

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 29 May 2013

(Extract from book 7)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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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 the Arts, Minister for Women's Affairs and Minister for Consumer Affairs	The Hon. H. Victoria, MP
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 Petrovich, #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 Petrovich, #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, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Brien, Mrs Petrovich, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Ramsay and Mr Viney.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 Graley, Mr Wakeling and Mr Weller.

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

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

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

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): Mr 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*): Mr Brooks, 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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The Hon. D. M. DAVIS

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	O'Brien, Mr David Roland Joseph	Western Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Hon. Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Darveniza, Ms Kaye Mary	Northern Victoria	ALP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Davis, Hon. David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pakula, Hon. Martin Philip ¹	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Davis, Mr Philip Rivers	Eastern Victoria	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Petrovich, Mrs Donna-Lee	Northern Victoria	LP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Elsbury, Mr Andrew Warren	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Hon. Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Guy, Hon. Matthew Jason	Northern Metropolitan	LP	Scheffer, Mr Johan Emiel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hall, Hon. Peter Ronald	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Tarlamis, Mr Lee Reginald	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tee, Mr Brian Lennox	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Koch, Mr David Frank	Western Victoria	LP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Resigned 26 March 2013

² Appointed 8 May 2013

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Wednesday, 29 May 2013

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

The PRESIDENT — Order! I inform the house that I have been advised the Economy and Infrastructure Legislation Committee and the Legal and Social Issues Legislation Committee will both be meeting this day following the conclusion of the sitting of the Council. I understand Mr Rich-Phillips has a particular interest in one of those committees this evening.

PETITIONS

Following petition presented to house:

Schools: funding

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the Baillieu state government's decision to cut \$555 million from Victorian schools. In particular, we note:

1. Funding for the VET and VCAL programs has been cut, meaning thousands of students are now missing out on opportunities.
2. The education maintenance allowance, the School Start bonus and the conveyance allowance have either been slashed or scrapped.
3. The Premier's broken promise to teachers means students will miss out on camps, excursions and other opportunities.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council urges the Baillieu state government to guarantee no further cuts to education funding will be made in the upcoming 2013–14 Victorian budget.

**By Mr SCHEFFER (Eastern Victoria)
(35 signatures).**

Laid on table.

LAW REFORM COMMITTEE

Sexting

Mrs PETROVICH (Northern Victoria) presented report, including appendices, together with transcripts of evidence.

Laid on table.

Ordered that report be printed.

Mrs PETROVICH (Northern Victoria) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

It is my very great pleasure to speak today on the report of the Law Reform Committee inquiry into sexting. The committee completed an extensive piece of what I think is groundbreaking work on technology that has got ahead of our community in many ways. Our young people are using this technology in a way that is very natural to them, but sometimes places them in jeopardy.

For their work on the report I would like to congratulate our committee members: chair Mr Clem Newton-Brown, the member for Prahran in the Assembly; deputy chair Ms Jane Garrett, the member for Brunswick in the Assembly; Mr Anthony Carbines, the member for Ivanhoe in the Assembly; and Mr Russell Northe, the member for Morwell in the Assembly. I would also like to congratulate the staff of this committee: executive officer Dr Vaughn Koops, research officer Ms Amie Gordon and administration officer Ms Helen Ross-Soden.

As I have said, this report is quite significant. It deals with the issue of communication technologies which are transforming the way people communicate. Many young people would much rather text each other than speak over the phone. It is now a recognised way for all of us to communicate and in many instances form relationships. Young people in particular, who are exploring their sexuality through online media, may portray themselves in sexually explicit photographs, and that can place them in jeopardy. Some adults also use this medium, but when they do there is a vast difference between the two as to whether it is a consensual exploration of that technology.

One of the difficulties with this law is that any explicit depiction of a minor is regarded as child pornography, and young people commit an offence when they create, possess or distribute images of themselves or their peers. In contrast, the laws surrounding child pornography, which are extraordinarily strong, as they should be to protect young people from predatory behaviour, can cause young people who take pictures of themselves to be caught up and potentially put on the sex offenders register. Currently we think the laws that apply to sexting miss the mark and do not adequately recognise that sexting by young people is different to the sharing of images by paedophiles. The law does not adequately recognise the real and significant harm done to people of all ages when explicit images are distributed by third parties.

One of the key recommendations in the report is that a new offence be introduced for non-consensual sexting,

and the committee has suggested that these sexting offences have a number of features, including that it be an offence to intentionally distribute or threaten to distribute an intimate image of another person or persons. 'Distribute' means to publish, exhibit, send, supply or transmit to any other person, whether a particular person or not, and to make available for access by any other person whether that be a particular person or not. 'Intimate image' means a photograph or footage, whether in digital format or another format, in which a person is or persons are depicted either engaged in sexual activity in an indecent sexual manner or context or in a state of partial or complete nudity. The committee suggests that a defence be available to prosecution for a sexting offence if it can be proved.

We had a vast number of inputs to this inquiry. They ranged from the police to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The committee also looked at work that is being done internationally and from the Victorian and Australian perspectives, and it is clear that there is much work to be done.

In many cases this issue will be resolved through the significant changes that have been proposed in this report but also through education for young people who use this technology and cannot be extricated from it. It is their way of talking and communicating, so we need to help them protect themselves in their exploration of this technology. I commend the report to the house.

Motion agreed to.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Auditor-General's reports on —

Management of Staff Occupational Health and Safety in Schools, May 2013.

Tertiary Education and Other Entities: Results of the 2012 Audits, May 2013.

