other place, Elizabeth Miller, showing her holding a Southland railway station sign in front of a passing train next to a rail reserve with lots of blackberries and weeds. That is the closest we have seen to the elusive Southland station. I recall that when as part of its Victorian transport plan the Labor Party announced the Southland station costing \$43 million — interestingly it was going to be a station with a roof, toilets, a bus interchange, platforms and some of the interesting little things that people often seem to associate with stations — we were lectured by the Liberal Party that we cannot manage money. Its members said, 'That's a lot of waste. We can do a station for \$13 million'. That is what we were told. Liberal Party members said, 'Imagine Labor spending \$43 million on a station. Labor can't manage money. It's a waste of money. We can do it for \$13 million'.

We still have a plan, and we have a picture of Ms Miller holding a Southland station sign with a train behind it —

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr LENDERS — No, it is a picture, Mr Leane. But have we seen a station?

Mr Finn — Did the train stop?

Mr LENDERS — The train did not stop, Mr Finn. Even Ms Miller could not get a train to stop at her fufphy Southland station. It is not just the Labor Party that is saying this. I will quote Adam Carey from the *Age*.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr LENDERS — Yes, I am very happy to quote the *Age*. It is an article from 11 December, which states:

A new railway station at Southland shopping centre is likely to have few of the amenities voters were promised at the last state election, because the coalition grossly underestimated the project's cost and is now looking to build it as cheaply as possible.

The planned station would be built without the promised waiting room, lifts, bike cage —

it is a pity Mr Ondarchie and Mr Guy, with their new lycra green bike images, are not here to hear this —

two-bay bus interchange and drop-off and pick-up zone, according to state government documents. It would also have no public toilets, and just 10 per cent of the platform area would have shelter, although it would have facilities for protective services officers.

State governments are supposed to be about service delivery. The Minister for Public Transport, Mr Mulder, knows his train system because he told the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee that we had had 300 years of public transport systems in Victoria. That is on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee record, and Mr O'Brien will enjoy that. I am sure that when Mr Batman signed the extortionist treaty with the Jika Jika elders about 160 years ago or whatever it was —

Mr Leane — It was on a train.

Mr LENDERS — Obviously they caught a train to sign the treaty. Let us just put on the record that that was not on a how-to-vote card. When Mr Mulder, former Premier Baillieu, the member for Bentleigh in the other place, Ms Miller, and the member for Mordialloc in the other place, Ms Wreford — all the gang — were promising the Southland station back in 2010, we thought we would get a station. We thought it would have those things, but it has not happened.

Moving on from that point, the Liberals cannot manage money, and I am sure that was not on the how-to-vote card handed to people as they walked into the polling booths. I take up Mrs Kronberg's comments about Labor not being able to manage money and the Liberals being able to. In my 14 years in the Parliament there have been two outstanding self-made businessmen in the Parliament who I have served with — Evan Thornley and Khalil Eideh. The last time I looked at those people, who know how to build a business, make money, employ people and grow jobs, they were and still are proud members of the Labor Party. Those opposite who think that the Labor side of politics does not understand how to manage money, grow jobs and run a business should perhaps have a quiet coffee with Mr Eideh in Strangers Corridor and learn a few things about how self-made people can manage money in a mixed economy. Perhaps they will then be a little more reticent about being so gung-ho in assuming that their side of politics is the only side that understands anything about that.

The motion also talks about slashing hospital waiting lists. I will not talk about that, because it is evident from the figures the minister has released from his man safe

that every hospital waiting list, by almost every measure, has blown out of control. Whatever the context is, Mr Finn will say that more money is being spent on the western suburbs than ever, Mr O'Brien will have been in Pembroke and Mrs Peulich will say it is being spent on education or whatever. Those opposite talk about more money, and it is not just them because all governments do it. But I advise that it does not work. A member might get up and say, 'We are spending more money than ever before on health', let us say. But when you have population growth of 1.7 per cent and inflation of 2.5 per cent, unless you are spending 4.2 per cent more than you did in the previous year you are actually contributing less. When you hear Mr Davis and other ministers in this place, as well as middle and backbenchers, parroting the lines from the government media unit that more is being spent, unless they can show that the increase is more than 4.2 per cent, in real terms it is actually a cut.

I will move on to item (e) of the motion, which relates to providing more support for Victorian teachers. I am sure that when the how-to-vote cards in Ms Ryall's electorate were being given to innocent and unsuspecting voters they were not told that the great TAFE institution just down the road in Lilydale was going to be significantly defunded and then flogged off. I am sure that when the how-to-vote cards were being handed out to people in Bentleigh they were not told that Holmesglen TAFE was to be downsized. I am sure that when they were handed out in Prahran people were not told that the government was going to flog off the campus and then, under pressure, sell it to another TAFE. I am sure that when they were handed out people were not told that the Victorian certificate of applied learning (VCAL) was going to have its coordinators cut from it in Bayswater, Bentleigh, Prahran and Burwood, where skills are often matched to jobs. I am sure none of that was said.

But the most bleeding obvious, because some of those were things unsaid, was the claim that a coalition government would provide more support for Victorian teachers. I am sure no teacher would have taken the words of the opposition leader, Mr Baillieu, and the shadow Minister for Education, Mr Hall, when they said they would make Victorian teachers the best paid in Australia —

Mr Leane — Not the worst paid.

Mr LENDERS — Not the worst paid. There were unanswered questions about the slashing of VCAL, the slashing of TAFE and the slashing of reading recovery, but it was said in this place, in the other place and at the Australian Education Union state council. It was said in

television debates. It was repeated again and again: 'We will make our teachers the best paid' — not the worst paid — 'teachers in Australia'. Here we suddenly have an enterprise bargaining agreement after two bloody years of industrial strife during which teachers were demonised and the Premier's cousin made an obscene gesture at teachers. We had this endless strife, and it was not that the teachers union was greedy or that teachers were greedy, it was just teachers saying, 'You' — that is, the Liberal-Nationals coalition — 'made an unsolicited promise to us that we want you to keep'. They were asking to be the best paid teachers. From memory the Australian Education Union and Victorian Independent Education Union were asking to be \$1 better paid than teachers in Western Australia. They just asked the government to honour its election commitment, and it did not. This goes back to why the government should be condemned.

I will move on to the provision of rail service links to Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. I know my colleague Ms Pulford wishes to speak, so I will not detract any more from her contribution than to say that this how-to-vote card was being handed out — —

Ms Pulford — This sham how-to-vote card.

Mr LENDERS — This sham how-to-vote card was being handed out right around Monash University in Clayton. I have said before in this house, and at the risk of Mr Leane not being attentive following Mrs Kronberg's earlier admonishments, I will say again that on 30 September 1958 Henry Bolte first promised a railway station at Monash University to the Victorian people. Mr Viney is not here and I might stand corrected, but I think that was the first of seven promises made by the Liberal Party to build that railway station at Monash University. While I potentially digress, because this is about Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong, I simply refer to Monash University because I do not have a great deal of faith in promises on these how-to-vote cards given that as far back as 30 September 1958 Henry Bolte promised a railway station there.

In conclusion, we have had these promises and Mr Leane disappointingly only put a few of them on the notice paper. There were a lot more about which I could have spoken in here.

Mr Leane — No Dorothy Dixers.

Mr LENDERS — There were to be no Dorothy Dixers — Mr Leane is right — but I do not think that was on the how-to-vote card. That promise was made in the leaders debate, when Mr Baillieu earnestly

looked at Ms Cafagna and said, 'Under a government I lead, Josephine, there will be no Dorothy Dixers'. Anyway, that is not on the how-to-vote card.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr LENDERS — Senator Finn is almost inciting me to go to item (b), which is about reducing carbon emissions, but I will not. I will close then on a contemporary issue, which was not on the how-to-vote card but is covered by the motion, which says:

- (3) calls on the government to fix the problems, as promised, and build the future.

Mrs Kronberg also touched on this. A government obviously deals with what is in front of it, but there is another aspect of government — you deal with circumstances that arise. Today we have seen Holden's tragic announcement that it will abandon us. We have seen that announcement made today, and we also saw the announcement made earlier this year by Ford. If a party is committed to fixing problems and building the future, it also has to be prepared to deal with the problems and not just operate in a time warp and say that it did not make promises on those issues. This is a criticism of Mr Wells, the former Treasurer, more than of Mr O'Brien, the current Treasurer. I have not heard Mr O'Brien say this, so I will not criticise him on it. Mr Wells's line to every stakeholder was always — I will paraphrase him here, and probably uncharitably — 'Unless we said something about it before the election, it didn't happen'. The reality is that things happen that are no-one's fault and no-one has control over them, but they happen. The obligation of government is to rise to the occasion and try to address them.

The last point I will make in this debate is that, difficult though it is, it is extremely disappointing that we have seen very little done. I will not say nothing. On the fringes, in some of the areas of the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Mr Hall, and in other areas the government has tried to do things. But there is the basic principle: is the government going to be a partner in addressing the state and federal issues that happen when an industry of this size is under stress? What can we do to keep those jobs? Those jobs are not just the ones of the people working on an assembly line and not just the ones of the people working on the component parts that support the assembly line.

We heard Mr David Davis go into a frenzy over an issue which, in the scheme of what General Motors and Ford have announced, was minor — that is, the leasing arrangements for vehicles and their effect on the car industry. That was a reality. I am not pretending that

was not a reality for the industry, but we saw the government politicise it and say it was a massive issue that was the cause of every known woe in the inner solar system. But it was an acknowledgement that this is an industry that involves jobs. As I said, these are not just jobs on the assembly line, in the manufacture of component parts or in the sales rooms, and not just in the not-for-profit sector that has cars. They are also jobs in the entire research, development and innovation areas of our whole manufacturing sector. These jobs are all tied together — let alone the strategic issues.

In closing, I would hope that a government that said it was elected to fix problems and build the future would be more open to being a partner in fixing a problem. That is not a call for the government to endlessly subsidise. It is not a call for the government to do those things, but it is a call for it to be slightly more interested — I should say considerably more interested — than it is. It is a call for the government to treat this as an issue of extreme urgency.

The health minister has come into this house and banged on for years on end seeking to blame others for the health system's inadequacies. We are talking about the health system — it is on the agenda. If the government goes to the effort of trying to demonise trade unions and blame the federal government and all sorts of people, then that is the government's prerogative if it does not want to govern — that is, if its agenda is to get elected, to blame others and have a good time. But if the government's objective, as it said on the how-to-vote cards, is to fix the problems and build a future, it needs to roll up its sleeves, it needs to make it an absolute priority to try to keep the important parts of this industry onshore, and it needs to try to be bipartisan. Far be it from me to suggest that Denis Napthine imitate former Prime Minister Bob Hawke, but let us get everybody in the one room at the one time with the one interest — that is, to see if there is a way forward to mitigate this if we cannot turn it around.

On the how-to-vote card, to quote Donald Rumsfeld, on the 'known knowns' it is a big fail; but on the 'unknowns', you cannot hold a government to account at an election for the things it has not been able to foresee — that would be ridiculous — but you can hold it to account for how it manages those unforeseens.

If the role of state government is what the Minister for Health and increasingly the Premier seems to think it is — the Premier, who has been a member for 25 years, found a pothole in a road in his electorate, told Neil Mitchell that it is the worst road in the state, called on former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to fix it and then crouched next to a giant mushroom in a photo shoot for

the Warrnambool *Standard* — that is, providing commentary, then respectfully and in all seriousness I suggest to those opposite that they pack their bags and make way for those who will try to make it work. Those commentators on the government's frontbench should make way for those within the government who at least see it as a state responsibility and try to make it work. There are some good people opposite who will try to do that, but tragically there are far too many commentators.

I urge the house to note the motion and condemn the government, and I desperately call on it to fix the problems and build the future.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I am delighted to rise to my feet to answer Mr Lenders's call on government members to fix the problems and build the future. I welcome the opportunity to recite at some length some of the wonderful things the government has delivered to the south-east as well as to the rest of Victoria. I thank Mr Leane for yet again doing what Labor does in opposition business — that is, providing Dorothy Dixier opportunities to government members to rebut the myths, fallacies and ridiculous campaigns that Labor has been trying to rally around pinch issues, which are often misrepresentations of the truth, and giving us the opportunity to set the record straight.

Firstly, the how-to-vote card that is lionised in this motion saw the election of Ms Dee Ryall as the member for Mitcham in the Assembly and the defeat of the member at the time, one Tony Robinson, amongst others. Tony Robinson was responsible, as then Minister for Gaming, along with the then Treasurer, who was the previous speaker, for the botched auction of electronic gaming machine licences, which cost \$3 billion in anticipated revenue and which could have helped this government fix even more of the mounting problems from Labor's 11 years in government and also build a much brighter and more prosperous future.

It was also interesting to listen to Mr Lenders's contribution to the debate on this motion, although his speech sounded disorganised and as if he was doing it on the hop. We know he is on the way out. He alluded to two people with strong financial and business backgrounds. For a moment I thought he was going to mention former Treasurer John Brumby and himself, as a former Treasurer, the two people who presided over pretty much all of the 11 years of Labor government, but he did not. He mentioned a former member of this place, Evan Thornley, who Labor was happy to see out of this place, and Mr Khalil Eideh. Mr Eideh is a nice man, but if he is so skilled — and I believe he probably

is — Labor should have taken the opportunity of promoting him to the front bench. Clearly Labor does not value the skills that those two individuals are claimed to have.

One of the dot points in the motion — and I will come back to this a little later — is that we have done nothing about carbon emissions. Perhaps not having this debate might have contributed substantially, because I have never heard so much hot air from the Labor side of politics as I have with these Dorothy Dixier motions, which we relish.

I remind Mr Lenders and other Labor members of the three key reasons for the Liberal Party picking up a clutch of seats in bayside suburbs, predominantly in South Eastern Metropolitan Region: failure to invest in infrastructure, deteriorating services and — the big one — waste and mismanagement. The claim that somehow Labor was a better money manager when it presided over such absolutely irresponsible, mammoth and reckless waste and mismanagement of state resources, the state budget and state finances is astonishing. Every dollar wasted is a dollar not spent on better infrastructure and services for the Victorian community. If Mr Lenders and his Labor colleagues had not wasted so much money and botched so many projects, we would almost have been able to provide gold-plated toilet seats to every Victorian household — I am speaking metaphorically. That is the biggest crime that Labor has committed.

One of the strong things Victorians can do to protect Victorian business and grow jobs is to vote Labor out. They have done that in Victoria. People are pretty much doing that around every other state in Australia and have recently voted in Tony Abbott and his federal parliamentary colleagues. That is the power of the ballot, the power of the vote — to shape future public policy. It is the most powerful thing that Victorians and Australians can exercise in order to protect business, jobs and the economy of Victoria and Australia, and they have done so.

For fear that I might run out of time, I turn to citing some examples of the things that we have done in the south-east to address the four areas of appalling performance under the former government. Basically those areas can be classified into the failure to invest in infrastructure or our physical environment, the failure to invest in building social capital, the failure to deliver on accountability and transparency of government operations and the performance of various portfolios and the failure to manage our economy and our state finances.

As a new government three years into its first term, we have had the opportunity of reversing that trend. Victorians are not silly enough to expect that we could erase 11 years of mismanagement in the best of economic times or that we could turn that around in a single term when so much money was wasted. We are laying the foundations, and the foundations require fixing the mess and then building the future in order to make up for the squandered opportunities in the good times, which were presided over by Labor and substantially presided over by the preceding speaker, Mr Lenders.

Mr Lenders has been an influential figure in Labor politics, first of all as state secretary of the Victorian Labor Party and subsequently as a key player in shaping its economic policy here in Victoria. No doubt his long hand will continue to strangle real democracy in the Labor Party by involving the faceless men in the preselection decision-making process, denying grassroots Labor Party members the opportunity of having their say as to who should be supported into Parliament. I hear those complaints all the time.

Mr Finn — Who is on the national executive? I have no idea.

Mrs PEULICH — I have not got the list, but if Mr Finn has a list, I will happily look into it. They are faceless. In the south-east some coalition infrastructure investment highlights include fully funding the strategically important grade separation at Springvale Road, Springvale, which is important to people living in Carrum, Mordialloc, Dandenong and the south-east. This grade separation, amongst a number of other grade separations, is currently under way, and we are delighted it is proceeding. Who would have believed Labor's latest Victorian transport plan, yet another poorly funded transport plan? It said that if elected it will do something like 50 grade separations. Was it 50?

Mr Finn — Yes, 50.

Mrs PEULICH — Fifty-something grade separations, including grade separations in my area, such as the one at Edithvale. If Labor members knew the local geography and territory, they would understand that that grade separation is going to be very difficult because of the water table. Setting aside only \$130 million for something that has been costed at around \$180 million yet again shows Labor's weakness in costing projects. No wonder Labor is so typically identified with these project cost blow-outs.