The State of Victoria's Children: Performance Reporting, May 2013.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Kath Hamilton

Ms TIERNEY (Western Victoria) — Kath Hamilton died recently, and my husband and I along with many other Labor members of Parliament attended Kath's funeral in Morwell to pay our final respects for the rich and deeply committed life that she led. Kath was a true believer — not in the popular sense of the word as it is bandied around, but in the sense that she

believed that all people, regardless of religion, gender or colour of skin, should be given the opportunity to advance themselves in this great country. She lived and breathed equality. She was a tireless campaigner, along with her husband Keith, who was a minister in the Bracks government, to ensure that the population of Gippsland was not left behind as the nation moved forward.

Those of you who had the privilege to know the Hamilton family will be aware of Kath's fierce campaigning skills and relentless drive to ensure that working people within her community were given a focus. She did this through her community work and her support for the Labor brand within the area. Everyone who knew Kath knew that she did it all with a sense of style and humour that resonated with all those who came into contact with her.

The best way to describe Kath's life would be: a loving mother, wife and grandmother; someone committed to the Labor cause; a tireless egalitarian; a fierce campaigner; and someone to be very, very proud of. Kath Hamilton was simply adored, and she will be missed by all those who knew her.

Pakenham Racing Club: Tynong racecourse

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE (Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation) — Last week I was pleased to join the Minister for Racing and Premier at the \$70 million, 608-acre new racecourse development at Tynong — the new Pakenham Racing Club facility — which is currently under construction. This facility will be fantastic for jobs, fantastic for economic growth and fantastic for the Berwick to Pakenham growth corridor and indeed the broader West Gippsland precinct, being strategically located between Pakenham and Warragul. The new racecourse will have a state-of-the-art 2400-metre turf track, two high-quality sand training tracks, a modern grandstand with customer facilities, high-quality training infrastructure, trainer allotments and other infrastructure.

The purpose of last week's visit was to announce the installation of a \$9 million synthetic track at the racecourse. The track, only the second of its kind in Victoria, will add to the precinct and cement the position of the south-east, in conjunction with Cranbourne, as a leader in racing in Victoria and indeed in the country, but more importantly it will generate hundreds of jobs.

This announcement builds on the funding in the budget for the port of Hastings, which will be good for jobs; the recent announcement by the Minister for

Agriculture and Food Security of the opening of a new stockfeed mill at Pakenham, a \$12.8 million investment; the jobs that will be generated by the construction of the Koo Wee Rup bypass; the Warragul station upgrade; the construction of the Officer special school, which is now well advanced; and funding in this year's budget for the Officer secondary college. The announcement is good for jobs, it is good for economic growth in that growing precinct and it is good for better service provision in Eastern Victoria Region.

National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — Like many people around Australia, I attended events to mark the 15th National Sorry Day on 26 May and National Reconciliation Week. The first National Sorry Day was held one year after the tabling of the *Bringing Them Home* report on the inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. It is now just over five years since the apology to the stolen generations was made in the commonwealth Parliament.

On 21 November 2004 Michael Long walked from Melbourne to Canberra, and was joined by Indigenous and non-Indigenous supporters, to raise awareness of Indigenous issues. I have participated in a number of subsequent Long Walks. Last Sunday I joined federal Greens MPs Adam Bandt and Rachel Siewert, many other state and federal MPs and members of the public at Federation Square to take the first steps along the Yarra River, led by Michael Long and other Indigenous elders, on Australia's Journey to Recognition, a relay from Melbourne to Adelaide and then north to Arnhem Land, arriving in August, to build momentum for the campaign to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the constitution.

The constitution is now 112 years old and still does not recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first people of Australia. It is now 46 years since the 27 May 1967 referendum. It is important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised in the constitution. I believe that, as in 1967, the vast majority of Australians will support this recognition. Let us hope it can be achieved before the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, in 2017.

The campaign for recognition is symbolised by the letter R, which also represents to me the three Rs — respect, recognition and reconciliation.

Geelong Innovation Expo

Mr KOCH (Western Victoria) — Last week I had the privilege of opening the first Geelong Innovation Expo on behalf of the government. The purpose of the expo was to promote practical steps for businesses to innovate and encourage greater collaboration amongst Geelong manufacturers and researchers. The expo was part of the Greater Geelong industry innovation program, which forms part of the government's broader \$15 million Geelong development fund.

The government has committed \$800 000 to the Geelong Manufacturing Council to deliver the industry innovation program in conjunction with Deakin University. The industry innovation program facilitates joint projects between Geelong manufacturers and Deakin researchers at the Geelong technology precinct in Waurn Ponds. Its main objective is to achieve a more competitive manufacturing industry while improving the productivity and competitiveness of manufacturers, which includes promoting industry collaboration with research institutions.

Launched in November 2011, the program aims to make it easier for local business to access researchers and to give researchers real-world experience working with business. Since its launch about 60 projects have been initiated and some 170 companies have been briefed on how they can collaborate with Deakin University. Innovation is vital to drive business growth, competitiveness and employment across all industries, and it will be a key contributor to securing a competitive future for the manufacturing sector, particularly in Geelong following the recent announcement by Ford.

My thanks go to David Peart, executive officer of the manufacturing council, for pursuing this vital initiative for Geelong and for his strong commitment to its success.

Detention centres: media access

Ms DARVENIZA (Northern Victoria) — I am deeply concerned that the Australian media continues to be denied access to offshore detention centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea. Media access is now more important than ever since these centres have been determined not to be under the remit of the Australian Human Rights Commission. The federal Parliament recently rejected measures that would have given the Human Rights Commission jurisdiction with respect to Australian offshore detention centres.

At the same time, the federal government argues that access by Australian journalists to overseas centres is a matter for the governments of the relevant countries, but as last night's SBS *Dateline* program again showed, staff at the Australian-run Manus Island centre went to extraordinary lengths to make sure that journalist Mark Davis was unable to film, even outside the centre. Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister Peter O'Neill confirmed on that program that PNG has no difficulty with the press visiting the centre and PNG prefers that detainees are free to leave the centre — a stand supported by local people. Indeed I was moved by the compassion for detainees shown by local people who appeared on the *Dateline* program.

At any rate, if conditions in these centres can neither be reviewed by the free media nor the human rights watchdog, that is all the more reason for detainees to be brought to the Australian mainland. The Australian public must be given the means of knowing the full circumstances of all detainees held in Australian detention centres.

Country Fire Authority: Warrnambool brigade 150th anniversary

Mr O'BRIEN (Western Victoria) — On Saturday, 18 May, I was honoured to represent the Premier, who is the member for South-West Coast in the Assembly, the Honourable Denis Napthine, at the Warrnambool fire brigade's 150th anniversary dinner and celebrations. The evening was well attended by members of the fire brigade and was a wonderful celebration for all involved.

The brigade's 150-year history has been well documented in a book by Avis Quarrell, which was launched that evening. In that book one can see the way the fire brigade has grown from the initial meeting on 6 March 1863 of citizens who were concerned about the impact of fires on the south-west and the growing township of Warrnambool. The brigade of 2013 is very different from the one of that time. For a start, water was an issue; there were no readily available supplies like we have today. Instead various people would bring water to the fire and then receive some sort of recompense for their contribution. Another issue in the early days was assembling the brigade when a fire occurred. Various methods were used, including the ringing of a triangle.

Under the banner of the Country Fire Authority the brigade is a significant workplace and an essential service. I congratulate Henry Barton, officer in charge at Warrnambool; Bryan Wills, the secretary of the brigade; David Fergusson, the project officer; other

brigade staff and volunteers on a wonderful evening and an important celebration.

Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union: industrial action

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) has finally been found guilty of contempt of court for its blockade of a Melbourne building site. The Victorian Supreme Court found the construction union was in contempt on five charges for ignoring court orders not to obstruct the Emporium Melbourne building site in the inner city in late September last year. The CFMEU now tries to justify its actions, but the court has seen the union's threatening and lawless behaviour on Melbourne streets for what it was.

We say no organisation in Victoria can consider itself above the law, regardless of its political or industrial influence. In his judgement Justice Cavanough found the union responsible for organising the demonstrations and said:

The two fundamental issues in this case are whether the persons in question obstructed access to the building sites on the days in question, and whether the CFMEU deliberately caused them to do so.

...

I am satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the answer in both cases is yes.

The case followed a week of violent clashes between construction workers and police who simply tried to escort managers and workers in to do their jobs. Police were on foot and on horseback, and horses were punched. It cost Grocon \$371 000 a day. After the confrontation a union assistant secretary, John Setka, drove his car at a Grocon manager at a facility in Footscray and hit him. Fortunately the manager was not badly hurt. But what did John Setka's puppet, the member for Mulgrave in the Assembly and Leader of the Opposition, Daniel Andrews, do? He opened his arms and welcomed the union members back into the ALP. He should condemn these thugs.

Mr Leane — On a point of order, President, it was all very dramatic, but if a member of this chamber wants to make accusations about a current member of Parliament, they need to do so by way of a substantive motion.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I think the point of order has some merit in the sense that where a member reflects on a member in this place or in the other place in terms of their conduct then it is best done by

substantive motion. I think Mr Ondarchie's time has expired.

Mr ONDARCHIE — I have 10 seconds to go.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Ondarchie to complete his members statement.

Mr ONDARCHIE — The Leader of the Opposition should immediately cut all ties with the CFMEU and return all the money the Labor Party has received from this union. Its members are thugs; they are stopping investment in Victoria, and the ALP should condemn them.

Mr Leane — On a point of order, President, I understand that the member has finished his members statement, but he should be reminded that in future he needs to direct his contribution through the Chair and not point aggressively at the opposition across the chamber.

Mr O'Brien — On the point of order, President, I ask for your further guidance, without disputing the ruling you made on aspects of Mr Ondarchie's contribution, by pointing out that allegiances with the unions are offensive — it seems to me to be a fact. I would appreciate your guidance on that, further to Mr Leane's point of order.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I do not believe I ruled that way at all. I indicated that, in a fairly amplified voice, Mr Ondarchie was suggesting an alliance between Mr Andrews and the union in a manner that suggested it was an improper alliance, and I think that would be best pursued by a substantive motion.

In terms of Mr Leane's point of order, which is the one I should be dealing with at this point, I believe Mr Ondarchie directed his remarks through the Chair. He was certainly looking at me quite fiercely, so I have great confidence that he was directing his remarks through the Chair. I think that completes the point of order.

Battles of Greece and Crete: commemoration

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — Over the past few days there have been many events commemorating the 72nd anniversary of the battles of Greece and Crete during World War II. During the battle of Crete, out of a total of 40 000 soldiers who made up the Allied and Greek forces in Crete, 3990 were killed, 2750 wounded and 17 090 captured. Post evacuation, hundreds of members of the Australian armed forces remained behind enemy lines, either

escaping or joining the Greek resistance, supported by the brave local Greek population.