We waited for 11 years to get a commitment on the construction of the Kingston leg of the Dingley bypass.

Labor opposed it. We supported its construction all the way up to 1999. I think under its Socialist Left minister Peter Batchelor, Labor opposed the construction of the Dingley bypass. What that meant was that local residents, such as those living in White Street in the electorate of Mordialloc, amongst others, suffered when their streets became choked with local, industrial and business traffic. It makes sense to connect the arterial flows to improve traffic flow not only to save time and money and support businesses but also to protect our environment. There is nothing more damaging to the environment than traffic congestion. Transport generates something like 15 per cent of the pollution in our environment.

When it was in opposition, this government campaigned on the construction of the Kingston leg of the Dingley bypass, as did a former member for Mordialloc in the Assembly, Geoff Leigh, Murray Thompson, the member for Sandringham in the Assembly, other current sitting members and me. It is wonderful that it has been fully funded, but the Labor government and the former Labor-dominated Kingston City Council also opposed it. That position was reversed in 2008, following the injection of some new blood on that council.

The coalition government has had to duplicate a number of roads in the growth area of South Eastern Metropolitan Region, where we have city volumes of traffic carried on essentially country roads. We recently also allocated funding of \$38 million for duplication of Hallam Road, from Pound to Ormond roads, and for duplication of Clyde Road from Hyde to Kangan streets, and we allocated \$40 million to duplicate the Narre Warren-Cranbourne Road between Pound and Thompson roads. In addition, significant road funding includes a \$102 million boost for metropolitan road safety.

When Labor was in government what did local members Jude Perera, Judith Graley and Luke Donnellan, the members for Cranbourne, Narre Warren South and Narre Warren North in the Assembly — who represent the city of Casey but do not live there — say about these issues? Absolutely nothing. They sat mutely on their derrières in Parliament, enjoying the benefits of office but not being a voice for their communities. In opposition they have now decided that perhaps they had better rediscover these issues, and they have found their voices, but they squandered 11 years when they were in government and failed to deliver on many of these things that were so important to the south-east.

Mr Lenders said that we failed to deliver on hospital beds but that we take pride in delivering more prison beds. Mr Lenders would probably not be surprised to learn that improved community safety was a very deliberate coalition policy. It was something that was broadly applauded by the community. One of our very successful initiatives criticised by Labor and criticised by the current member for Cranbourne — and I do not believe it will stay that way for long — is the now overwhelmingly supported protective services officer program. It is a wonderful program, which has been well received by the community and well supported by the police because it has improved commuter safety. Yes, the program has elevated the crime rates, and do members know why? We are apprehending offenders and freeing up police to do their job, And guess what? Community sentiment and community attitudes towards law and order and community safety are more positive than ever over the last 15 years. The community recognises that the coalition has been very strong on the community safety agenda.

Further to that, we have set aside \$100 million for the upgrade of and maintenance work on the Frankston rail line to allow the newest trains to run on it — it is one of our busiest — as well as for the provision of additional car parking at key railway stations right around the south-east, including at Merinda Park and Narre Warren, amongst others. This government is not a one-trick pony. Whilst we absolutely believe in the wisdom of the east-west link, as ultimately Labor will as well, and in the commitments we have made, we are also continuing to deliver on improved public transport.

We are strengthening our commitment to community safety with funding for works at suburban police stations, including \$750 000 to upgrade facilities at Narre Warren. We have recruited an additional 1700 police officers and placed protective services officers at railway stations as well as strengthened laws to protect our community.

I will come back to the provisions specified in the motion before us. We have presided over an expanded hospital system. It is not just about beds; beds have not been counted since the establishment of health networks, so I am not exactly sure what Mr Lenders and Mr Leane are on about there. We measure the number of surgeries undertaken and the number of patients who are put through the hospital system. That is what we measure, not the number of beds. That has not been the case since 1996, when I spoke on the establishment of health networks; it has been a mighty long time since we measured numbers by beds.

However, what we have done is expand the system, including funding of the new Monash Children's hospital. Those opposite might pillory that decision, but we are delivering on it. We have put \$38 million towards the expansion of the Frankston Hospital and created additional beds for mental health patients to service the heart of the south-east, the Greater Dandenong and Casey areas, which were neglected by Labor. Then there is funding for new services, such as \$765 000 for a new Lynbrook integrated community centre. We are rolling out a co-location model of services and family service hubs, which the Kennett government advocated in the 1990s; we have had to wait a very long time to resume that rollout.

In addition to this, there has been mammoth funding for community renewal across eight sites in Victoria. It is true that this project was started by Labor, but it has been strengthened and delivered on by this government. I would especially like to mention Hampton Park, Chelsea and Frankston North.

Then there is the injection of resources into education, notwithstanding the criticisms of Labor and the Australian Education Union. There has been record investment in early childhood education and a record expansion of kindergarten facilities. The reason we had to do that was that Labor failed to negotiate additional funding to accompany the then federal Labor government's policy of universal access to 15 hours of kindergarten. What the previous state Labor government failed to figure out was that it would need to fund a 30 per cent increase in facilities and staff and that that would cost money. It failed to deliver on any of this, so the coalition government had to embark on a massive injection of funds to expand kindergarten facilities in order to honour the federal agreement. Labor just rolled over to its federal colleagues on this and other things. What this government does is negotiate deals that deliver. As I said, this has touched every community.

Millions of dollars have been allocated for school upgrades right around Victoria. We did not know how much maintenance there was to do until we undertook an audit. When the Kennett government left office, there was a zero balance on school maintenance. That figure has now crept up to \$420 million. That does not even cover the need for capital works or for new schools in growth areas. Labor did not know about this need, because it never bothered to do the audits, and the reason it did not bother to do the audits is that it figured that, if it did not know about the issue, it would not be held accountable for it.

The fact is the coalition government believes in being accountable and transparent across every portfolio, whether it be by undertaking an audit in education or by introducing key performance indicators for the \$8 billion local government sector. That legislation is now before the lower house, as it should be; it is a very important sector. There ought to be no wasting of money; the local government sector ought to be accountable for how it spends money across the system. This government stands by its words, The previous government was all words and no action.

In terms of the injection of funds into education, we have purchased land for new schools, including Derinya, Cranbourne South and Cranbourne West primary schools, and we are better resourcing students with disabilities. In particular I am very proud to see — and I am sure Mr Finn will also speak about this — the new special schools that are being set up, including one at Officer.

Despite much criticism and an attempt to perpetuate a fallacy in relation to TAFE funding, we have increased the allocation of funding to vocational education and training courses. We have courageously and deliberately increased the subsidies for publicly funded courses that are in national skills shortage areas and reduced the subsidies for those courses that do not translate, lead or articulate into jobs. That is a responsible and necessary thing to do, not only for educational outcomes but also to support our young people, or whoever is undertaking the course, to gain employment. Ultimately that is what it is about. To not do this would be to continue the irresponsible governance and management of the Labor government. I commend the Minister for Higher Education and Skills for having the courage to make that change. There will always be some issues that need to be addressed and ironed out, but the reform the minister is rolling out is long overdue, having long been neglected by Labor.

I could speak about many other initiatives across my region, but I will now briefly address some of the provisions of the motion. I have addressed the first point, which notes the how-to-vote card of Dee Ryall, the member for Mitcham in the other place, and commended her on her win. Whilst Tony Robinson may have been an inoffensive fellow, the loss of \$3 billion whilst he was Minister for Gaming will long stand as a black mark against his name.

I have spoken about delivering on election commitments and the government being focused on fixing the problems and building the future. As I said, 11 years of Labor neglect and mismanagement cannot

be turned around in 3 years. We coalition members are not magicians — we are politicians — but we are doing a very good job of trying to address some of these problems.

Specifically I will make some comments on our commitment to work to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020. Mr Leane would know —

Ms Pulford — That was just an aspiration.

Mrs PEULICH — No. The Climate Change Act 2010 was enacted by the previous government at a time when there was no national framework for emission reductions.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs PEULICH — Absolutely; there was no national framework. In March 2012 the government tabled its response to the independent review of the Climate Change Act 2010. The independent review found that there was no compelling case to maintain Victoria's 20 per cent emissions reduction target due to the establishment of a national 5 per cent emissions reduction target, which had bipartisan support. Labor continues to pursue policy positions that are indefensible and unsustainable. That is why when it is in government it invariably comes a cropper. It just does not get it. When problems arrive, you cannot sit on them; you have to act. You have to adjust and be agile; otherwise you cannot be an effective government.

In its 2009 Victorian climate change green paper the previous government stated that it:

... does not see any benefit in legislating for a state-based emissions reduction target that is inconsistent with a national target.

The federal government has said the role of the state government should really be to focus more on climate change adaptation, and that has essentially been the focus of our government. In March we released our very first climate change adaptation plan, which details the decisive action being taken by the coalition to strengthen our management of climate risks by protecting Victorian critical infrastructure, including our waterways, transport, energy, health care and emergency response systems. I commend a recent initiative that saw \$73 million spent to address the drainage issues covering most of the city of Frankston. That is one concrete example of the sorts of action being taken to protect our critical infrastructure from the risks of climate change.

In relation to the 20 per cent emission reduction target, Greg Barber was also quoted in the *Australian* of 27 March 2012 as having said:

It didn't actually do anything. It was a PR stunt ...

To debate that point any further would only add to carbon emissions in this room.

I turn now to our promise of 1600 new hospital beds and slashed hospital waiting lists, but first let me make a few comments about our health system. The Victorian government is committed to increasing the capacity of our health and hospital system. Since coming to office we in coalition have increased health funding by \$2 billion to a record of \$14.3 billion. In 2013–14 our health budget increased by \$661 million — a 4.8 per cent increase on the 2012–13 budget. This was at the time that federal Labor cut \$99.5 million from the promised hospital funding for 2013–14 and made a cumulative cut across the forward estimates of \$368 million. That is certainly a huge contrast.

It is important to remember that there is no absolute bed number or count. A bed count does not take into account all the bed types or reflect the amount of care being provided. For example, there is the hospital-in-the-home bed equivalents, which increased by 47 per cent between 2009–10 and 2012–13. There are also the mental health prevention and recovery care beds. I have had the privilege, along with the Honourable Mary Wooldridge, of seeing a number of those facilities open. They are wonderful facilities providing wonderful mental health support. From 2009–10 to 2012–13 the numbers have increased by 90.

We are building capital infrastructure and providing beds for the future. In the 2013–14 budget we have committed a further \$624 million for capital. The biggest rural and regional hospital in Australia's history, the \$630 million Bendigo Hospital, will receive funding for an additional 250 beds. The Monash Children's hospital is in my electorate — the rapidly growing south-east — and I am delighted to see that it has been funded and is progressing. The project was ignored by the previous Labor government for 11 years. When completed it will have 230 beds with an additional 74 beds.

I will now comment on some of the remarks made by Mr Lenders. He talked about how Labor established the Monash Medical Centre. Yes it did, but there were a number of casualties along the way. One of those casualties was the Moorabbin hospital emergency department, which residents of Bentleigh valued highly. Labor knows that was one of the consequences of

establishing Monash Medical Centre, but it has never claimed credit for it.

On planning the establishment of Monash Medical Centre, Labor should have planned a grade separation at the Clayton rail crossing. The grade separation should have been undertaken simultaneously and not ignored for so long. The Labor member for Clayton in the Assembly, Mr Hong Lim, has held his seat for 17 years, and in that time has done nothing for his electorate. We have not heard from him. He has now discovered the Clayton rail crossing.

We have allocated \$1 billion to the world-class Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre, and we are redeveloping the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. Other capital investments include \$447.5 million for the Box Hill Hospital redevelopment — \$40 million more in large capital contributions than what was promised by Labor — \$76 million to redevelop Frankston Hospital, \$15 million to expand intensive care and maternity services at Sunshine Hospital, \$29 million to expand Northern Hospital and \$50.2 million for the Waurn Ponds community hospital. The total program is creating a capacity of more than 1000 additional beds in the system.

I turn now to hospital waiting lists. In the 2013–14 health budget, which increased by 4.8 per cent even while federal Labor was making cuts, we increased and invested an additional \$101 million to treat more elective surgery patients. Victoria continues to maintain its record in meeting the performance targets of 100 per cent of category 1 elective surgery patients admitted within 30 days. The government is obviously also aiming to turn around 11 years of Labor neglect and mismanagement by seeking to drive down the surge in the median time before treatment that occurred in 2007–08.

More elective surgery patients were treated in the June 2013 quarter than in the June 2012 quarter; 1305 more patients received elective surgery — that is, 39 992 patients were treated compared to 38 687. In the June 2013 quarter 5749 more elective surgery patients were treated than in the March 2013 quarter, showing that hospitals are beginning to recover from the terrible federal funding cuts. There has been a huge increase in the number of people able to access our hospital services.

The coalition government has fully funded construction of the Southland railway station in the 2013–14 state budget. The station will comprise two single-face platforms, a connecting passenger subway along the changes to the tracks and signalling to enable the

maintenance of train headways. The local community will welcome it for its obvious convenience. The station does not need all the bells and whistles, because it is adjacent to a major shopping centre which has most of the conveniences that people look for, including shops and toilets and the like. Progress is on track there despite Mr Lenders's attempt to portray it as otherwise.

In the 1990s, when Labor was waging the big class size debate, I am on the record as having said that the most important ingredient in providing quality education is quality teachers — that is, quality learning and teaching. Quality of teachers is the greatest force for realising our goal as a world-class education system. As a former public school teacher and English faculty head in charge of more than 100 teachers, I can say that fantastic teachers are not that easy to come by. We can all improve, however, and become better. That is the objective of our policy.

Recently *From New Directions to Action — World Class Teaching and School Leadership* outlined the government's support for Victorian teachers and student learning outcomes. The coalition government is committed to supporting our great teachers by improving the professional development opportunities for principals and teachers. In the 2013–14 budget the Victorian government committed a further \$15.7 million to help support principals through targeted training to better equip emerging school leaders and to invest in teacher and school capability through the influential teacher-led research program.

We are also developing a new performance and development framework, which will be implemented in 2014. It will give teachers meaningful and valuable assessments about their work, which will in turn lead to improved performance and better learning outcomes for Victoria's children. Given that the recent Program for International Student Assessment results show that we have slipped despite a huge investment and increase in education funding, we have to deal with the issues that may have been considered sacred cows by the union movement. We have to bring education into the 21st century.

In relation to the commitment to make Victoria's teachers the best paid, we know that during the enterprise bargaining agreement process, which concluded earlier this year, the Victorian government put an offer on the table that would have made Victoria's best-performing teachers the best paid in Australia. This is not what the union movement wanted; it chose not to accept this offer, and an alternative agreement was reached. We have increased funding to schools in each budget since coming to

office. We have invested \$541 million more in school education than Labor did in its last budget. We have invested \$386 million in programs for vulnerable students, including extending primary welfare officers to 800 primary schools by November 2014. We have made the single biggest capital investment in special and autistic schools in over a decade, and we have taken the student support officers out of the bureaucracy and put them under the control of schools.

Next year we are providing \$5.1 billion directly to government schools through the student resource package, which is a funding record. This includes a 2.2 per cent non-wage indexation, which is the largest such increase in 15 years. This government's record in education is commendable. We are focused on trying to make progress in the areas that are critical to improving the quality of learning and teaching. The Minister for Higher Education and Skills is doing some excellent planning work for making the vocational education system sustainable and of higher quality, ensuring that it is more accountable and delivering better outcomes for the community and the state. Indeed, we are attempting to address the lack of investment in social capital and physical infrastructure and to do so in an open and transparent way, while at the same time managing the state's finances. We have done that, and we are the only state at the moment to have retained a AAA credit rating.

All I can do is thank Mr Leane for the opportunity to take part in this debate and thank him for the Dorothy Dixer; he has provided an opportunity to talk about the things we have achieved and the appalling legacy of the 11 years of Labor's mismanagement.

Ms PULFORD (Western Victoria) — I thank Mrs Peulich for taking us through the government department's speaking dot points in relation to Mr Leane's motion noting the member for Mitcham's how-to-vote card. The election was now more than three years ago, and Victorians are counting down the weeks until the end of November next year at which point they will be able to pass judgement on this government. That will be the determination that really matters, rather than anything we say in here about this how-to-vote card.

The Victorian people will soon enough have an opportunity to consider whether they got what it was they thought they were getting in the last state election: more jobs, safe streets, reliable and safe public transport, quality roads, strong families and communities, a planning system that works better, access to hospitals, more support for schools and teachers, a healthy environment, less waste and a

government they can trust. I almost do not need to go on.