On Monday I had the pleasure of attending a medals ceremony hosted by the Consul General of Greece, the dynamic Mrs Eleni Lianidou, to pay tribute to Australians who fought bravely in these battles. Commemorative medals of honour from the Greek armed forces were presented to 92-year-old veteran Mr Alex Maxwell White, and family members accepted medals on behalf of Mr Lenard William Thomas Beal, Mr Davy Howard Bertram, Mr Ernest Allen Bridges, Mr Swan Bramwell, Mr Alan Dyer Campbell, Mr Arthur Charles Ford and Mr Ronald Valentine Margetts. As a Greek-Australian, I am forever indebted to them for their bravery in fighting for freedom.

As part of the delegation of members of Parliament who undertook an Anzac study tour, I recently attended the moving commemorative dawn service at Anzac Cove, the Australian memorial service at Lone Pine in Gallipoli and other services. We also had the opportunity to visit some of the major battle sites such as Vevi, the Servia Pass, Pinios Pass, Brallos Pass, Thermopylae and Corinth in Greece where the Anzacs fought in World War II. It was an honour to attend events hosted by the local authorities commemorating and paying tribute to the sacrifices of the Anzacs. Australians are buried in six commonwealth war cemeteries in Greece. This is an important part of Greece and Australia's shared history.

Drought: western Victoria

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — In this chamber last sitting week I described the worsening dry conditions in Western Victoria Region, but I am happy to report that since then 38 millimetres of rain have fallen across the general area. In fact the rain started almost at the same time Mr Barber, Leader of the Greens, called for a statewide drought declaration, blaming climate change for the dry. The climate has changed, but unfortunately the much-heralded financial assistance package for farmers promoted by the Gillard government is typical of no change. It is all spin and no substance with no detail and no consultation with the state government, concessional loans still not defined, eligibility not determined and delivery not detailed.

Prompt action was taken to take money out of Caring for our Country Landcare projects to fund other parts of the package, but we have a federal Gillard government which is dithering on the concessional loans. So while the Gillard government was ripping the money out of Landcare and offering false hope to the farmers of

Victoria, I was pleased to represent the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith, in celebrating award recipients of the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) Landcare awards. I congratulate the winners and the authority's staff and board members, ably led by the chair, Alice Knight, in showcasing the volunteers of environmental stewardship under the watch of the CCMA.

This is in stark contrast to the shameful way the Colac Otway Shire Council has conducted itself in pursuing the imposition of proposed saline and biodiversity overlays, known as C68 and C70, on land-holders, driven by the green bureaucracy in the Department of Environment and Primary Industries, formerly the Department of Sustainability and Environment. A meeting I attended in Colac last Monday night with over 300 concerned ratepayers voted unanimously to oppose the proposed new overlays and the impact they would have on farming operations.

This demonstrates the danger of having inexperienced city councillors not understanding what they vote for; town planners not experienced in mapping environmental overlays; and council officers trying to bulldoze through new overlays, which require more permits, more restrictions and more fines, without fully engaging the community they purport to represent. The Colac Otway Shire Council is running amok and not engaging with the community, so much so that new environmental overlays being proposed will require a permit to have a pee on a tree and impose a fine for increasing the acidity of the soil around it.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The member's time has expired.

Marong Early Learning Centre: opening

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development) — It was wonderful to see a big turnout of families, children and of course teachers for the opening of the brand-new Marong Early Learning Centre near Bendigo recently. The government contributed more than \$800 000 to this exciting new development, which sees three and four-year-old kindergarten offered right next to the Marong Primary School. Maternal and child health services are due to join the kindergarten programs, meaning the Marong school campus will offer a one-stop shop for children from birth until grade 6. The new development is a wonderful asset for the growing community of Marong.

Lulla's Children and Family Centre: staff scholarships

Hon. W. A. LOVELL — I recently visited an early childhood centre that is providing exceptional education and care for young Aboriginal children. My visit to Lulla's Children and Family Centre was to congratulate seven staff members who have been awarded scholarships to further their qualifications. In 2012–13 scholarships totalling \$237 500 were offered to Aboriginal educators to support their studies from certificate III to early childhood teaching degree level. It was a pleasure to visit Lulla's place and to see firsthand the difference these scholarships are making to young Aboriginal educators.

Louise Fitzpatrick Leach

Hon. W. A. LOVELL — I would like to congratulate Louise Fitzpatrick Leach from Ouyen Preschool, who was named Early Childhood Teacher of the Year at the Victorian Education Excellence Awards. Louise uses video for teaching, learning and assessment and to communicate with parents, creating a DVD for each family. She also takes part in mentoring programs and has been praised for her work in the areas of literacy and Indigenous education. It is wonderful to see Louise being recognised for her innovation and her dedication to the children of their part of the Mallee.

Multiple sclerosis: Kiss Goodbye to MS

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Today is World MS Day. Just over two weeks ago I met a remarkable woman, Megan Healey, who is undertaking an extraordinary endeavour to raise awareness and funds for the Kiss Goodbye to MS campaign. Megan has always been active, whether that has been playing tennis, bungee jumping, horseriding or even skydiving. But now Megan is wheelchair bound. This barrier did not stop her from undertaking a ride from Melbourne to Sydney on a lawnmower; she commenced her trip outside the Melbourne Brain Centre in Parkville. Proudly watching on and waving her off were her three children, her husband and many supporters. Megan came up with the idea whilst mowing her lawns where she lives on the New South Wales central coast.

In attendance at the campaign launch were Professor Trevor Kilpatrick, who leads the multiple sclerosis (MS) division at the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health; Dr Ben Emery; Jeremy Wright, the CEO of MS Research Australia; and Deborah Cerasa, the CEO of MS Australia. Megan's story is certainly an inspirational one. As someone with a profound disability, she completes her

journey today and should be congratulated on raising awareness of MS as well as on her extraordinary courage and determination.

The Minister for Disability Services and Reform, Ms Wooldridge, and the Premier, Dr Napthine, reached a historic agreement with the Prime Minister on 4 May allowing for the full rollout of the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS), now known as DisabilityCare Australia, across Victoria by 2019. Mrs Coote, who is the Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Community Services, was also in attendance for the announcement. Minister Wooldridge has said that the agreement will provide more than 100 000 Victorian residents with significant or profound disability — people like Megan — with choice and control over their care and support services. Commencing in the Barwon region on 1 July, being the largest launch site in Australia, and having the Transport Accident Commission located in Geelong, it is common sense for the NDIS headquarters to be located in Geelong. I look forward to that being the case.

Australian Labor Party: union affiliation

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — The entry of a new member to this house is always a joyous event — a wonderful celebration of democracy in fact. Even when it is surrounded by bitter factional warfare it is still a marvellous thing. Even when one of the most prominent federal cabinet ministers and arguably no. 1 factional warlord in Victoria makes a complete galah of himself, it is still a salute to all things that make our nation great. Even when one of the two major political parties rips itself in two as it goes about choosing the victor and then does a dodgy deal with the vanquished — yes, even then we raise our glasses to the art of number crunching.

As deep personal hatred, factional brawling and heartfelt promises of retribution next time move aside, we stand and applaud as the winner, fresh from the kill of a preselection battle, enters this chamber. It is a glorious thing, a new member of this house to add to the diversity of backgrounds and interests held by fellow members — unless of course that new member just happens to spring from the same background and interests as most of the members already on his side of the chamber.

Could it be the ALP has contributed to this diversity by giving us yet another union good old boy? With or without a slush fund I would have thought the very last thing the Labor Party needs right now is another professional unionist in the Parliament. A small

businessperson, a carpenter, a butcher, a baker, a candlestick maker — maybe even a totally discredited ex-mayor of a western suburban council — is much needed in a Labor Party that has hit the rocks and is sinking fast. Instead the Labor Party give us another union man — not even a union woman! Whatever will Joan Kirner say?

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order!

GOVERNMENT: PERFORMANCE

Ms TIERNEY (Western Victoria) — I move:

That this house notes that over the last two and a half years the government has failed to create an economic climate conducive to investment and job creation and that —

- (1) the government has no target for jobs growth in manufacturing;
- (2) April unemployment figures revealed that 5700 more people became unemployed and the unemployment rate rose from 5.7 per cent to 5.8 per cent, the highest of any mainland state;
- (3) youth unemployment in Victoria is now 21 per cent, the highest rate in Australia, yet budget assumptions do not include a projected figure for youth unemployment;
- (4) the Napthine government has cut youth employment programs that work with vulnerable young people to help them find sustainable employment;
- (5) the Napthine government is more focused on creating the impression of activity on major infrastructure projects rather than actually commencing them and that —
 - (a) the budget allocated only \$10 million of the required \$9 billion for Melbourne Metro, the government's no. 1 public transport priority;
 - (b) while the government says it will deliver east-west at an estimated cost of \$6–8 billion, the budget allocates only \$294 million or 3.6 per cent of the estimated project cost;
 - (c) integrated transport planning was cut by 35 per cent in the budget;
- (6) the government's confirmation that the Regional Growth Fund contains only half the \$1 billion claimed and that recent machinery-of-government changes are an admission of government failure in regional development;
- (7) cuts to TAFE are already limiting training opportunities for young Victorians to attain the skills they need to secure a job; and
- (8) the government still does not have a jobs plan.

This motion was developed prior to Ford's announcement last Thursday. I have had to put the contribution I had prepared to one side. I have it here in terms of facts and figures, but what I really want to talk about are paragraphs 1, 2 and 8. I will also touch on some other points in the motion.

The high level of interjections and constant barrage that I was subjected to from government members yesterday while I was attempting to make my members statement calling on the Premier to identify blue-collar jobs which redundant Ford workers would be able to apply for indicated that they have absolutely no sense of what it is like to go through a wave of retrenchments and of the human costs when there are significant job losses in a very large industry.

Thinking of those people that I have represented and those that continue to be constituents of mine and what they would like me to say today in my contribution, I am not going to get into point-scoring about what the government claims to be the unemployment figures versus what the opposition says. I will not get into a table tennis match today. I would like to use this opportunity to provide some reflections on my experience of some 20 years in the automotive industry, and hopefully government members can take some messages back to their policy-makers and program developers so that there is some genuine and serious assistance provided to the men and women who will be losing their jobs at Ford.

Job losses in the auto industry are not a new thing. When I started in the industry in 1989 it was between the second tier and award restructuring initiatives. It was when we had the Button car plan, a plan for the restructuring of the car industry. That is not to say that it went smoothly. A number of unexpected things occurred during this period. If they were expected, the timing of those announcements took people by surprise — for example, when Nissan announced its closure we knew that there were some problems, but given that only a short time before that announcement Nissan had invested millions of dollars into a new paint shop, the last thing we expected was that it was going to completely shut down its Clayton operations. Although we had gone through a number of negotiations in terms of waves of job losses and redundancy packages, to see the final announcement of a plant closure was significant.