Mr Leane's motion identifies some points, which previous speakers, including Mrs Peulich, have responded to. The government promised to deliver many new hospital beds; the government is unable to point to a single new hospital bed. The how-to-vote card talks about better access to hospitals; we have an ambulance crisis in this state. Our emergency rooms cannot cope, and patients are not being transferred to wards, because the beds have not been delivered. This is a spectacular failure by this government at the hands of a minister who is more intent on playing games and bagging all opponents than finding policy solutions. You would be forgiven for getting the impression from question time that the minister spends more time checking Ambulance Employees Australia's Facebook page than he does trying to identify one new bed that the government has delivered to a hospital in Victoria.

Previous speakers have talked about the government's position on carbon emissions. On all matters of environmental policy, what the Liberal-Nationals coalition purported to be before the election and what it turned out to be after the election could not stand in any greater contrast. Mr Lenders talked about the new railway stations at Southland and Grovedale, while Mr Leane talked about the need for more support for Victorian teachers.

Mr Leane's motion specifically mentions the provision of a rail service linking Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. My base is in Ballarat, and I take those journeys on a reasonably regular basis, so if there were a rail service from Ballarat to Geelong or a rail service from Ballarat to Bendigo, I would be its biggest fan. The coalition said these rail upgrades were going to happen, then it put that commitment on a lot of advertising material before the election and stumped up \$2 million for a feasibility study, the findings of which were released in June this year.

The Rail Revival study report noted that there are 244 kilometres of rail lines between Geelong and Ballarat via Meredith and between Ballarat and Bendigo via Newstead. The Rail Revival study said we could put on a few more coach services and improve the timetable so that more people catch the existing coaches. In the media release on the study findings the Minister for Public Transport, Terry Mulder, is quoted as saying:

Trains may become viable in future years.

That is very different to the promise that was made before the election. I for one was very sceptical about

that promise when it was originally made. I was mocked by members of the Liberal Party and The Nationals for that scepticism, but there again is another example of this government failing spectacularly to meet the expectations it set for Victorians. The record of the Liberal Party and The Nationals on regional rail is abysmal, so we should not be surprised. People in regional communities across Victoria have not been surprised by this, but for the coalition to go to the election presenting how-to-vote cards with these messages and promises, which I think it probably had no intention of ever delivering, is just a massive fraud to commit on the Victorian people.

I will respond to some of the comments Mrs Peulich made earlier in the debate. She talked about the economic fundamentals in Victoria. She got stuck in to former Labor treasurers John Brumby and John Lenders, as she likes to do, and she tried to make the argument that this government is managing the economy better than the Labor government managed the economy. Labor had AAA credit ratings and surplus budgets for the duration of its term in office. This government has been able to maintain a AAA credit rating and has been able to deliver surplus budgets, but it has done so by doubling debt.

Mrs Peulich's argument was very flimsy. She talked about the need to adapt to changing circumstances. She said that to grow jobs you have to vote Labor out. Mrs Peulich spoke for about 25 minutes on this motion, and she did not mention what happened earlier today — that is, Holden announcing it was going to cease production in Australia and cease its manufacturing operations in 2017, which will affect the employment of 50 000 workers in Australia. This is a significant event. In Victoria this decision affects 1300 direct employees. There are 160 automotive industry component makers who now face an uncertain future, and it is not drawing a long bow at all to say that the decision places Toyota in a precarious position as well.

The front page of today's *Australian Financial Review* quotes the federal Treasurer, Joe Hockey, as having said in the commonwealth Parliament on Tuesday:

There's a hell of a lot of a lot of industries in Australia that would love to get the assistance that the motor vehicle industry is getting.

Alongside that quote is another from Mike Devereux, the chairman and managing director of General Motors Holden. He is quoted as saying:

There is a level of assistance GM needs to be there to have a business model that's viable.

The Liberal Party has failed to provide the sort of assistance and support that is needed to protect our automotive industry in Victoria. This is a very sad day.

The impact of the automotive industry on research and development, skills training and advanced manufacturing and the way it contributes to our economy cannot be underestimated. During question time in the Legislative Assembly earlier today, as this news was breaking, my colleagues from the Labor Party asked the Premier to outline to the house for the benefit of Victorians what the government had done. I acknowledge that this area is very much the responsibility of the commonwealth government, but Victoria has the largest share of the automotive industry in Australia, and for Holden to pull out of Australia shows an absolute dereliction of duty by the Liberal Party in Canberra.

Yesterday Joe Hockey as good as dared GM Holden to make a decision, and now it has made a decision. Basically there is a fundamental difference between the Labor Party and the Liberal Party when it comes to industry support.

The Victorian government's Live in Victoria website, which is designed to attract skilled workers to Victoria, provides a brief overview of the automotive industry in Victoria. It says:

Victoria is the hub of Australia's automotive industry — it is responsible for around 60 per cent of the country's automotive turnover, and a significant proportion of exports.

The website goes on to describe what we all know — that this is one of the few places in the world that can take a car from the stage of design concept to that of the showroom. It talks about the size of the automotive industry and the automotive manufacturing sector in Victoria, and it says:

Victoria's automotive manufacturing sector employs around 25 000 people and had AUD\$2.2 billion worth of exports in 2010. Victoria is also home to the headquarters and engineering centres of all three motor vehicle producers in Australia and the supplier companies that support them.

The commonwealth government has enormous responsibility in this area, but this is a problem that disproportionately affects Victoria. The Liberal Party does not believe in supporting industries in the same way the Labor Party does. It has a different philosophical approach. Today we have seen the devastating consequences of the Liberal Party's view. I do not underestimate for a minute how difficult and complex it is to support the automotive industry.

Mr Ramsay — On a point of order, Acting President, perhaps you could advise me where in the motion of Mr Leane or on the how-to-vote card of the member for Mitcham in the Assembly there is a reference to the decision made today by Detroit on the future of Holden. For Ms Pulford to stand up here and criticise the coalition government in relation to a decision made in Detroit, which has nothing to do with — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! Mr Ramsay, I now have your point of order.

Ms PULFORD — On the point of order, Acting President, on the how-to-vote card, which Mr Leane's motion specifically referred to, dot point 1, which is just above the picture of the former Premier, Ted Baillieu, refers to 'more jobs'.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! This is a very broad motion which talks about election promises, including those listed on the how-to-vote card of the member for Mitcham. I will not uphold the point of order on this occasion, but I ask Ms Pulford to get a bit closer to the motion listed on the notice paper.

Ms PULFORD — Thank you for your assistance, Acting President. I will briefly respond to Mr Ramsay's concerns about my concerns about automotive jobs by saying that this has been a very broad debate and that more jobs and the state of the economy in Victoria have been a theme of the debate. If Mr Ramsay had been here, he would have heard Mrs Peulich talk about the economic fundamentals, talk about jobs creation — —

Mr Ramsay — Don't blame the coalition government. It was a decision made in the US.

Ms PULFORD — Now you're inviting me to respond. It was already a pretty broad debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! Through the Chair.

Ms PULFORD — Thank you for your assistance, Acting President. This is a significant event for the Victorian economy and Victorian industry. This is massive news, involving 25 000 jobs and \$2.2 billion worth of exports according to the Victorian government's own website. Previous speakers have indicated that a characteristic of a good government is the ability to respond to changing circumstances, and these are exactly the kinds of changing circumstances a government ought to be able to respond to.

For Mr Ramsay's benefit, I note I have spoken about the missing train service between Geelong and Bendigo. Perhaps Mr Ramsay will be able to identify that around the time Mr Davis identifies the first of the many hundreds of hospital beds promised. There are no doubt other people, however, who wish to speak on this motion. I am pleased to support Mr Leane's motion. I note the broken promises and the lies told or the complete misrepresentations made by the Liberal Party in its how-to-vote cards at the time of the election three years ago. I note that there is one year to go and that we will be watching with great interest to see what is on the party's how-to-vote cards next time.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise to speak on Mr Leane's motion being debated this afternoon. I note that in the contribution of Ms Pulford, just delivered in the chamber, and in a number of interjections reference was made to those unfortunate decisions made by international companies in relation to their situation in Victoria. It is far too simplistic to say what Ms Pulford has said and blame the state government for those decisions. A number of decisions needed to be made in relation to those matters.

I note that in today's *Australian* there is a headline about the continuation of Toyota's manufacturing capability in Victoria, and Toyota was also giving some warnings to various unions, basically saying, 'Just calm down and have a look at what is on offer here, because you too are at risk'. So it is very simplistic to say, 'The Napthine coalition government is to blame for those decisions, and what are you going to do about it?'. Yes, we know we are in a changing economy. We have been in a changing economy for quite some time, if Ms Pulford had not noticed. I think I have to draw Ms Pulford's attention back to the state of the Victorian economy when we came into power in 2010.

Mr Ramsay — She didn't mention anything about our support for Jetstar.

Ms CROZIER — Indeed, Mr Ramsay. There is the support that has been provided for Jetstar, for Avalon and for international flights. That is very good news for Victoria, for Victorian commuters and for international commuters, who bring so much business — —

Mr Ramsay — One hundred and thirty jobs at Avalon.

Ms CROZIER — And 130 jobs at Avalon, as Mr Ramsay quite rightly interjects. I return to the state of the economy and where we are at. You do not have to be too clever to understand we are on a trajectory. I

am not sure where the members of the opposition are. They are not anywhere to be seen. Perhaps they are making upper house preselection decisions; I do not know where they are.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms CROZIER — Mr Leane is here. In any case I make the point that when we came into power the budget was on an unsustainable trajectory and at an unsustainable level, and we needed to make some hard decisions to give Victorians confidence in our state and in our economy. I am delighted that the Treasurer, Michael O'Brien, has had significant input into this, as did the former Treasurer, Kim Wells, the member for Scoresby in the Assembly, who came in, looked at the books and looked at what we were dealing with. It was quite seriously a basket case. We have maintained our stable AAA rating from both major ratings agencies, and that represents a tremendous accolade accorded to Treasurer O'Brien in terms of where we are at as compared with other states and territories around the country.

As part of that we have been able to maintain jobs in this state. In fact there are more jobs under the Victorian coalition government — 73 000 more people are now in employment — than when we came into government in 2010. That is an indication of strong economic performance and confidence on the part of the Victorian people, who understand that coalition governments know how to manage money. Those opposite know how to play games, but they do not know how to govern. They are good at the antics and the games, and they know how to spend taxpayers money willy-nilly, but they do not know how to govern responsibly or how to be prudent economic managers.

Getting back to the motion of Mr Leane and the items he listed, I remind him about what we are doing and what we came to power to do. Those election promises were first and foremost to fix the problems. We have seen a number of problems, and I do not need to go through the litany of projects we have been left with. At the top of the list, as we all know, is the desalination plant. Our dams are at a not quite full but very safe level of capacity, and we have a desalination plant sitting down in Wonthaggi costing Victorian taxpayers — and the Victorian taxpayer is paying for this — \$1.8 million or thereabouts each and every day. That is money that could have been better spent on more services.

Mr Koch — How much?

Ms CROZIER — It is costing \$1.8 million or thereabouts each and every day, Mr Koch. That money could have been better spent on better services. We are paying for that legacy. In an earlier debate in relation to hospital beds, prison beds and all sorts of other things, the Minister for Corrections, Mr O'Donohue, highlighted the debacle of the contract relating to the Ararat prison project and where we are at with that. Significant numbers of prison beds would have been brought online if that project had been managed properly.

This government has received consistent criticism about the lack of hospital beds. It is pretty evident that those opposite do not quite understand what the term 'hospital bed' means, because it can mean a number of things. People can be admitted to hospital for a very short time or for a very long time. They can even be considered to be in hospital whilst in nursing homes as well as when they are admitted to emergency departments. These are all counted as hospital beds, and this government has done a significant amount to improve the state of the Victorian health service.

I will refer to a number of government initiatives, including the enormous capital works program in health infrastructure — over \$4 billion worth of capital infrastructure, the building of which takes some time. Capital infrastructure in the health sector takes time to build, and when it is undertaken it will mean an increase in the capacity to treat more patients.

I am delighted that the report *Australian Hospital Statistics 2012–13 — Emergency Department Care* released in October confirms that Victoria is leading the way in hospital performance. In fact the figures show that Victorian hospital emergency departments treated 1.53 million patients in the 2012–13 year. Of course emergency department beds are counted as hospital beds. That figure shows an increase of 1.3 per cent on that of the previous year, so Victoria is treating more patients. We can all agree that our hospital services are doing a tremendous job, particularly in light of an ageing and increasing population, and a population which has more complex and chronic diseases, yet we are still treating patients in a very satisfactory manner. If we compare our health services with health services around the world, we can see that we are doing a terrific job, and all our health workers and allied health workers should be congratulated on the tremendous work they do.

Having said that, I return to the report to which I referred, because it makes some important points about people going through the hospital system, and in particular about the number of patients being treated.

The figures show that Victoria has maintained its rate of treating 100 per cent of category 1 patients immediately upon arrival at a hospital, that hospitals treated 84 per cent of category 2 patients within 10 minutes of arrival and 72 per cent of category 3 patients within 30 minutes. These are very good statistics and figures for the treatment of patients and people who occupy hospital beds in our hospital system.

As we know — and I do not want to labour the point on this, pardon the pun — halfway through last year some \$107 million was ripped from the hospital system by the former Labor federal government — —

Hon. D. M. Davis interjected.

Ms CROZIER — As the minister reminds me, we are still missing over \$368 million. If anybody understands how a health service works — and I know you do, Acting President, because you have been in charge of a large health service, so you understand how our health services work — they will understand that we cannot just fund health services and then rip the money out and expect hospitals to create a situation in which people can be treated. It is significant that that \$107 million was ripped out halfway through a financial year. Anyone who knows basic economics would understand the impact of ripping out such a significant amount of money. Some \$368 million over three years was taken by the former Labor government from promised funding. Labor politicians are pretty good at rhetoric and ramping up promises, but they have no idea how to manage the economy. At a federal level we have seen that they are very good at playing games but absolutely hopeless at governing.

Earlier I referred to the more than \$4 billion worth of capital works in health services alone, including the Monash Children's hospital project, which will have 230 beds when it is completed. This project will provide significant services for people within the southern areas of metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. We also have a tremendous asset in the Royal Children's Hospital, but only this week reports have emerged that that hospital is bursting its capacity and there are claims that it is not big enough. It is true that Melbourne has a very large metropolitan base, and expanding growth corridors in the eastern and south-eastern regions will also require health services.

I turn to the Monash Children's hospital. The former government had a plan on the table in 2002, but did nothing with it — it just sat there. Labor did absolutely nothing. This government has got on and is delivering on that project. The completion of the hospital will

increase our capacity to treat more children across the state and alleviate some of the pressures we are seeing at the Royal Children's Hospital. The situation at the Royal Children's is not this government's fault. We are fulfilling our promises, unlike the former government, the members of which did a couple of things but did not do them very well.

I turn to the transport issues that have been raised in this debate and remind members that significant improvements have been made to our public transport system. Earlier today we were speaking about the east–west link project, a very significant project for Victoria which will improve our productivity, create thousands of jobs during its construction phase and provide overall improvements for the entire Victorian economy. The east–west link project is a very good news story, as we heard during that debate. It is a shame that the rhetoric from those opposite was confusing. There are members opposite who supported the project before they were elected, yet once they were elected to this Parliament they changed their tune. This is unsurprising, because they are managed and run by the unions.

Returning to the transport issues on which this government has done significant work, I congratulate the Minister for Public Transport, Mr Mulder, on his stewardship in dealing with the very real issues we faced when we came to government in 2010. There were significant problems along our railway lines and with a number of services. Now there are 1078 extra metropolitan train trips each week and 3400 extra bus trips per week. Some \$4.8 billion has been invested in the regional rail link, and \$25 million in the Dandenong line upgrade, \$100 million in the Bayside rail upgrade, and \$400 million allocated to remove level crossings across Melbourne. Work on the Springvale level crossing and other level crossing upgrades is also under way.

My electorate of Southern Metropolitan Region has a number of large level crossings, including in Carnegie and Murrumbeena, and I am pleased that crossing has been put on a priority list to be looked at. A number of feasibility studies and preliminary works have been undertaken for that level crossing, so I am very delighted that the minister understands my concerns for the people in and around the Carnegie area and other areas who are impacted by that particular level crossing.

Nevertheless, people in the community understand that we cannot complete all of these projects in isolation. Ours is a very large metropolitan rail network, and you cannot promise to remove 50 level crossings, as

members of the opposition have undertaken, without understanding that doing so would have enormous implications for our entire rail and road networks. The situation would be chaotic. Members of the opposition make these throwaway comments and think that people are so gullible that they will accept Labor's proposition, which is absolutely ludicrous.

I will refer to what the coalition government has done in transport during the three years it has been in government. We have budgeted for 15 new X'Trapolis trains, some 7 of which have already been delivered and 8 are on the way. There are also 40 new V/Line railway carriages on the way and 50 new low-floor trams. There is significant capital infrastructure in relation to our road, rail and public transport networks. I know members of the opposition always call for improvements, but I have outlined what the government is doing.