Following that we saw the closure of the manufacturing operations of General Motors and also the closure of the Isuzu truck plant, both in Dandenong. A number of other auto component suppliers that relied on large manufacturing also folded. The lucky ones were able to

pick up contracts with other auto suppliers and continue to work. But it has been a shrinking jobs market for some time. Even the larger, successful companies like Toyota also have not gone without pain and hurt. We saw only last year some very pointed sackings at that company, and I complained about the process vigorously at the time.

Even prior to those sackings Toyota went through an internal consolidation which saw the company's Port Melbourne manufacturing operations cease and the transference of some of that work to the Altona plant. A subsidiary of Toyota was also established to take over the work of seat making and assembly. We went through a fairly complex set of negotiations, but with good faith on all sides we managed to work through them. Again, it was a situation where the company announced in advance what it intended to do, and we got to work, put our shoulders to the wheel and came up with solutions. We negotiated so that those who wanted to stay could stay, those who wanted to go over to the subsidiary could do so and those who wanted to go to Altona were sorted, but essentially everyone ended up with meaningful jobs.

Those who chose to leave took packages, but a lot of work needed to be done to make sure that the process went seamlessly and production and car volumes were maintained. We ran round-the-clock information sessions — during day, afternoon and night shifts — so that everyone understood exactly what was going on. As you can imagine, in a large car plant the rumour mill is absolutely enormous. You need to be on top of it 24/7, otherwise things can get quite out of hand, particularly when emotions are, quite naturally, running high over issues of lives being dislocated and jobs subsequently being lost.

The car manufacturing industry is a very interesting, vibrant and changing industry, and members of the unions know and understand that. There have been occasions when I have walked onto the shop floor and seen familiar faces of people I first knew when they worked with different companies. These people might have been made redundant, found a job in another manufacturing company and then worked their way back into the vehicle industry with one of the major employers. Unfortunately in the case of Ford, that is not going to happen. Those sorts of cases will now not occur because there has been a major shrinkage in the automotive and manufacturing industries.

The other problem we have is that employees who remain with the major car companies have deliberately made a decision to stay and not to take packages, and they need those jobs desperately. As I said yesterday a

lot of these people are around 50 years of age, many have mortgages and many have children and grandchildren. I will talk about their children a little bit later. These people cannot afford to retire, and some of them have made the decision that they cannot afford to take a package. They need long-term, sustainable, honest, good work so they can keep putting food on the table and have an opportunity for their families to continue to work in either the car industry or beyond.

There is now a high unemployment level in Geelong, hovering at around 6.8 per cent, which will make it more difficult for workers at Ford Geelong to obtain similar jobs. Shell has also announced its decision to close its Geelong oil refinery, which will mean further job losses. Alcoa is at a point which is quite interesting, and a number of other companies are on the brink. Essentially there are no blue-collar, non-trades jobs for people to move into not only in Geelong but also in Broadmeadows. The concern I raise today is that because of this set of circumstances the people who are affected will be left behind, and I underline that we do not want these people left behind.

If we do not have a tailor-made response to last Thursday's announcement, there is a very high possibility that these people will fall between the cracks, and we will lose their skills to our local economies, not just now but forever. There will not be those other jobbing shops for them to go to where they can sit and wait for another job in the manufacturing industry to come up. To say that will be the case is just not being honest with those people.

As I said yesterday, I understand that in response to questions asked by Broadmeadows workers the government has said the Epping market is a possibility in terms of employment. The reality is that the construction of that market is almost finished, so there are no construction jobs there. By the time these people leave Ford most if not all of the jobs will be taken, and that is simply a fact. The other thing those opposite have said in terms of Geelong is, 'Hopefully we will get the national disability insurance scheme headquarters based in Geelong'. I agree — I hope we do too, and I am lobbying ferociously for it. But to think that is going to be the panacea instead of a tailor-made approach for Geelong for non-trades-based blue-collar workers is living in Disneyland. The government needs to be very clear and very honest with people about what it intends to offer in terms of a package. For a long time now we have been calling on the government to put forward a jobs plan, but one has not been forthcoming.

Before I get to that I want to say I was really disheartened by the response of the government last

week. In terms of true leadership, the Premier should have at least been at one of the sites, if not both.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Ms Tierney has the floor.

Ms TIERNEY — In government, as in opposition, you have good days and bad days. There are days when there are issues that are outside of your control and decisions are made that you know are going to have dreadful ramifications for people. What you really need to do is talk to the people who have been directly affected. Pick up the phone! Go and talk to people. Ring up the people that are very close to those who have been affected by what has happened. That did not happen, and it still has not happened, apart from one short visit the Premier made to the Broadmeadows site on Monday. It has not happened in terms of those other MPs who purport to represent western Victoria; they have not made contact with one vehicle worker since the announcement.

Mr Ramsay — This is absolute rubbish.

Ms TIERNEY — It is not rubbish; it is true.

We had a meeting at 3 o'clock at Kardinia Park last Thursday afternoon. It was organised by the federal member for Corio, Richard Marles. That meeting pulled together all the key players. David Koch was there, all the stakeholders were there and the mayor was there. It was an important meeting because we needed an immediate response from the wider Geelong community in terms of what its views were and what its response was going to be.

We came together, as we always have — and with the last Geelong Investment and Innovation Fund response as well — to say that we understand the plight of the workers, that the measures Ford has announced are going to have an enormous impact on individual workers but also on the local Geelong economy and that we will band together and form ourselves into a task force that will be meeting on a regular basis to address the specific local issues in Geelong. It was also an important message that we needed to send out to the members of the local Geelong community to remind ourselves how resilient we are.