It is getting on with working through those issues, which included the lack of planning by the Labor government which had 11 years and did not understand that we had an increasing and ageing population, and expanding Melbourne — —

Mr Elsbury interjected.

Ms CROZIER — Yes, Mr Elsbury, they just ignored it. They had their heads in the sand. How surprising!

Nevertheless I take up Ms Pulford's comments about what we have done and compare it to what Labor did. I remind her that most of the time the opposition was in government it was fortunate to have prudent economic managers at a federal level during the Howard-Costello years. Does Australia not scream out for those years again! Thank goodness we have an Abbott-Hockey government in control at a federal level to try to bring back some prudent and responsible economic management. After all, as governments we have a responsibility to the taxpayer and the spending of money should be done in a prudent and responsible fashion as opposed to just throwing money around and spending willy-nilly, as the former Labor government has done in this state.

Mr Leane's motion 'calls on the government to fix the problems as promised'. I say to Mr Leane that that is exactly what the government is doing. We are fixing the problems and they are numerous. As I said, there were numerous projects on which the costs had blown out. They were underfunded and have caused a great deal of concern for Victorians. We are getting on with the job and improving the overall situation.

Again I would like to commend the Treasurer, Michael O'Brien, for putting us in a very strong position which gives us a AAA credit rating, the strongest anywhere in the country. That means lower borrowing costs for every Victorian taxpayer and that is good news because it will enable the completion of service and infrastructure projects that Victoria requires in the future. As a coalition government we understand the future planning requirements of this state and look forward to continuing to deliver on future projects and promises as indicated during our election campaign.

Debate adjourned for Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) on motion of Mr Leane.

Debate adjourned until later this day.

ACCIDENT COMPENSATION LEGISLATION (FAIR PROTECTION FOR FIREFIGHTERS) BILL 2013

Introduction and first reading

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) introduced a bill for an act to amend the Accident Compensation Act 1985 in relation to compensation for disease due to employment suffered by firefighters and for other purposes.

Read first time.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I move:

That this house notes and endorses the finding of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2013 Working Group 1 report that —

- (1) it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of observed warming since the mid-20th century;
- (2) continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system; and
- (3) limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change is the greatest challenge that humanity has ever faced. If we think forward to the scenario of a world that is 4 degrees warmer than it is now, which is a quite likely outcome of the current do-nothing settings that Australia and a number of other major emitters have adopted, then we in Australia are in real trouble as a country that has always been on the edge climatically. Therefore it is hugely important that we as a

community here in Australia understand the scenario we are facing.

The working group of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in that report made a number of important findings. One was, as noted in my motion, that it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of observed warming since the mid-20th century. It is extremely likely! In my daily life if I were told that if I drove my car down a certain road it is extremely likely that I would run off a cliff, and I believed the source of that information, I would not do it. I am not that sort of risk-taker.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr BARBER — You might look at it the other way, Mr Finn. If you were given a bet that was extremely likely to pay off, you would consider that to be a good bet.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr BARBER — It is a pretty good bet, Mr Finn, that if we go on emitting carbon dioxide at the rate we have been, it is extremely likely that we are going to see a continuation of the rise in global temperatures. The same working group report states that continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system, not just the average air temperature at surface level close to land but the temperature of 70 per cent of our planet surface that is covered in water and all the other — note the language the working group uses — ‘components of the climate system’. It is talking about the knock-on effects of heat on other climate phenomena such as rainfall frequency, rainfall intensity, melting of ice caps and glaciers, wind speed and so on.

In another finding, which is at item (3) of the motion, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. I do not know if the panel has made further commentary on the individual targets adopted by individual nations, but in Australia there is bipartisan support from the Labor and Liberal parties to reduce emissions by 5 per cent for a particular period of years — the so-called Kyoto commitment period. That is not what I would call substantial or sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

I am reasonably confident that the Labor Party will support my motion, because the science of the IPCC is impeccable, and the conclusions that roll on from it are hard to avoid. Supporting the findings is one thing; acting on them is another. In the Labor Party’s recent

period in federal government I am not aware of a particular fossil fuel development that it or its environment minister knocked back. There are two types of denialism: there is accepting the science and somehow managing to deny what is necessary to be done, and then there is simply denying the science. What I would like to hear from coalition MPs today is whether they accept the science and whether they accept the very clear conclusion of the IPCC that it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of observed warming since the mid-20th century. It is very important that as a chamber we take that first step and recognise the science, because from there on in the demands on us as political leaders get a lot harder.

I am worried that there might be members in this chamber who are just too narrow-minded to get their heads around the idea that when the world’s top climatologists come together and make a finding that something is extremely likely, they should accept it. There is a degree of intellectual cowardice, let us say, in not accepting what scientists are telling us, when people know that conclusions will follow on from that and that action will need to be taken.

In relation to climate change there has been comment on what is called the pessimist-optimist problem. If you understand and accept what the data is telling us, it is necessary to be a pessimist. But if you want to take action and you want to join with all those around the world who are taking action, it is essential to be an optimist.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr BARBER — Do not be on the wrong side of that split, Mr Finn; history might judge you badly. That is why I think it is important that we have this motion. I would like to see unanimous support for the motion with no division required, and I mean that genuinely. Whole nations have managed to accept the findings of the IPCC and then work together to make the necessary changes. As a starting point I would like to see this chamber accept the motion. I am worried that Mr Finn will not be able to take that step, even though it arises neither out of optimism nor pessimism; it arises from empirical evidence — and I have been sitting next to Mr Finn for seven years while he rants and rails against anybody who supports and accepts the findings of the IPCC. If that transpires, I hope at least Mr Finn backs up his many years of strong views in this area and when the time comes calls for a division on the motion and has his position in opposition to the IPCC and the position of any others in this chamber who want to accept the science recorded. If on the other hand — —

Mr Finn — Which science?

Mr BARBER — It is not a matter of which science, Mr Finn. It is the science that I am referring to in the motion. If you accept my motion, you are accepting this group of scientists and their findings. It is a body put together by the United Nations, which is itself a collection of nations for the express purpose of advising people —

Mr Finn — The most corrupt organisation on the face of the earth!

Mr BARBER — Mr Finn says it is the most corrupt organisation on the face of the earth. I am saying it is a body put together for the sole purpose of advising decision-makers just like us, at the national level of course and all the way down through the areas of responsibility. If it turns out that Mr Finn wants to back up what he has been saying for the last seven years and call a division when the motion is put, we will at least have a test of who is for action and looking forward and who is saying, 'Don't worry about it. There is nothing there'. If on the other hand we can achieve a result which is a unanimous endorsement of the motion in this place, it will be something that I will find quite positive, and I will be happy to talk about that publicly — that is, that this house has accepted the science and therefore we have built a foundation on which we can go forward and debate further action. I thank members for the opportunity to raise this critical issue.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on the motion put forward by our dear friend Mr Barber. Of course Mr Barber has made quite a decent living out of this sort of thing for some years now, and he is not alone. There are many people on the face of this earth who have made extraordinary amounts of money —

Mrs Peulich — Who?

Mr FINN — I will get to that, Mrs Peulich. There are many people on the face of the earth who have made extraordinary amounts of money on the back of the climate change scam, on the back of this so-called global warming that does not actually exist. These people have been ripping us off to the tune of billions of dollars every year for at least the last 30 years. It is extraordinary that we still accept some of the ludicrous assertions that come from the climate change industry after all these years, although if we look at the results of the last federal election, which was on 7 September, we note that the people of Australia elected a government on the basis that it would abolish the carbon tax. That is the most positive sign. Mr Barber was talking about

optimists and pessimists. Following the election I am very optimistic that the people of Australia have finally woken up to this scam. They have finally woken up to the fact that these people have been having a lend of us for a very long time. Not only have they been having a lend of us, but they have been feathering their own nests as a result.

I was delighted today as I looked out the window and saw the rain coming down, and I was reminded of just how delighted I was that the federal Abbott government has abolished the Climate Commission. It has not so much abolished the Climate Commission as defunded it; it had been on the public teat for many years as well. Its chair, Professor Tim 'Sandbags' Flannery, had been on the public teat to the tune of \$170 000 a year on a part-time basis. Not many can get a job for \$170 000 on a part-time basis. Even fewer can maintain a job for \$170 000 on a part-time basis while getting it so wrong week after week, month after month and year after year. Now I am delighted to say he is no longer being fed by the taxpayer. The snout is out of the trough, but that did not stop him, because I noticed this week that the Climate Commission was out there again telling us that the end is nigh. It was telling us that we are all going to fry in our beds and all manner of things. I do not know where Professor Flannery, our friend Sandbags, has been for the duration of this year.

Mr Ramsay — He probably drowned.

Mr FINN — He may well have drowned, Mr Ramsay. But if he has been anywhere near Melbourne, he will know damn well that his assertion that the rain which falls from above will never fill our reservoirs and dams has been proven to be absolute and total nonsense. What a great pity and a great shame it is that as a result of the actions of the previous government we, the Victorian taxpayers, have spent billions of dollars listening to the likes of Sandbags Flannery, who told us it would never rain again, and going ahead and building a desal plant that, as we speak, is rusting away in the rain down there in Gippsland. It has been doing so now for about three years. We have spent billions on this thing.

Hon. D. M. Davis — It is \$1.8 million a day.

Mr FINN — As Mr Davis points out, it is costing the Victorian taxpayers \$1.8 million a day, and at this point we are yet to taste one drop of water from the thing. It would have to be the greatest act of farce that we have seen in this country. It is a monumental stuff-up, if ever there was one, yet it was done on the back of listening to the greenies. It was done on the back of listening to these people, these leeches, who have been

living off the taxpayer not just in Australia but around the world for some years.

I am surprised and a little disappointed that Mr Barber did not go a little bit further in support of his motion, but on reconsidering that statement I suppose it is not surprising that he did not go very far in supporting his motion.

Mr Ramsay — There is not much to say.

Mr FINN — As Mr Ramsay points out, there is not much to say, because the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a largely discredited organisation now. In 2007 it told the world one thing; in 2013 it said, ‘Oops, we got it wrong. Oops, we made a mistake’. It says now that its computers may have been exaggerating. I recall when I was a lad that my dear father — God rest his soul — told me that a bad workman always blames his tools. Here we have these so-called scientists blaming their computers for getting it so dreadfully wrong. Just how wrong is it? They told us one thing in 2007, and what did they tell us in 2013? The world has warmed at a quarter of the rate that they suggested in 2007. You have got to ask the question: if they got it so wrong in 2007, what makes anybody think that they will get it right now? What makes anybody think that in 2013 they would get it right? According to the *Daily Mail*, they said that global warming ‘over the 15 years from 1990–2005 had taken place at a rate of 0.2 degrees Centigrade per decade’. I am reading this from the ‘Mail online’ from London.

Mr Barber — Which one?

Mr FINN — It is the *Daily Mail*, Mr Barber; have you heard of that?

Mr Barber — Yes.

Mr FINN — Yes, he has; well done. Somebody may read it to him one day.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr FINN — The article goes on, and it says that the IPCC predicted that this would continue.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr FINN — Don’t worry, comrade, I will quote the *Guardian* in a minute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! Mr Finn and Mr Barber! I remind Mr Barber that I let him make his contribution uninterrupted, and I will ask that he do the same for Mr Finn.

Mr FINN — I reassure Mr Barber that if he does not like the *Daily Mail*, in just a moment I will quote from his favourite newspaper, the *Guardian*, which of course is to the extreme left of politics and in fact has been involved in undermining Australia this year. I suppose that is by the by — so has the ABC — but that is perhaps something we can talk about another day.

The *Daily Mail* says that the IPCC:

... observed warming over the 15 years from 1990–2005 had taken place at a rate of 0.2 degrees Centigrade per decade, and it predicted this would continue for the following 20 years, on the basis of forecasts made by computer climate models.

But the new report says the observed warming over the more recent 15 years to 2012 was just —

this is an interesting figure —

0.05 degrees Centigrade per decade — below almost all computer predictions.

I say that 0.05 is an interesting figure because I reckon it just might happen to be your blood alcohol level if you believe some of the nonsense that comes from the climate change industry.

The *Daily Mail* article on the IPCC report continues:

The 31-page ‘summary for policy-makers’ is based on a more technical 2000-page analysis which will be issued at the same time.

It also surprisingly reveals that IPCC scientists accept that their forecast computer models may have exaggerated the effect of increased carbon emissions on world temperatures and not taken enough notice of natural variability.

When we talk about natural variability, might we be talking about things like volcanoes? Is it possible that volcanoes may in fact put out more carbon emissions than everything else in the world put together? A decent volcano can black out half the world, so why would you not think that it would be putting all these carbon emissions into the atmosphere? If you are seriously talking about the effect of carbon emissions, you have to take these things into consideration.

The IPCC admits that parts of the world are as warm now, as they have been for decades at a time, as they were between 950 and 1250 AD, which I have to point out, as the *Daily Mail* points out, is centuries before the Industrial Revolution and when the population and CO2 levels were both much lower. This stuff just continues to pile up and people look at it and say, ‘This mob have been having a lend of us’ — they really have, for a very long time. I can understand why people have

not taken well to this sort of nonsense. I refer again to the article in the *Daily Mail*, which says:

The IPCC admits that while computer models forecast a decline in Antarctic sea ice, it has actually grown to a new record high. Again, the IPCC cannot say why.

Here we have the IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, telling us it got it wrong again but once again we do not know why. How many times can it get it wrong? How many times can it tell us that it does not know why it got it wrong before its credibility is put in the shredder forever? You have to wonder. The IPCC expects governments to make policy decisions based on predictions by people who have no credibility, who have a record, just like Sandbags, of getting it totally wrong. Here we go again.

The IPCC forecast in the 2007 report that hurricanes would become more intense has simply been dropped. It did not mention it this time. It is not surprising, because according to the *Daily Mail*, and I have no reason to doubt this, this year has been one of the quietest hurricane seasons in history and the US is currently enjoying its longest ever period — almost eight years — without a single hurricane of category 3 or above making landfall. When the IPCC gets it wrong, it gets it incredibly wrong and just does not mention it. That is science for you. That is not great science. When we get it so wrong, we just do not mention it. In one instance or in a couple of instances, we are sure. We admit that we may have got it wrong and it was not quite right, but it was the computers that did it.' But the third time, the IPCC just dropped it altogether. It is not mentioned at all.

Mr Barber makes a great song and dance about science. He would have us believe that every scientist was on board. He would have us believe that this climate change nonsense is endorsed by every scientist under the sun. This is as much nonsense as is climate change. Professor Myles Allen, the director of Oxford University's climate research network, said this report should be the last IPCC assessment, accusing its cumbersome production process of 'misrepresenting how science works'. There is a unanimous view for you. There is science getting behind the IPCC. There is science getting behind the global warming and climate change industry. The article goes on to say:

Despite the many scientific uncertainties disclosed by the ... report, it nonetheless draws familiar, apocalyptic conclusions — insisting that the IPCC is more confident than ever that global warming is mainly humans' fault.

If it has got everything wrong to this point, why would we believe, without any real evidence, that this is the fault of human beings? It is quite extraordinary.

Professor Judith Curry is the head of climate science at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia. You would imagine that the head of climate science at Georgia Institute of Technology would be a climate scientist, unlike Tim Flannery, who is not a climate scientist. He is just a shonk. Mr Barber might listen to this; I hope he does listen to this. Professor Curry said this showed that 'the science is clearly not settled and is in a state of flux'. Here we have Mr Barber getting up and telling us the science is over. This is what they do. They say the science is settled and there is no further argument on the matter 'because I am right and you are wrong'. That is about as far as it goes. Mr Barber gets up and says, 'I'm right, you're wrong. Go away'. If you do not go away, then you are a bigot or a denier or something else. He does it on a range of issues, not just on climate change.

But here we have the head of climate science at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Professor Judith Curry, saying — and I quote her again for the benefit of Mr Barber — that 'the science is clearly not settled and is in a state of flux'. She went on to say that it therefore made no sense that the IPCC was claiming that its confidence in its forecasts and conclusions has increased. I think that would be pretty obvious. How could you get it wrong year after year and then turn around and say, 'The confidence in my prediction powers has increased'? It is a bit like me at the races. You would not follow me around the betting ring. After about the third race, you would give me away altogether, because my capacity to pick a winner matches that of the IPCC, or indeed Professor Sandbags Flannery. I could not pick one for love nor money. I would not know one end of the horse from the other, and this crowd clearly would not know what it is talking about either.

In the new report the IPCC says — and Mr Barber made reference to this — that it is extremely likely that human influence caused more than half the temperature rises from 1951 to 2010, up from very confident, 90 per cent certain, in 2007. The IPCC has gone from 'extremely likely' to 'very confident'. The same Professor Curry, who I referred to earlier, says, 'This is incomprehensible to me', adding that the IPCC projections are overconfident, especially given the report's admitted areas of doubt. Here we have a situation where Mr Barber and his green friends get up and as an article of faith declare that the IPCC has got it right, that we should endorse everything it says at all times because it is spot-on the money, even when it admits that it is not sure what is going on. Yet we are supposed to blindly follow the IPCC into the valley of death. I am not keen on that. I do not think that is a very good idea, as a matter of fact.

It is interesting that Professor Myles Allen, the director of Oxford University's climate research network, who I mentioned earlier and who might just happen to be a climate scientist himself, is quoted in the same *Daily Mail* article as saying:

The idea of producing a document of near-biblical infallibility is a misrepresentation of how science works, and we need to look very carefully about what the IPCC does in future.

Is that not the truth. He sounds like he has his head screwed on properly, and that is a good thing, because in this area it is rare to come across somebody like that. Professor Allen makes it clear that we have to be careful about what the IPCC says.

If Mr Barber wants to talk about the evidence, the evidence that has been presented here today makes it clear that the IPCC does not have much of an idea what it is talking about. The article also reports that:

... Dr Benny Peiser —

and I do hope I have pronounced that correctly, because I do not want to give it another go, I can tell members that —

of the Global Warming Policy Foundation, described the ... report as a 'staggering concoction of confusion, speculation and sheer ignorance'.

As for the pause ...

There has been no global warming for 17 years — this is the thing — but the IPCC describes this as a 'pause'. How much longer this pause will last is anybody's guess. I would have thought that after 5, 6, 10 or even 15 years you could call it a pause, but after how long do you say this is not happening anymore? But it is calling it a 'pause'. The article continues to quote Dr Peiser as saying:

It would appear that the IPCC is running out of answers — pretty obviously so —

... to explain why there is a widening gap between predictions and reality.

Yes, it is running out of reasons and excuses, but like so many in the climate change industry the IPCC has a good reason to continue the predictions of the end of the world — it is called filthy lucre. Once these professors, scientists and all sorts of shonks like Al Gore and others accept the reality that there is no global warming — that man-made climate change is just a figment of our imagination — guess what will happen? The grants will dry up, and once the money dries up they will have to work for a living.

Speaking of Al Gore, let us take a look at that bloke since he made that documentary — or rather mockumentary — *An Inconvenient Truth* some years ago. Has there ever been a documentary so full of holes? He was actually dragged to court in Britain, and it was shown that that film had more holes in it than a factory full of Swiss cheese. Half of it was made up, but that did not stop people who are just living so that they can be told they are going to die — which I have to say is a very strange reason to live — from following him into the valley of death. Did not he love that? His personal fortune doubled in a matter of months. At the start of that time he was estimated to be worth \$50 million, which you would have thought was a decent whack, but after a certain period of time — I think from memory it was six months — he was estimated to be worth \$100 million. That is \$100 million for being a shonk, for being a shyster — for taking the world for a ride. It is just extraordinary. No wonder, after telling us all that the sea was rising and we were all going to drown, he was able to buy his mansion on Miami Beach — I hope he can swim!

Fair dinkum, these people must think we are stupid. They must think we are idiots. Sandbags Flannery has a waterfront compound as well. I think Kevin Rudd, who was Prime Minister of this country a couple of times, said global warming is the greatest moral challenge of our time and then proceeded to do absolutely nothing about it. He was a ripper, Kevin. He too decided he would try his luck with the rising waters and bought a beachside house. After telling the world that we are all going to drown due to rising sea levels, the climate change minister in the previous federal government, Greg Combet, bailed out — he had had enough; he said, 'I'm going to get a real job; I can't cope with this at all' — and I understand his beach house at Newcastle is doing very nicely. You have to wonder.

If I were a cynic — and I ask Mr Elsbury not to look at me like that — I would almost be tempted to say that some of this stuff was actually put out there to get the price of houses down so that they could buy one. You have to wonder. Why else would you say that anybody who lives within 10 kilometres of the beach is going under water and then race out and buy a house near a beach? You have to wonder whether they were having a lend of us all in a very big way. It is quite extraordinary.

The most insidious part of the global warming-cum-climate change industry is the way it treats those who question it — the names it calls them, the way that many have been forced out of their jobs, the way they have been bullied and threatened merely because they have used the science in which they specialise to

question people who have blind faith in something that does not exist.

The UK's *Mail on Sunday* had a story in September of this year which was quoted in the MailOnline website on 14 September. It states that 'arctic ice has had a massive rebound this year from its 2012 record low' — —

Mr Barber — A record low?

Mr FINN — A record low, and now it has had a record rebound.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr FINN — That is apparently the case, and now it has more ice than in the history of the Arctic. What do members think happened in that 12 months? I am fascinated to know what happened in that time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! I ask Mr Barber and Mr Finn to direct their remarks through the Chair.

Mr FINN — Certainly, Acting President, but Mr Barber keeps asking me questions. I am a very polite man, and when people ask me questions I have a tendency to answer them. My apologies for that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! I acknowledge Mr Finn's politeness and ask him to continue.

Mr FINN — Thank you very much. What happened to the author of that article? He became what is described in this newspaper article as:

... the object of extraordinarily vitriolic attacks from climate commentators who refuse to accept any evidence that may unsettle their view of the science.

The story goes on to reference the *Guardian* website. The *Guardian* newspaper basically took over from *Pravda*. I do not know if *Pravda* is still going, but at least *Pravda* gave up on communism. The *Guardian* is yet to do so. It will push this global warming line until its last breath, which hopefully is not too far away. The article states:

A *Guardian* website article claimed our report was 'delusional' because it ignored what it called an 'Arctic death spiral' caused by global warming.

This is the global warming that we have not had for 17 years. It is fascinating. Beneath the online article some of the comments made by readers were quite extraordinary, because the gentleman, David Rose, who wrote this particular article is Jewish. His article was

compared to Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Surely that is a deeply offensive comment to any Jewish person. Even worse were another reader's comments:

In a few years, self-defence is going to be made a valid defence for parricide (killing one's own father), so Rose's children will have this article to present in their defence at the trial.

Here we have a case of global warming extremists calling for the death of somebody who dared to criticise them. Is this science or thuggery? Is this intimidation? Is this bullying of an appalling order? I find it despicable. I have spoken to a number of people who have been forced out of their jobs, who have been shunned by the climate change — —

Mr Barber — Name them.

Mr FINN — I am not going to name them. I am not going to set you onto them. Why would I do that?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! I remind Mr Finn one more time that he should speak through the Chair.

Mr FINN — I apologise, Acting President, but Mr Barber has to stop asking me questions. The attitude of the global warming-cum-climate change industry is one that is quite despicable. Far from being concerned about what is correct about science or what is right, they have already made up their mind. They know which side one's bread is buttered on. They know that, if their theory is questioned and their meal ticket is ripped up, they are in real trouble. They will go out of their way in a big way to stop anybody from questioning the scam that is global warming and climate change. It is despicable, but that is the way they operate. There are countless reports of people who have been affected by this attitude right across the globe, because it seems this rampant attack on debate — —

Hon. M. J. Guy — Minus 95 degrees Celsius in Antarctica.

Mr FINN — Minister Guy tells me that it is minus 95 degrees Celsius in Antarctica today, which goes hand in hand with what I was saying a moment ago that there is more ice now than we have known in its history, more ice there than ever.

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Mr FINN — Lunatics. I have copped what could be described as unreasonable abuse, and not just from the other side in here, on the basis that I have expressed an opinion. I have researched the opinion and brought forth evidence to support the opinion, but no, I am a

denier. These global warming types call us deniers, clearly putting us in the same category — —

Mrs Peulich — To vilify.

Mr FINN — To vilify, absolutely. They put us in the same category as those who deny the Holocaust. That is the way these people operate. There is nothing scientific about that at all, but that is the way they operate.

I am very pleased to speak on this motion. I will not be supporting it because I think to support a motion on a report that is clearly so flawed would be a nonsense. I hope that in his response Mr Barber will give us some indication of why we should support a report that has so clearly got it wrong, and admits it has got it wrong. It even admits it does not know why it got it wrong! Yet Mr Barber and his friends want us to blindly support it nonetheless. I am just not prepared to do that; to support it would be quite ludicrous, in my view. It would be extraordinary, it would be nonsensical, it would be illogical, and that is not something that I want to become involved in today.

As I said a little bit earlier, I believe that the tide has turned in this debate. Some years ago the hysteria created by the Greens and others regarding this issue swept up a lot of people. In fact I think it might have even swept up John Howard in the lead-up to the 2007 election, and I think he would now admit that he got that very wrong.

However, I am pleased to say that having spoken to a lot of people in my electorate and around the country, and having seen the results of the September federal election, I found the enthusiasm that was evidenced for this green crusade some years ago is no longer there. People have thought about it; they have thought about the evidence. They have thought about what it means to them and their lives and they have come to the view that the green lobby has not been entirely truthful. That is an understatement — the green lobby has been less than truthful. As I said earlier, the reason for that is very clear — it has a very strong vested interest in ensuring that the truth does not come out. Mr Barber sits in this house as a result of the truth not coming out. The Greens political party was founded on a lie, and that is a fact.

The peoples of Australia, Germany, the United States and the United Kingdom — wherever the Greens are — were told by the Greens that they would all fry. We were told that global warming would destroy us, our society and civilisation. After 17 years of no warming at all and very minimal warming before that, I

have to ask: what do the Greens say now? What is the big scare now to get people to vote for them? That is all it was — a scare.

It is interesting that these people in the extreme left always have to be scared of something. I do not entirely understand the mentality behind it; it is all very odd. Back in the 1960s America was going to destroy the world. There were atomic bombs and all sorts of things. We were told, 'They're going to wipe out the world', but that did not actually happen. In the 1970s we had a whole range of scares coming from the left, but none of them actually happened either.

In the 1980s — and those of you who are around the same vintage as I am would well remember this — the great Ronald Reagan was the great threat. He did not destroy the world. The left told us that he was going to destroy the world but he did not destroy the world at all. In fact what he did do was bring the Cold War to an end. He made the world a far more peaceful place than it had ever been before.

I grew up with the prospect — I suppose fed by the extreme left — that at the whim of the Russians I could be incinerated by a nuclear device at any time. My children do not have to worry about that now because Ronald Reagan won the Cold War. I am exceedingly grateful to him for that, as indeed are hundreds of millions of people around the world. If you travel through Eastern Europe, you will see many statues of and monuments to Ronald Reagan, built in thanks for his efforts in giving them freedom and peace and ending what was a long and painful saga in the history of the world. We have moved on now. Once communism collapsed, the left was a bit — —

Mr Barber — On a point of order, Acting President, this is a deliberately wide-ranging motion. It is not just about supporting the science; it is also about the requirement for substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse emissions. It is open to any member to talk about anything to do with climate change or reducing emissions. For that matter, an alternative policy such as the federal government's direct action plan could be brought into the debate to be scrutinised and tossed around. However, the fall of communism is not really — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Crozier) — Order! What is Mr Barber's point of order?

Mr Barber — My point of order is relevance. I do not think the fall of communism is really within the scope.

Mr FINN — On the point of order, Acting President, I was just illustrating the string of scares that we have had over recent decades, and the latest one of global warming and climate change is just one more along that path — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Crozier) — Order! As Mr Barber said, it is a wide-ranging motion, but I ask Mr Finn to come back to its main points.

Mr FINN — I am certainly very happy to talk about — —

Mr Barber — The red scare?

Mr FINN — The red scare and the green scare — what is the difference? One was, ‘The Russians are going to get us’ and the other one is, ‘We’re going to get ourselves’. This mob over here — the Greens — have no shame. They will scare little kids, they will scare old people, they will scare anybody with a view to promoting themselves and their party. They are a disgrace, yet they come in here today and expect us to take this report seriously.

I have been through just a fraction of the report which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) got hopelessly wrong. I have talked about how Sandbags Flannery and the Climate Commission got it wrong and how they had their funding cut as a result. I have talked about how the IPCC told us that all the seas were rising because of the melting snow; there was no snow on the ice caps. But would you look at that — this year there has been more ice than ever before — —

Mr Barber — No. Wrong.

Mr FINN — Mr Barber sits over there, out of his place, interjecting and shaking his head. I am very happy to show Mr Barber the photos from NASA. Does Mr Barber believe NASA or have they made it up as well? This is the ice here — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Crozier) — Order!

Mr FINN — I am sorry, Madam Acting President; I do apologise. For the benefit of those who may be reading *Hansard*, I will just point out that the photos I was displaying to Mr Barber clearly show that the polar caps are very much covered in ice; they have more ice than we have seen for quite some years. That is something that flies in the face of the arguments put forward by the extreme left and the green lobby.

Interestingly enough what they have done over the past few years is to demonise carbon. What do they mean by

‘carbon’? When I or somebody else says ‘carbon’ we think of something black and sooty. That is what springs to mind when someone talks about carbon — something black and sooty. When we talk about carbon, we are in fact talking about carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is air; it is a part of life. Trees cannot live without carbon dioxide. Without trees to produce oxygen, none of us can live. Carbon dioxide is a part of the circle of life. I do not know from where the Greens and the extreme left got this rather intriguing idea that carbon dioxide is a real danger. I almost think that L. Ron Hubbard might have put it in one of his books, because somebody has made it up. From what I can see there is not much scientific evidence to support it.

Carbon dioxide is a very important component of life. To suggest, as we have seen done federally in recent years, that we can change weather patterns by putting a tax on carbon dioxide stretches the imagination beyond all hope. It is quite a nonsense. When we talk about the carbon dioxide tax, which is currently in dispute in Canberra, we must remember the rationale used by the then Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, who told us before the 2010 election that there would be no carbon tax under any government she led. She later turned around and said we needed a carbon tax ‘because the globe is warming’. Where is the globe warming? It is not warming in Australia. It is not warming at the ice caps. There is no global warming. There has been no global warming for 17 years. Why would you need a tax to stop something that does not exist, apart from because of political pressure exerted by the Greens? That is where the nonsense really hypes up.

We have this extraordinary situation where the people sitting in the opposite corner of this chamber think we will be able to change the weather patterns if we impose taxes, close down industries and increase the price of electricity. Have I got news for them! They might as well go and read *Hansel and Gretel* because *Hansel and Gretel* has more credibility and reality than the fairytales that they tell. If those opposite are fair dinkum and genuinely believe that a tax on carbon dioxide will change the weather and the climate, you have to wonder where they have been and perhaps what they have been smoking. It is a ludicrous proposition.

To the senators in Canberra who are currently blocking the Abbott government’s attempt to scrap the carbon tax, I say, ‘Why are you doing this? Why are you slugging the Australian people? Why are you hurting working families?’. Mrs Kronberg and Mrs Peulich might remember that Julia Gillard said she cared about working families. Kevin Rudd said he cared about working families. Why does Bill Shorten not care about working families? Why does he not allow his senators

to vote to scrap the carbon tax? Once that tax is gone, we do not want an emissions trading scheme. 'Emissions trading scheme' is just another term for 'tax'. We want recognition by government that this climate change scam is just that — a scam. Let us get real. This is affecting people's lives. This is affecting people's ability to pay their bills, cook and eat their meals and turn on the lights at night. There are people who cannot afford to do such basic things, because the carbon tax has been added to their electricity bill, sending it through the roof.

Why does the Labor Party in Canberra not do the honourable and decent thing and listen to the people of Australia and vote to remove the carbon tax? Whether we have that tax or not will have no effect on the climate. I am sure Mr Leane has the common sense — or maybe not — to realise that to tax carbon dioxide and expect a change in the weather is a bit loopy.

Mrs Peulich — It is very loopy.

Mr FINN — Mrs Peulich is correct. It makes no sense at all. Let us get this carbon tax off the back of industry, off the back of business and off the back of working Australians, because all it is doing is hurting people.

Mrs Peulich — And shaking jobs.

Mr FINN — Indeed it is shaking jobs, Mrs Peulich. When you think about it, it is very much a tax on jobs. You hear members of the Labor Party — and occasionally you hear members of the Greens — talking about jobs. They come in here and tell us about what we are not doing to promote jobs and employment. If they are really concerned about jobs and employment, I strongly suggest that they contact their federal colleagues in Canberra and say, 'Hey, we're concerned about jobs. We're concerned about working Australians. We want to keep working Australians actually working. Get this carbon tax off. Vote for what the Australian people voted for and remove this carbon tax'.

To hope that a tax on carbon dioxide — a tax on air — will have any impact on anything apart from the ability of Australians to live at the standard they should is an unrealistic expectation, to say the least. Ms Broad, Mr Leane and Mr Tee are in the chamber, and I am hoping that they or some other members opposite will ring Mr Shorten and point this out to him.

As I go around talking to people in my electorate, I find it amazing that so many Labor people — people who have always voted Labor — will quite openly say to me that they know this climate change scam is just that.