I thank Richard Marles and all the other people who were in attendance on Thursday afternoon.

Mr Ramsay — Mr Koch was in attendance.

Ms TIERNEY — I have already mentioned that; Mr Ramsay is not listening. The next day local MPs were scheduled to have a meeting with the mayor, which had been scheduled for some time. Unfortunately on Thursday night we received text messages or emails saying the meeting had been cancelled. We then found out that the Premier was meeting at the council chambers and that local Labor members were not even invited. I think that is poor form when — —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am of the view that Mr Ramsay will have an opportunity to join the speakers list and rebut aspects of Ms Tierney's contribution that he disagrees with. He could perhaps take some notes and save his comments for such an opportunity.

Ms TIERNEY — Last Thursday's announcement was traumatic for a lot of people. We thought the announcement might happen, but again the timing took us by enormous surprise. I was in my car when I was rung by one of the shop stewards. I had to pull over and ask him to give me some time, and I then rang him back. When I got to my destination in Belmont I was lucky enough to see a woman who I know, but not particularly well, and I was very fortunate she was there. She was able to offer me some very sage advice and a good cup of tea; essentially she held me steady for the rest of the day. I say that because I know many people who are going to be affected by this decision.

It is possible in a very strong sense that a lot of those jobs at Ford are going to be lost before September 2016, because September 2016 is largely dependent on whether the facelift of the new Falcon, scheduled for September 2014, is successful. If that facelift does not dramatically pick up sales, job losses are going to happen much earlier than 2016. That is why it is so important for people to get their heads around this issue. It is not going away. In fact it is going to get worse as the auto component suppliers, who we know are also going to be affected by this, will continue to have problems dealing with the real lives of those who are affected by this decision.

Thursday's announcement represented a D-day. We know it is going to be tough for Ford workers. We really do not know where the jobs are that they will be moving into, as I said, particularly the blue-collar jobs. As Cesar mentioned yesterday in his inaugural speech, we are seeing these honest manual jobs disappear out of our economy, and we need a much better approach on how we deal with the situation.

The PRESIDENT — Order! It is Mr Melhem, not Cesar.

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you, President — Mr Melhem. If Ford workers were not working on the lines or on machines today, they would definitely be here to ask those very questions.

Essentially the situation at both Ford sites at the moment is that people are starting to deal with the shock. In their own minds they are trying to work out their plans, their family plans and their finances. I have had many conversations in recent times with people who have been going through major readjustments, and in some cases weddings have needed to be put off. Major financial decisions will essentially now only be dreams; they will not be able to be implemented. I am very concerned that unless the workers can start seeing some semblance of understanding from members opposite and from government members in the other chamber, then they are going to continue to lose faith in what is happening.

Prior to 2010 there was optimism around Victoria. We were the engine of the Australian economy. We had an infrastructure plan, and a lot of people were employed. Yes, there might have been some problems here and there, but overall we were a state that was on the move. We had a plan, and we were implementing it. That is not the case in terms of this government. This government needs to send very clear and proper messages to those who have been affected by Thursday's announcement.

Mrs Peulich — Do you drive a Ford?

Ms TIERNEY — That is the very point I am attempting to make: when I try to convey the problems affecting Ford workers as a result of the announcement last Thursday I have ridiculous interjections asking me whether I drive a Ford.

Mrs Peulich — Do you?

Ms TIERNEY — Of course I do.

Ms Broad — What an idiotic interjection.

Ms TIERNEY — It is ridiculous that Mrs Peulich is wasting the chamber's time on this issue.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Ms TIERNEY — It is, and that is why I drive one.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Tarlamis) — Order! Ms Tierney has the call. I ask members to refrain from interjecting. There are plenty of

opportunities for them to make a contribution to the debate.

Ms TIERNEY — The key points are that this government needs to get on board and understand the impact this decision is having and will continue to have on Ford workers. No-one needs to be left behind in this. If we leave this group of people behind, it means that all the other Ford workers will have no opportunity, it will mean all those other workers affected when manufacturing jobs are scrapped will also be left behind, and we will not be able to resurrect them, their families or their skills.

We have also seen a number of other receiverships. I am quite concerned about CMI Fuel Systems in Bayswater. That company has two other companies operating in suburban Melbourne that are under fire. I was again told this morning that there are at least another dozen automotive component suppliers that are on the brink.

We call on this government to provide a jobs plan. The Premier has announced the establishment of a ministerial task force, and we were excited by that prospect, but my hopes were dashed yesterday when Mr Lenders asked the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Minister Hall, about that task force. The chamber was informed that that ministerial task force has not even met, nearly a week out from the Ford announcement. I implore those opposite to respond quickly to what is happening to the workforce at Ford, the workforce at automotive component suppliers and, dare I say, the workforce at other manufacturing facilities, because we need that plan as soon as possible.

People are starting to feel incredibly pessimistic, and they are starting to feel quite angry. They are also highlighting to me that this announcement impacts not only on their family budgets but also on their teenage kids, who are finding it difficult not just to get a job but also to get more than one shift a week at different enterprises in Geelong and around Broadmeadows. Whether it be in a service station, at Wendy's or at McDonald's — you name it — they are doing it tough. At this point in time they simply cannot see an employment future for their children, and as we know, youth unemployment statistics are through the roof, at around 21 per cent. As I understand it, that is the highest in the country.