They do not believe that this global warming thing is having any impact on them or on anything else. They are angered not only because they are paying the carbon tax and having it inflicted on them and their families but also because they know their intelligence is being insulted by the people who insist that a tax on carbon dioxide is somehow going to protect them from frying in their beds. I can understand their anger.

These people are good, hardworking, taxpaying Australians. They have done the right thing all their lives. They have never broken any laws; they pay their mortgages; they pay off their cars; if they have kids, they put them through school; and all the rest of it. In short, they do the right thing. Most of them are blue-collar workers, people whom the Labor Party says it looks after. These people are your archetypal workers. Mr Leane would spring to mind as one such person if he did not have a suit and tie on at the present minute. I am sure in years gone by Mr Leane would fit the category of the sort of person I am talking about. These people come up to me and say, 'We don't believe what is going on here. We can't believe that people are having a lend of us to this degree. We can't believe that the people we voted for are doing this to us. And we know the tax is having no impact on the weather'. They know that.

You cannot con the Australian people; not for very long anyway, and that is the truth. Kevin Rudd was able to con them for a little while; Julia Gillard was able to con them for a little less time. Even Bob Brown, with his smooth-talking style, was able to con the Australian people for a fair while. But they wake up after a while, and they have woken up now to the fact that this climate change scam has to be exposed. Governments and oppositions have to take on board the fact that there are myriad issues affecting us on a daily basis, but man-made climate change is not one of them.

As I said before, I do not say that there is no climate change. The climate has been changing forever, otherwise we would still be in the ice age. It is always changing — that is nature. It always does, it always will and there is nothing we can do about it. We can introduce as many taxes as we like. We can tax everything known to man, which given half a chance Labor and the Greens would do, and it would have absolutely no impact on the fact that the climate changes. It does change, and it is a fact of life now for most people that that is the way the world has always been. People are now scratching their heads and saying, 'How much longer are these people going to take us for fools? How much longer do these people think they can live off us and be leeches on the taxpayer, while promoting something that is clearly quite nonsensical?'.

The reality of this motion is that it is a nonsense to suggest we should come in here and support a report that is so incredibly flawed. This is a report that had holes shot in it even before it was printed. This report confirms more than anything what we have always known about man-made climate change and global warming: that it is a con, and a very expensive one at that.

We can talk about carbon emissions, greenhouse gases and all sorts of things. In fact a lot of people do because, as we know, this is an industry. It is a very profitable industry, as I mentioned earlier, for quite a number of people. There are a lot of people who are flying around the world first class as we speak and staying in 5-star hotels as a result of saying there is global warming. I suppose if I was one of them, I would not want there to be any exposure of the truth either. If I was one of those people living off the taxpayers of various countries, I too would want this myth to continue. We have to face facts. This is a good gig: you get to stay in the best hotels, fly in the best planes and go to places you would never otherwise see. These are the reasons we have a climate change industry.

I could go into the other reasons behind the climate change industry in some depth, but I think the majority of people in the caper now are in it for their own reasons. As I said a moment ago, they are in it because it is a good gig, and they are very happy to take the spoils of this industry without having to be responsible for anything. I will leave it there. I regret that I do not have longer, but I know that statements on reports and papers are coming up in a moment, and I might have a few words to say on those as well. I thank members of the house for their indulgence today, and I urge them to oppose the motion put by Mr Barber.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

Auditor-General: *Occupational Health and Safety Risk in Public Hospitals*

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Auditor-General's report *Occupational Health and Safety Risk in Public Hospitals*, dated November 2013. I am always interested to read reports of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) because they give a true and clear picture of the efficiencies or otherwise of government agencies. Some VAGO reports can be quite disturbing, and this one sets off all the alarm bells.

For the purposes of this report, 11 public hospitals were audited, and without exception all of them failed the fundamental test of applying proper safety measures and mechanisms to minimise workplace risks for staff and patients within the public hospital system. While the report recognises the complexities of managing a multiprofessional workforce, it also demonstrates that the public hospital system has a lack of clarity and responsibility for the day-to-day running of occupational health and safety strategies.

It appears that in these hospitals there is no coordination of data collection and there are no simplified measures to establish at any given time the number of WorkCover claims currently being paid out by insurers. WorkSafe Victoria is not able to regulate the number of accidents that are occurring every day within the public hospital system or explain why they are occurring. All we know is that \$80.5 million was spent in the 2012–13 period, which means that WorkCover claims are on the rise. All employers have a duty of care towards their employees. It is their responsibility to ensure the minimisation of accidents wherever possible. The public hospital system is a dangerous place to work. The increase in violence by drunken or drug-crazed patients is increasing, and it is absolutely unacceptable for health professionals to be threatened or assaulted in the performance of their duties.

The report highlights a worrying concern regarding WorkSafe Victoria and its apparent inability to perform as the occupational health and safety regulator. Whilst the public hospital system is fragmented in its approach and responsibilities in regard to providing a healthy workplace for its employees, WorkSafe Victoria has a statutory obligation to monitor and enforce compliance under the Accident Compensation Act 1985 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004. They are not performing this crucially important role.

I do not advocate a punitive or big-stick approach to this problem, but I think WorkSafe Victoria should be providing more educational and training programs to assist the public hospital system to reduce workplace injuries as far as possible. The Auditor-General's recommendations for improving our public health system are worthy of support.

Parks Victoria: report 2012–13

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise to speak this afternoon on the Parks Victoria annual report 2012–13.

Mr Barber interjected.

Ms CROZIER — I do not understand Mr Barber's interjection, but at the outset, I would like to congratulate the board chairman of Parks Victoria, Mr Andrew Fairley, Parks Victoria's board members and its employees, who work throughout our state and do a terrific job. I would like to highlight a number of points in relation to this report. Mr Ryan Smith, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, has delivered a number of very good initiatives. I would like to highlight those that have been drawn to my attention by this report.

There are a number of issues that relate to the area I represent, the Southern Metropolitan Region, which includes Port Phillip Bay, the Yarra River and a number of spectacular parks we are fortunate to have. It is interesting to note that Parks Victoria manages approximately 18 per cent of Victoria's land and 70 per cent of its coastline, so very significant areas of our coastline and land are managed by Parks Victoria. A number of elements in this report relate to areas outside my electorate.

I would like to draw attention to the Albert Park area, which is a significant park precinct. Its area is around 225 hectares, and as people would know it sits within the electorate of Albert Park and extends from the city fringes right down to St Kilda. It is a very well-utilised parkland and has many good facilities that the community uses on a regular basis. Parks Victoria is looking at creating a master plan to ensure that the community can further use the amenities of the Albert Park Lake precinct.

I would also like to highlight a very good initiative that aims to increase access to parks for people with a disability. The report speaks of Parks Victoria's disability action plan. At page 35 the report states:

Parks Victoria continued to deliver its objectives as outlined in its disability action plan. Changes in practices, services and infrastructure are designed to improve accessibility and increase inclusiveness for people with disabilities.

This is a great initiative, because the more people who use our parks the better, especially people with a disability, who would gain so much enjoyment from experiencing the many features of our parks and the natural assets we are so fortunate to have.

As I said, we have waterways in the Southern Metropolitan Region, and in relation to the Yarra River I commend the minister, who recently released a document entitled *A Cleaner Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay — A Plan of Action*. In that plan of action the minister highlighted 12 months of achievements. The plan highlights four main points.

The first point is about clearer, more responsive management. In relation to this point the department has released the Port Phillip Bay algal bloom response protocol and has progressed the development of a new environment management plan for Port Phillip Bay.

The second point is about preventing pollution and reducing litter. In relation to this point, the department will look at working with two bayside councils, which are obviously in the Southern Metropolitan Region. Mrs Coote, who also represents this region, understands this issue and is working on it very closely with her council. We know how important it is for those councils to have clean waterways in their bayside areas. The department has commenced work with two bayside councils to determine high-risk sources of pollution impacting on their most popular beaches.

The third point is about providing relevant and accessible information. In relation to this point, the department has looked at testing water quality, and obviously that is particularly important over the summer months when our communities are accessing our beaches and want to know about the quality of the water; and the department has worked with the Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay plan key partners to progress the delivery of a water quality website, which would provide the community with information on water quality. The fourth point is about supporting community action and looking at ways in which the community can further support parks.

I commend the minister on this initiative, and I commend Parks Victoria for the work it is undertaking throughout the state.

Swinburne University of Technology: report 2012

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I wish to make a statement. —

Mrs Coote — You're having a busy day!

Mr LEANE — Yes — always very busy. I wish to make a statement on the 2012 annual report of Swinburne University of Technology. I know I have spoken on Swinburne reports a number of times during this term of the Parliament. I have concentrated on what used to be the Swinburne University of Technology at Lilydale and how it no longer exists, and I now wish to add another instalment to this tale of woe, but I should start from the beginning to give context.

The Napthine government announced it was going to cut \$1.2 billion of funding of the TAFE sector over four years. The Swinburne University of Technology

probably conveniently used that as a catalyst, making an announcement that it no longer wished to operate from its buildings at Lilydale. The community jumped up and down and had a community meeting, as it should, which was co-hosted by the Shire of Yarra Ranges. At that community meeting the CEO of the Shire of Yarra Ranges put a motion to which he hoped the collective would agree and which included the proposition that the site become a civic centre, which would have involved moving the council offices into what was then deemed the Swinburne University buildings — there was a TAFE building and a university building. The ALP has come up with the position that these buildings have to be maintained for higher education and that a future ALP government will not rezone this land, and we call on the current government not to rezone this land but keep it for higher education.

When there was inaction, a second public meeting was called. A study had been done by Box Hill Institute of TAFE before that second meeting. The meeting determined that the land should be kept for open space, but meanwhile the council and in particular the CEO, Glenn Patterson, were continuing to work on the push for the council to move into one of the vacated buildings. On the same day the Napthine government granted the council \$100 000 to form a committee to do a review of what could be done with the buildings as far as higher education went, even though the shire, through its CEO Glenn Patterson, had stated openly — in shire magazines and in local papers — that it wanted to move its offices into the university building.

I decided this was a huge conflict of interest, and I contacted the appropriate authorities to look into it. The Victorian Ombudsman looked into it, and recently he responded to me. In part his letter states:

The council ... stated that it became aware of the potential for a surplus of land and buildings on the site through numerous conversations with the TAFE —

which the council has been demonising —

and the state government ...

All this collusion between the state government, the TAFE institute and the shire has been occurring in order for the shire to move its offices into this higher education building. I do not know when the shire was going to explain to the ratepayers that it was prepared to spend tens of millions of dollars of ratepayers money to move into shiny new offices and use a building that should be kept for education, but that has not happened. Even worse, this response identifies the fact that the council also became aware of that potential surplus

through a letter sent about a year ago from Box Hill institute to the government in which the institute had stated it was prepared to operate from the same building — the university building — that the shire has been agitating to move into. I do not know when the government, the shire and Swinburne TAFE were going to tell the community, which has been screaming for TAFE training in the outer east, that this was the case.

I will restate the matter. The letter from the Ombudsman says a letter was passed to the Napthine government from the Box Hill Institute of TAFE in which the Box Hill institute clearly indicated it was prepared to do higher education — to do TAFE training — in that building. The community of the outer east has therefore been hoodwinked by the shire and by the Napthine government in collusion with Swinburne University, and they will be hearing about it more and more over the next few weeks.

Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability: state of the environment report

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I was going to say it gives me pleasure to rise and speak on the report of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's report *Victoria — State of the Environment 2013 — Science, Policy, People*, but I do not think it does give me pleasure. I have to say I was absolutely staggered to see the size of this report when I got it. I do not know how many copies of the report were produced, but I reckon half a forest was chopped down to produce this particular publication. What really staggered me was that when the copy was handed to me, I saw that it was surrounded by very thick pieces of cardboard on each side — presumably to keep it in place, as it is a very hefty tome — and to top it off it was completely wrapped in plastic. For the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's report to be wrapped in plastic leaves a fair bit to be desired, I would have thought — though perhaps not as much as the report itself.

I may have mentioned earlier this afternoon that I am not necessarily a great believer in climate change. This report very much depends on the view that climate change exists. I refer to our friend Sandbags Flannery, who predicted that it would never rain again and that the rain that falls from above would never fill our dams again. In chapter 5 of this report, 'Human settlement', under the section heading 'Climate change', on page 192 the author has written:

Reduced rainfall and increased evapotranspiration —

that is a new one for me —

are likely to increase the frequency and severity of drought, and permanently reduce the availability of water resources. Under climate change, streamflow is projected to decrease by up to 50 per cent across much of Victoria by 2070 ... This will result in less water in storages and groundwater resources, putting pressure on water supply for cities and towns, industry and agriculture. Reduced water resources will have important consequences for the supply and use of water in the future.

I have to ask where the author of this report has been this year. This has surely been one of the wettest years Victoria has experienced for decades. If we were to go outside right now, we would see that it is raining. In the middle of the first month of summer it is raining, yet some people insist we are having reduced rainfall and insist that the global warming myth is a reality.

Hon. M. J. Guy — 81.1 percent.

Mr FINN — As Minister Guy says, currently Victoria's water storage levels are at 81.1 per cent of capacity. It staggers me that people can produce these sorts of reports and make these sorts of extraordinary statements and get away with it. As a legislator — a government member who is responsible for the proper expenditure of taxpayers money — I cannot justify money being spent on something like this, apart from the fact that it is a very fancy publication, with a plastic cover as well. To have a report full of these sorts of nonsensical statements about reduced rainfall when rain is falling as we speak, has been falling all week and has been falling all year is — —

Mrs Coote — How full are the dams?

Mr FINN — The Thomson River Dam is as full as Bob Smith, and that is really saying something. It is very sad for me to have to stand in this place to talk about this report, not because of what is in it but because it exists. Surely — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! I ask Mr Finn to withdraw that comment about the former President.

Mr FINN — Okay. I am happy to withdraw. I did not realise it was covered by the standing orders; I will be interested to see which one. I am happy to discuss this at greater length at another time.

Department of Environment and Primary Industries: report 2013

Ms DARVENIZA (Northern Victoria) — I am pleased to rise and make some comments on the 2013 annual report of the Department of Environment and

Primary Industries (DEPI). At the outset I acknowledge the contribution of the department's secretary, Adam Fennessy. During the year there has been a great deal of change and achievements made for which the department should be congratulated. The most significant challenge was the merger on 9 April of the former Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the former Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to form the new Department of Environment and Primary Industries, and the transfer of Land Victoria to the new Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, about which I will talk in some detail a bit later.

Despite wet and variable spring weather and a demanding fire season, firefighters completed 678 controlled burns — an increase of over 255 000 hectares of treating public land, and an increase of 58 078 hectares on the previous year. It has been the largest planned burning program in the past 30 years.

At this point I will mention the loss of the lives of two firefighters who died on active duty in northern Victoria — Katie Peters, 19, and Steve Kadar, 34, of Corryong. I respectfully acknowledge their commitment to protecting the Victorian community.

The Murray-Darling Basin plan, which was signed into law in 2012, brings together a new regime for the management of water resources in the Murray-Darling Basin, and the finalisation of the plan will give clarity to communities in northern Victoria and to the agricultural and industrial sectors.

Flood warning and response were improved through a series of initiatives, including the upgrade of both information and infrastructure. Floods have severely impacted parts of the electorate of Northern Victoria Region in the last few years, so I welcome upgrades that allow response and warning times to be improved.

There are always challenges for service areas, so the creation of the new Department of Environment and Primary Industries has been particularly problematic due to the merger of two former government departments. The new open-for-business culture with fewer bureaucratic bottlenecks that the Premier promised has not been delivered. Constituents in Cobram, Birchip, Kyneton, Ouyen and St Arnaud can no longer go to their local DPI office and do not agree with the Premier's sentiments. Being open for business in Kerang, Echuca, Swan Hill and Rutherglen — communities and towns in my electorate — means speaking into an intercom, because the number of

reception staff has been slashed. The exact number of staff who have been axed to create DEPI from the former Department of Primary Industries and Department of Sustainability and Environment has not been included in DEPI's annual report.

On Wednesday, 25 September, the *Weekly Times* printed what it had found through its own research, which indicates that the combined department employs more than 3700 staff who work in 39 different locations. By comparing the individual annual reports released, we can see that the total number of staff lost amounts to 592, close to the sustainable government initiative quota of 200 voluntary redundancies from DPI and 400 from DSE. Community and Public Sector Union spokesperson Julian Kennelly said in an article on 25 September that it would likely be two years until there was any transparency in the job cuts. We all know there have been lots of job cuts, but Mr Kennelly says the government has made it impossible to know how many.

The merger and the confusion that has resulted in this lack of transparency are just another example of how the Liberal-Nationals government has failed to understand what is really important to rural and regional Victoria. Slashing jobs and cutting services to our important primary industries does nothing to improve those industries; in fact it just makes it harder for them to do the work that needs to be done and the research that needs to be carried out. It is incumbent upon the Liberal-Nationals government to make sure that this sector is properly resourced.

Education and Training Committee: extent, benefits and potential of music education in Victorian schools

Mrs KRONBERG (Eastern Metropolitan) — My contribution centres on the Education and Training Committee's report on its inquiry into the extent, benefits and potential of music education in Victorian schools, which was tabled in November.

Mr O'Brien — Hear, hear! A great report.

Mrs KRONBERG — I thank Mr O'Brien very much for his comments. Chapter 2 highlights the value and benefits of music education, an area I will focus on in my contribution. It is important to put commentary on the record that places an emphasis on the role music plays in the lives of children. We all know music plays a meaningful role in children's lives, and we can also say that we can see how children enjoy and respond to music from a very early age. I am experiencing that with my seven-month-old grandson, Hamish, who is

responding to music in a very robust fashion. I believe it is innate in human beings to respond to music and to rhythms.

Children respond not only by listening to music but by making it, and by singing and moving. I know of a 15-month-old child who, when given access to her mother's iPhone, can make her own music selection and dance to it accordingly. It is a sight to behold. At 15 months of age children are able to respond to music. It is very important that children have the opportunity to access music, but sometimes families are not in a position to prioritise access to music in terms of time, commitment or the money that is attached to music tuition and participation in music-based settings.

Research exploring the meaning, value and participation of Australian children in the arts found that children value that participation. I say three cheers for all the right-brain-dominated people in our society. For instance, research indicates that Australian students perceive the arts to have important meaning in their lives as a means of expressing and communicating thoughts and feelings. We are actually talking about the formation of the whole human being.

Evidence was received by the committee suggesting that learning music during childhood provides a foundation for lifelong participation in music, and we saw a testament to that in the New Horizons Concert Band from the Dandenong Ranges that played in Queens Hall just last night. Over-50s committed to lifelong learning are taking up the learning of a musical instrument, something they probably did not have the opportunity to do as children. This underpins the value of music to people in becoming a complete person.

Parents Victoria, an organisation that represents the interests of parents of students in Victorian government schools, noted:

An appreciation of music developed in childhood has lifelong benefits. Music is part of our celebrations, valued in times of stress or loneliness, an aid to relaxation and also in exercise.

The intrinsic value of music education as an art form is what I am now going to focus on. The committee took evidence centred around the important understanding of our own humanity and the unique way of communicating and expressing ourselves. The Australian College of Educators, the national professional association for the education profession, in its contribution to the hearing process submitted that:

Music is intrinsically valuable as a unique form of human expression and experience and deserves its place in the curriculum for its own sake.

Whilst we are looking to focus on literacy and numeracy levels and continuing to slide down the ranking among the 65 nations that form the comparative analysis for the Programme for International Student Assessment scales, we need to round off the whole person and provide balance. It is a little bit like the model we see with the Finnish education system.

Royal Children's Hospital: report 2012–13

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — I am delighted to speak on the Royal Children's Hospital 2012–13 annual report. The Royal Children's Hospital has once again provided exceptional care not only for the children of Victoria but also for those from around the country — and for that matter from around the world. I congratulate the hospital's chairman, Rob Knowles, and members of the board Ms Linda Berry, Dr Julie Caldecott, Mr Max Findlay, Ms Jane Hume, Mr Sammy Kumar, Mr David Mandel, Mr John Rimmer, Dr Lakshmi Sumithran and Mr Peter Yates.

In addition to the board members I extend my thanks to the chief executive officer, Professor Christine Kilpatrick, and other members of the executive staff for their hard work during the 2012–13 financial year. I also acknowledge the various committees that are a part of the hospital and make valuable contributions throughout the year. I would also like to thank the 4500 hardworking staff who have gone above and beyond their duties to deliver world-class health care and ensure that their patients are back on the road to recovery as soon as possible.

There were many highlights in the 2012–13 financial year, including the hospital's infection control program, which since its introduction has seen the rates of in-hospital infection drop in all infection categories. This is very important, as this program ensures that our children are not exposed to any viruses during their stay at the hospital that could potentially make them sicker. Unfortunately this highlight from the year has been overshadowed by an escalating problem that has continued into the current financial year and will continue to intensify unless this government acts.

During the 2012–13 financial year 77 695 cases presented at the hospital's emergency department, 4094 more than anticipated, and as a result waiting times to receive care and surgery at this hospital have blown out. I am afraid this is just another health crisis which adds to the already mounting problems in our hospital system that this government has failed to control, along with the escalating waiting times for

ambulances that are called to code 1 emergencies and the out-of-control ramping in emergency departments.

This government is losing control of the health-care system in our state, and unfortunately, as I have said in this house before, Victorians are paying the highest cost — their lives.

I read in the *Age* of Thursday, 5 December, that:

... more than 1600 children a year are missing out on semi-urgent surgery such as hernia and tonsil removals within 90 days and non-urgent procedures such as plastic surgery to repair deformities within a year — the government's target times.

The article goes on:

In the year to June 30, 69 per cent of 3091 semi-urgent surgery patients were treated on time, down from 89 per cent in 2010–11. For non-urgent patients, 73 per cent were treated on time, down from 95 per cent.

There is a clear trend here.

Whilst I acknowledge that the Royal Children's Hospital has seen the most significant increase in service demand across the state, if this government had kept its election promise of delivering 800 new hospital beds, as opposed to making prison beds a priority, sick children visiting this hospital would not be facing a significant wait for treatment.

The Labor government made health, and in particular the Royal Children's Hospital, a priority to ensure that our children can receive the care and treatment they need. I sincerely hope that this government also recognises the need for this priority, and quickly, so that it can fix these ongoing problems at the Royal Children's Hospital. I commend this report to the house.

Queen Elizabeth Centre: report 2012–13

Mrs COOTE (Southern Metropolitan) — I have a great deal of pleasure this evening in speaking on the Queen Elizabeth Centre's annual report for 2012–13, its 95th. I would like to commend both the president and board chair, Ms Susan Harper, and Ms Athina Georgiou, the chief executive officer, on this annual report, which is clear, succinct and easy to read. Thousands of annual reports have been presented over the last little while, many of them full of glossy photographs. They must cost a fortune. This report is absolutely to the point, and I commend everybody who had something to do with it.

The Queen Elizabeth Centre (QEC) is an extraordinary organisation. It is one of Victoria's three early parenting

centres, providing specialised and intensive parenting services aimed at supporting parents and families to safely care for their young children. Services provided range from early intervention, guidance and education through to specialist and intensive early parenting support, targeting the most vulnerable families involved with child protection. The centre originated as a baby health centre, opening in North Richmond in 1917. Over the years it became pre-eminent in the provision of maternal and child health care and the training of nurses throughout Victoria. In 1934 it became a registered public hospital, which evolved into the Queen Elizabeth Centre in 1986. The centre moved to its current purpose-built facilities in Noble Park in 1998. I feel particularly proud because I chaired the committee that chose the site and supervised the building of the facility.

On 18 November I had the great pleasure of attending and launching a new website the centre established. The centre worked really hard to create the new website in only eight months. It incorporates information about every QEC program, with stories from past clients and the staff. It includes historical documents and information about education, training and employment opportunities. Innovative information technology has been used to create an interactive admission form for clients. This is really important because families presenting to the QEC are usually very stressed by a range of issues, and to be able to register online is an enormous advantage.

The centre has also noted an increase in the complexity of family trauma and the exposure that a greater number of very young children have had to abuse and neglect. The website will be a great resource for families and professionals working in the field. It provides valuable information about all of the programs. Interactive admission forms for clients ease access to services and reduce administrative burden. Personal stories from families who have used this service and from staff are testimony of the many great outcomes that families have achieved for their children with the help of the QEC teams.

With the website the QEC is exploring innovative and creative ways for professionals all over the world to access and share information and keep up to date with cutting-edge research, training and employment opportunities. I encourage members to look at the website. It is very easy to use, and there really is something for everyone. It is interesting to look at the cohort of people. The centre has a fantastic outreach program for young fathers, who can learn about parenting skills. There is a mentoring program, and parents meet on a regular basis. It really is a very

innovative program dealing with some of the simple aspects of becoming a new parent.

The website also deals with sleeping issues for children who are finding it difficult to settle, which therefore causes problems in families. There is an outreach program, which is extremely successful. A member from the centre goes into people's houses and works with the whole family — parents, siblings and the extended family — to see how they can make it better for the children in those circumstances. There is a range of programs, and I encourage people in the chamber to understand them so that, if anyone comes to their offices, they can direct them to the excellent services at the Queen Elizabeth Centre.

Some of the statistics are quite amazing. For example, in 2012–13 the DayStay program had a total of 197 families. The residential 5-day program had 531 families, and the 10-day residential parenting assessment skills development services had 122 families, giving a total of 850 families who were helped. There are outpatient programs, consultation programs and group programs. I have run out of time, but I commend the report to everyone in the chamber.

Auditor-General: report on financial report 2012–13

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I take this opportunity to make some remarks on the recent *Auditor-General's Report on the Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria, 2012–13*. On reading the report it becomes apparent that the Napthine government is economically irresponsible when it comes to creating jobs and ensuring economic growth in this state. The report notes that the revenue from taxation, dividends and the sale of goods and services has increased. The state's 2012–13 net result was a surplus of \$9525.8 million. However, the report notes that the level of infrastructure renewal at public hospitals, water entities and self-funded state agencies varies significantly and in some sectors is not sufficient to replace or maintain assets at the rate they are being consumed. This is explored by the Auditor-General in the sector-specific reports. The report needs to be read alongside the Australian Bureau of Statistics recent release of the national accounts for the states for 2012–13.

The report is damning when it comes to the economic management of the Napthine government. In 2012–13 Victoria experienced the third lowest annual growth, of 1.6 per cent compared to 2.6 per cent nationally. Further, growth in the gross state product for Victoria in the period was negative and the second lowest in

Australia. Damningly, the level of gross household disposable income per capita in 2012–13 was the second lowest in Australia. It is clear that when it comes to the economic wellbeing of Victorians this government is a basket case.

I will focus more particularly on the Auditor-General's complete slamming of the government's practice of not disclosing the budgets for major projects. Traditionally it has been the practice of the government of the day in this state to disclose budgets for major projects at the time of project announcement. Victoria embraces the Westminster system of government, and amongst the core tenets of this system are accountability and transparency. Disclosure of the expected total end cost for major projects is crucial for allowing the Parliament and Victorians to scrutinise whether the government of the day is meeting its promises and delivering projects in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Obviously that is something this government does not embrace. The Auditor-General concludes:

Recent changes to the information provided by government to Parliament and the public regarding major projects has reduced transparency. A move away from publicly disclosing project budgets and costs decreases government accountability over a significant area of public spending.

The government must change its position on this issue. The current policy on costings transparency is completely against what it promised voters at the election — that is, clear and transparent government. Given the impact of projects under way and in the pipeline when it comes to this state's finances, as well as the scale of the projects, it must not be that the public's right to transparency and accountability is sacrificed in favour of commercial sensitivities. Once tender processes for a project are finished and contracts are signed, the government must disclose expected project costs to this Parliament. Anything less is a show of contempt for Victorians. I urge the government to heed the recommendation of the Auditor-General in this report.

Law Reform Committee: sexting

Mrs MILLAR (Northern Victoria) — I am pleased to make a statement in relation to the Victorian government's response to the Law Reform Committee inquiry into sexting. This was an inquiry of great significance addressing an issue which puts many in our community at risk, most especially our young people. As raised in my inaugural speech, rapidly changing and emerging technology is a hallmark of our time and brings with it much exciting potential but also some challenges as we learn to adapt to this new

potential. The chair's foreword to the inquiry report states, in part:

Communications technologies are rapidly transforming the way people communicate, form relationships with one another, and find information.

With my background in human resources I have seen many times how relationships between people, both personal and in the workplace, are easily damaged and fractured by things done and said in texts, in emails and on social media sites. It is perhaps too easy to put out something that is irrevocable and which plagues the sender forever, and relationships are permanently damaged. This is the context in which we now conduct our relationships with others. Most especially it is the world in which our children have largely grown up.

The world of sexting takes this concept a step further into some very dark and menacing conduct and behaviour. The committee's inquiry report details many instances in which young people have had their trust, privacy and wellbeing abused and are left shattered, bullied and exposed by those who have sought to harm, denigrate or humiliate them, often without their knowledge or consent.

These Victorians need our protection through greater awareness and education about cybersafety and also through legislation to make those perpetrating these offences duly accountable for their deliberate actions. This will be done in an appropriate framework of ensuring that valid defences are implemented for minors in particular.

Regarding the terms of reference for this committee, this inquiry was about reviewing the prevalence of sexting in our communities, the ways in which raising awareness and education can minimise the ramifications of sexting and, significantly, legislative reform that may be required to protect our young people and address cases of abuse. Therefore it was very welcome yesterday that the state government released its response to the Law Reform Committee and most especially the decision that legislation will be forthcoming in relation to this important issue.

I congratulate Mr Clem Newton-Brown, the member for Prahran in the Legislative Assembly, as chair, together with the other committee members on both sides of the chamber and in the other place on their work on this inquiry, together with the outstanding committee staff, who deserve acknowledgement and credit for this welcome outcome.

Department of Primary Industries: report 2012–13

Mr O'BRIEN (Western Victoria) — I rise to make a contribution on the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) annual report for 2012–13. It is with great pleasure that I make this contribution, because it is a significant industry, and a significant department, and the government has made significant and long-lasting reforms, firstly in relation to the structure of the department, but secondly, to support the activities of the department. This contribution will focus principally on food and fibre producers, who are commonly called our farmers.

In the message from the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries we have a description of the significant machinery of government changes that this government has made. A longstanding complaint of many people dealing with the various government departments has been about the difficulties of going through different departments on other issues — that is, from the former Department of Sustainability and Environment and then to the Department of Primary Industries and the converse of that. These ministers and the government have made significant efficiencies in bringing these departments together, but I would also like to congratulate the department and obviously the new secretary, Adam Fennessy, as well as the deputy secretaries and other people who are mentioned in the report for the work they have done to bring those formerly separate departments together.

This report is only one of the two reports at this stage; obviously the Department of Environment and Primary Industries will produce a separate report. This DPI report also mentions the Minister for Energy and Resources, Mr Kotsiras, and a very important industry that is still relevant to Victoria — that is, our mining industry — but obviously it has challenges particularly in comparison to the opportunities in other states.

In relation to our food and fibre producers, this report is timely because it demonstrates again the government's commitment to funding sensible research and development as well as providing the sensible challenge to our food and fibre industry to double its production over the next 20 years. The Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, Mr Walsh, has been active in this area. As the report outlines, there are a number of significant initiatives including the support of trade missions to Asia and the Middle East to open up new markets, the launch of other programs and initiatives, including the red meat innovation centre at Hamilton, and promising research into dairy and other initiatives, with a \$61.4 million Growing Food and Fibre initiative.

By contrast it is timely to mention the comments that came out this week from a significant union official associated with the Labor Party, who derisively said that in our country we need to see the end of what he called 'ma and pa farming'. This was an extraordinary suggestion that showed again that those in the Labor Party and particularly union officials — and I make no criticism of the working people who are often associated with unions — within the leadership who have never worked in the industry can make such ignorant comments. If one is talking about the agricultural sector, a healthy market from a market point of view even in economic terms requires a range of players. You want people to be able to enter a farming industry on a lease, as farm manager, on 2 acres that are built up to 4 acres or built up as sharefarmers. You want a range of participants from family farming operations, corporate family farming operations and other structures. You do not want to put all your eggs into a large agricultural conglomerate sector, as recommended ignorantly by union official Mr Paul Howes.

It is such a free kick, because he failed to appreciate that some of the largest so-called corporate farms in Australia are in fact 'ma and pa farms'. They are the people who have driven this industry, and I can name plenty of them. The biggest one that I know in my area is a person for whom I have a lot of time — that is, Allan Myers, QC, who has grown from the butcher's floor. Yes, he has a law degree, is a significant barrister and has made some money legitimately, but he has invested back into farming and has grown a corporate sector. There are plenty of smaller farming operations, and guess what? Some of them go down, some go bad and some will go out of business and provide opportunities for others to take over.

This report is significant because it shows the government's commitments are realistic and based on what the industry is. It does not talk down the industry, does not insult our family farmers and is not out of touch like Paul Howes and the Labor Party.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Moving Victoria advertising

Ms DARVENIZA (Northern Victoria) — I wish to raise a matter for the Treasurer, Michael O'Brien, and it concerns a number of full-page advertisements that are appearing in regional daily newspapers and weekly newspapers in my electorate of Northern Victoria

Region about the Moving Victoria campaign and the letter of offer from the Department of Health signed by the Minister for Health, Mr David Davis, regarding the paramedics pay dispute.

These advertisements cost thousands of dollars, especially in the bigger daily regional newspapers. Not only are the advertisements costing thousands of dollars, they are also misleading. In Mildura the *Sunraysia Daily* reported on 7 December that ambulance officers have criticised the full-page advertisements from Minister David Davis as being not only a waste of money but, they believe, an attempt to discredit the hard work of paramedics. Ambulance Employees Australia Irymple representative Travis Coombes said he was unhappy with the ads, which had cost the Victorian taxpayer thousands of dollars to discredit paramedics.

The Moving Victoria campaign full-page advertisements that the Liberal-Nationals have also inserted into weekly newspapers and regional daily newspapers have lovely full-colour photos of all the wonderful projects the state government has completed and what is coming down the track. For example, in Kyabram, a thriving regional town in northern Victoria, one of the highlights is the proposed construction of the second Murray River crossing. Two years down the track, after a very passionate front-page article appeared in the *Riverine Herald* in July 2012 quoting then Acting Premier Peter Ryan as saying, 'Well, let's build the bloody bridge', we are still in the planning stages, with the mayor of Murray Shire Council in New South Wales, Cr Tom Weyrich, saying in October 2013, 'Enough is enough'.

Embarrassingly, it seems that perhaps the researchers were struggling to find appropriate projects for some areas. If you live in Kyabram, you are told the new Murray River crossing is being evaluated, and if you live in Echuca you are told that the new Swan Hill bridge planning is under way. If you live in the shire of Gannawarra or in Numurkah you are promised new V/Line and metropolitan trains, which are for all Victorians.

I have a specific request of the Treasurer, and the action I seek is that he be open and transparent and let Victorian taxpayers know exactly how much taxpayers money is being spent on publicising the Moving Victoria campaign and the letter of offer from David Davis in those full-page advertisements. This is taxpayers money that is being spent, and we want to see exactly how much it is costing.

Hangin Rock development

Mrs MILLAR (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Planning, the Honourable Matthew Guy. In my first 15 weeks in this place there has been one issue which has loomed larger than any other, an issue about which I have been approached by some hundreds of residents of the Macedon Ranges and even far beyond, from right across Victoria, that being the proposed development in the East Paddock at Hangin Rock. This Macedon Ranges Shire Council proposal is in its early stages, but I note that the name of this state government has been invoked on the council's website, which states:

Macedon Ranges Shire Council has resolved to work with the state government to secure a sustainable income source for Hangin Rock Reserve by using a small portion of the East Paddock to provide privately funded accommodation, conference and tourism facilities.

These statements have greatly concerned thousands of local residents. I can tell this house that I cannot go to my general store or the local pub or drop my children at primary school without the words 'Hangin Rock' being spoken to me.

Community members who have spoken to me largely have similar stories — they love to see investment in their area; most have noted that they have never been active in any cause before; there is a range of people that come from across a broad spectrum. They are simply concerned about the proximity of the proposed development to this special and treasured place in the heart of Victoria.

In raising this matter with the minister I note all the good work which is being done by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council with the coalition government. We are working at this time on a range of important projects with the council and its hardworking and dedicated local councillors. But I cannot be a true representative and voice of my local community without bringing to the minister's attention that Hangin Rock is a very special place embedded in the hearts and minds of Macedon Ranges locals. It is the subject of one of Australia's greatest literary masterpieces in Joan Lindsay's *Picnic at Hangin Rock*, first published in the year of my own birth — 1967. It reads:

On the steep southern facade the play of golden light and deep violet shade revealed the intricate construction of long vertical slabs; some smooth as giant tombstones, others grooved and fluted by prehistoric architecture of wind and water, ice and fire. Huge boulders, originally spewed red hot from the boiling bowels of the earth, now come to rest, cooled and rounded in forest shade.

This book inspired Peter Weir's haunting film from 1974. Racegoers and picnickers have visited the site for well over a century. People have always come to the rock and appreciated its uniqueness. I can tell members that there is much excitement in the local area about the planned concert on 30 March by the Rolling Stones — the rock legends come to the rock. These concerts, promoted by Frontier Touring, are a brilliant addition to our local area.

The Minister for Planning is no stranger to the Macedon Ranges. Locals are aware that he has an in-depth knowledge of the unique and significant nature of this region, so I invite the minister, together with other parliamentary colleagues, to climb the rock with me this summer, because it is only by standing on top of this iconic place at 718 metres that you can understand why this site is so precious to so many.

Prahran electorate secondary schools

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter tonight should be for Mary Wooldridge, but it is not — it is for Martin Dixon, the Minister for Education. The matter regards government secondary schooling provision in Prahran. During the Kennett government two secondary schools, Prahran Secondary College and Ardoch Windsor Secondary College, and two primary schools, Prahran Primary School and Hawksburn State School, were closed in the lower house electorate of Prahran. As I recall, the sites of three of those four schools were sold and the fourth was used for other purposes.

This short-sighted decision has meant that, with a change in the demographics of the Prahran area, there is a shortage of secondary school provisioning in Prahran. Governments of all stripes have been trying to catch up from the Kennett government's asset sales that got rid of these four schools. My colleague Clem Newton-Brown, the member for Prahran in the Assembly, raised an adjournment matter in that house in 2011 asking the minister to undertake a feasibility study for a government secondary school in Prahran, but that study will not be completed until after the end of next year. We also had a brief opportunity for a government secondary school in Prahran with the proposed sale of Swinburne University of Technology's Prahran campus, but that has now been bought by another TAFE institute, so that option has gone.

The actions I seek from the minister are: firstly, that he actively seek to replace those two government secondary schools that were closed by the Kennett government with a government secondary school in the Prahran electorate; and secondly, in doing so, that he

inform the member for Prahran that the reason there is no government secondary school in Prahran is not 11 years of Labor inactivity — it is the fact that seven years of the Kennett government got rid of four government schools in the Prahran electorate, two of which were secondary schools. The actions I seek are that the minister work hard to get a government secondary school in Prahran and that he keep it in an appropriate historical context.

Marina Reserve, St Kilda, skate park

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith. The issue is also relevant to him as Minister for Youth Affairs. Earlier this year I had the pleasure of representing the Minister for Sport and Recreation and the Deputy Premier at the opening of the Marina Reserve upgrade in St Kilda. This reserve is on the beach and has a number of recreational attractions, including obviously the beach and parklands, but also a skate park, which is an important facility for many people but around which there has been some contention. As I said, I was at the opening of the upgraded Marina Reserve representing the two ministers who, along with the Port Phillip City Council and others, contributed money towards development of the reserve.

A leading skateboard rider, Renton Millar, was at the opening. He is well known within his sporting field and has been a great advocate for the skate park; he says it is one of the best in the world. Renton made the point that a company called Globe, which promotes skateboarding activities, is located close by in Port Melbourne. If this skate park were opened up for some competition events throughout the year, it would be a great attraction and would help promote the local economy of St Kilda. Renton is a great champion of the sport and competes on a regular basis around the world. Currently there is an inability to hold events at the skate park.

My question to the minister is whether he can review the coastal consent framework that applies to the reserve so that events would be able to be held at that skate park. We are not talking about multiple events; it would be a few events throughout the year. This is a very worthy activity to undertake in such a precinct. Hopefully the minister will consider this request favourably.

Vocational education and training subsidies

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — My matter is for the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development. The matter I wish to raise relates to the government's recent announcement of funding cuts to training subsidies for all vocational education and training courses from 1 January 2014 and specifically to the reduction in the government subsidy for certificate III in children's services from \$7 to \$5. This is highly surprising, given the shortage of qualified staff in the sector. Not only is the government slashing the subsidies, making it more unattractive for people to enter the early childhood workforce, but the cuts to TAFE have resulted in the closure of campus child-care services such as the BRIT Beginners Childcare Centre at Bendigo TAFE.

On 5 October 2010 Minister Lovell said in Parliament that it was a 'good thing for us to have higher qualifications for staff'. By cutting the training subsidy for children's services courses, is she saying she does not consider early education and care training to be a high-needs area? The minister's federal colleagues have also indicated they are walking away from the former Gillard Labor government's pay increase to child-care workers. What the government does not seem to understand is that if you make it harder for people to get training, if you do not adequately remunerate staff, you will not attract and retain quality people to these jobs. Everything that is being done by both the federal coalition and state coalition governments is a retrograde step in training up the workforce in early childhood education.

Given the requirements of the national regulations require all educators in centre-based services to have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved certificate III level education and care qualification by 1 January 2014, I ask the minister: how is the cut to this TAFE subsidy consistent with meeting this objective and what are the implications for the Victorian early childhood workforce?

Electricity prices

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy and Resources, the Honourable Nicholas Kotsiras. It is in relation to a number of representations to my office regarding potential price gouging by power companies, particularly targeted at residents with solar power. I am sorry Mr Barber is not here this evening to hear this adjournment matter, because he would be drooling at the prospect that I am going to speak in support of those with solar power.

Constituents of mine from Western Victoria Region have come to my office in Ballarat and raised a number of concerns about the behaviour of the generators. It is particularly where we as a government encourage the use of renewable energies and the use of solar power. We have provided significant feed-in tariff support, and through the federal government there has been significant rebates given for the panels themselves.

My constituents are saying that people who have invested in solar panels are being increasingly subjected to significant cost burdens imposed by the generators themselves. It has been suggested to me that the generators are now charging solar customers more for their access to the power grid, viable lines and infrastructure. It appears that solar customers are being advised that due to their reduced power use from the grid, energy companies are increasing their access fees to recoup some of the consumption losses. In a letter to the editor of the *Ballarat Courier* of 10 December, Ms Rosemary Glaisher wrote:

In an attempt to protect their margin from the decrease in demand for their product, they are hitting householders with higher bills and trying to slow down the solar rollout.

A recent report by the AEMC (Australian Energy Marketing Commission) has indicated that they may recommend new tariffs for every solar home connected to the grid, claiming that because solar panel owners do not have to buy as much electricity from them, they are not paying their fair share for infrastructure use.

If the government accepts these recommendations, solar homes could be faced with higher charges to use the poles and wires that distribute electricity.

This would be both unfair to people who installed solar panels in good faith ...

I ask the minister if he could provide oversight of some of these generators because they appear to be discriminating against those who use solar power. I also ask him to request that the Essential Services Commission investigate pricing by the generators, particularly in relation to their recouping of losses for their infrastructure following greater use of solar panels.

Docklands short-stay operators

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Planning, and I am pleased to see he is in the chamber. It relates to the issue of short-stay apartments, particularly in Docklands. Together with Ms Kanis, the member for Melbourne in the other place, I visited Docklands to meet with some of its residents, who are very concerned about individuals who rent apartments for short stays of a day or more for the purpose of holding

parties, including bucks nights or 21st birthday parties. These short stays have a very disruptive impact on the amenity of residents of those apartments. The partygoers are often disruptive, loud and abusive. They leave litter, alcohol, vomit and all sorts of stuff, which can make it a very unpleasant and frightening environment for people to come home to on a Friday or Saturday evening.

Residents received some comfort when in August this year the *Docklands News* reported that the Minister for Planning had vowed to increase the powers of Docklands owners corporations to regulate short-stay apartments in their buildings. The residents were reasonably pleased with the commitment made by the Minister for Planning but are now concerned that in the four months since that commitment was made the Minister for Planning has yet to deliver on it.

I ask the Minister for Planning to outline what steps he has taken to deliver on the commitment to empower owners corporations to manage short-stay operators and to give a time frame as to when those residents will be able to see some action. This is particularly an issue for residents as we enter the Christmas and holiday periods, during which this sort of activity is heightened. Residents are looking for some assurance from the minister in terms of the steps that he will take and the time line for those steps.

Cemetery workers enterprise bargaining

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Health, Mr David Davis, and it is in relation to the ongoing industrial dispute at the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust. The action I seek is that the minister provide an account as to whether or not he has engaged in any action to resolve the dispute and to further engage in action to bring this dispute to an end.

The Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust is accountable to the Department of Health under the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003. In 2013 the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust had 230 full-time equivalent employees and an operating revenue of \$47 million. Needless to say it is a formidable enterprise. For some time now employees of the trust have been seeking the retention of those industrial conditions enjoyed by their fellow workers in the industry — namely, they seek the agreed 2.5 per cent increase in wages, as per state government policy, and maintenance of their existing conditions, which are also enjoyed by employees of other trusts.

On 22 August the Minister for Health made remarks in the Council that insinuated that, if the union responsible for representing the industrial interests of the employees of Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, the Australian Workers Union, were to engage in a series of industrial bans, it would greatly impact upon the community. The minister attacked the workers' rights to take lawful industrial action to achieve an outcome. It is clear where the minister's priorities and loyalties lie. Needless to say none of these bans has eventuated. Indeed during that time industrial negotiations have stalled.

The reality is that employees of the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust just want to retain their current conditions of employment and not have them ripped away. I call on the Minister for Health to act now to ensure that the unfair and substandard treatment of these employees is brought to an end, that an industrial agreement is offered in line with the established industry norm and consistent with the government policy of a 2.5 per cent wage increase and that they are not forced to give away their current conditions of employment.

Country Fire Authority Fiskville facility

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Assistant Treasurer, as the minister responsible for WorkSafe. The matter relates to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) Fiskville training facility. As all members would know, a couple of years ago some grave health concerns about the Fiskville facility were brought to the attention of the people who use it, including firefighters. WorkSafe officers visited the site on 5 December 2011 and committed to an investigation. Unfortunately two years have now passed. Under the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, WorkSafe may bring a prosecution at any time within two years of an offence being committed.

Representatives of the CFA personnel have contacted WorkSafe officers to ask why the investigation has not been completed, considering the grave concerns of the firefighters and the community. WorkSafe has written back to say that even though it has been over two years since the investigation commenced, an outcome is not expected for another five months. It has been a long time since the issue was raised. This is a sensitive issue and one which is of grave concern to a number of people. WorkSafe says it needs five more months, despite having already exceeded the prescribed period of two years, as outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The action I seek from the Assistant Treasurer is that he personally guide the authority to a position where it can finalise the investigation once and for all. Whether the outcome is good, bad or indifferent for the people who utilise the facility, the investigation needs to be completed in the very near future.

Responses

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — Ms Darveniza asked a question of the Treasurer, Michael O'Brien, around government advertising. Notwithstanding the previous government's record on government advertising, I will have the Treasurer respond to her concern. Maybe in his answer he can also enlighten her about some of the previous years' advertising figures compared to the current ones.

Ms Millar asked me to visit Hanging Rock and the areas around it over the summer period. I will be very happy to do that. No doubt she and I will go walking up the rock. Mr Leane can come with us. Hopefully he will not go missing; he has preselection to fight for. I will go up there with Ms Millar. She has raised a very important issue with some distinction.

Mr Lenders raised a matter for the Minister for Education, Martin Dixon, in relation to secondary school issues in the Prahran area. I will have a written response prepared for him.

Ms Crozier raised a matter for Ryan Smith, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change and Minister for Youth Affairs. I will have him give her a written response.

I will have a written response prepared for Ms Mikakos from Wendy Lovell, the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development.

A written response will be prepared for Mr Ramsay from Nicholas Kotsiras, the Minister for Energy and Resources, in relation to price gouging by power companies. Mr Ramsay is not here — —

Ms Crozier — Here he is.

Hon. M. J. GUY — He is right behind me. You have to be careful in politics with people standing behind you. I think I am safe; he is a good bloke. It is a shame Mr Barber was not here to hear Mr Ramsay. Mr Barber would have loved it. It would have been the first time there was synergy between the two of them. It would have been quite worthwhile.

Mr Tee raised a matter for me in relation to short-stay apartments. There is no easy fix when it comes to short-

stay apartments. How do you tell someone who owns an apartment that they have to get out of it? You cannot; they own it. We are working through a number of solutions. Mr Tee raised it as an issue of concern. It is an issue of concern for a number of people in Docklands. I certainly accept that. We will try to address it in the first few months of next year. It will take some time, but we will try to provide a proper response that takes in the genuine concerns of a number of people in Docklands and also deals with how a body corporate might be empowered to find a proper solution rather than being left powerless or being given a power that is over the top. We will work through those issues. I am working with a number of other ministers because these issues involve a number of portfolios, not just planning.

Mr Melhem raised an issue for the Minister for Health, David Davis, in relation to a Southern Metropolitan Cemetery Trust dispute, and I will have the minister attend to that.

Mr Leane raised an issue for the Assistant Treasurer relating to a Country Fire Authority facility in Fiskville which, as he said, is a very serious matter that needs a proper response. I will have one prepared by the minister for Mr Leane.

There are eight written responses to adjournment debate matters: for Mr Tee on 15 March 2012, for Ms Broad on 5 February, for Mr Tee on 5 March, for Ms Pennicuik on 17 April, for Ms Darveniza on 11 June, for Mr Barber on 29 October, for Mr Elsbury on 26 November and for Ms Pulford on 28 November.

Those are all the matters I have tonight for the adjournment debate.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The house then stands adjourned.

House adjourned 6.49 p.m.