In closing, I thank a number of people who have been heavily involved and have been dealing with a number of really difficult issues since Thursday. They include people like Henry Fuller, Tony Anderson at the casting plant, John Kotwic at the main Geelong plant, Doreen

Sindoni, Dean Brown, Stewie Harris, who was fantastic the other day, Wendy Haby and Paul Boulos. Paul was on commercial television one night last week when he said, 'I have been here all my life. I have been here since I was 18. I know nothing else. I am skilled, I want to work and I cannot retire. We really need some assistance'. He spoke from the heart and with honesty, and he spoke from a basis of fact. I think his ask is not too hard for us to respond to. It is straightforward, and we need to respect that by putting our shoulders to the wheel.

I also thank Dominic Balliro, whom I have known for 30 years. What a stalwart! He has been there for ages and will be there right up until the end. Nick Dorio, Billy Hasiotis, Jonio Cham, Robert Corevski, Tony Casabene and John Angelovski — these people are not just people who hold things together, they are the ones who people go to for assistance and advice. I am proud to call them friends, and I consider many of them members of my extended family.

I say with a strong and heavy heart that as politicians we can have this debate today and then have a table tennis match, but at the centre of this are the Ford workers. I believe they deserve much better than they are currently being offered by the government in terms of the money, and just as importantly they deserve a lot more in terms of respect. At the very least they should be spoken to directly and not have to rely on other people to tell them what they are saying or what they are thinking. They might be many in number, but they are not just numbers. They are people who live and breathe. They have houses, mortgages, families and community groups. All we are asking is that they have an opportunity to continue in sustainable employment that is skilled, of high quality and for which they are paid the proper rates with the proper conditions.

With that, I look forward to the contributions of other members, particularly those on the Labor side, who will talk about a whole range of points I was not able to get to in my contribution today. Again I thank all those who have been able to hold things together since Thursday. I will continue to fight for them, particularly in terms of appropriate and well-tailored employment that needs to be provided for there to be no hiccups and a seamless integration for the Geelong local economy and the northern suburbs of the city.

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am also pleased to speak on the motion before the chamber, and I thank honourable members for their contributions. Ms Tierney has argued the case for the motion presented before the chamber for the last half hour, particularly points (1), (2) and (8).

I intend to go through each of those points, and I will also discuss the additional points in minor detail.

From the outset, I will say that the government will not be supporting the motion. We note the preamble that Ms Tierney put forward:

That this house notes that over the last two and a half years the government has failed to create an economic climate conducive to investment and job creation ...

When I read that I assumed that Ms Tierney was referring to the federal Labor government, because there could not be a more stark contrast between what we have been doing in government and what the federal government has been doing. I have continually reminded members opposite and people outside the chamber that as we, as a state government, have been moving two steps forward, the federal government has continually been placing us one step back. In the manufacturing area the carbon tax was brought in by the federal government. Although the federal government promised at an election that it would not bring the carbon tax in, it brought it in. That has had an enormous effect on manufacturing, not only in Victoria but also right across Australia. The impact that the carbon tax will have on manufacturers was outlined early.

We also know that the federal government has brought in the Fair Work Act 2009. It was interesting to note that Ms Tierney brought up the Toyota issue. Those who have a memory of it will recall that Toyota had a significant industrial dispute that went well beyond what I could class as being necessary in the circumstances. Despite the economic climate that Australia was facing and indeed what was occurring around the world, the union movement was more focused on doing what it thought was appropriate for the union movement rather than realising the current trends around the world.

Regarding current trends around the world, to put it in simple terms, I was on the India trade mission and when you see automotive manufacturers producing a car every 12 seconds it makes you realise the competitive pressures that we have here in Australia. The additional costs and burdens placed on manufacturers in Australia have not been conducive to investment, to job creation or to creating an economic climate that would fit the needs of the manufacturing base. It is important to put on the record some of the imposts the federal government has put on Victoria.

We know that manufacturing is a significant full-time employer. It is still the largest full-time employer in this state, and we continue to work towards that. Although

South Australia has since done so, Victoria was the first state to put in place a cohesive, coherent manufacturing strategy. To refresh the memories of those in the chamber and those listening elsewhere, as an election promise we made a commitment to review manufacturing in this state. We said that we would have the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission review manufacturing. We undertook the most rigorous and detailed investigation of manufacturing in this state. From that we delivered a \$58 million four-year commitment to manufacturing. Yes, that does mean there are tasks ahead of us. We do not shy away from the challenges that the large automotive manufacturers have had and continue to have, but it is important to note the opportunities that there are for manufacturing.

Ms Tierney spoke about blue-collar workers. When I visit manufacturing facilities I always speak with the workers. At the end of the day this government is there to support the guys and girls who are working in those locations to ensure that they have sustainable long-term employment opportunities. Ms Tierney knows, as does everyone in this chamber, that this is a difficult period for manufacturing. Those who have been lucky enough to travel overseas on an overseas inquiry or to visit another country on a trade mission or as part of a joint parliamentary committee would realise the growth opportunities that are occurring in India, South-East Asia, China and other locations. There is enormous pressure on manufacturing in this country.

We also have had a consistently high Australian dollar, and increasing levels of tariffs have also been applied around the world. A good example that comes to mind is the tariff placed on the import of the Ford Territory by the Thailand government. It is a great vehicle, but unfortunately the Thailand government put a false 50 per cent tariff barrier on it, despite the fact that there is little or no tariff for vehicles coming the other way, from Thailand to Australia. Some of those adjustments need to be identified and acknowledged. If you google what is happening around the world with some of the tariff barriers or other false barriers that have now been put in place for the automotive sector, what you find is quite alarming. It is something all governments need to be mindful of into the future.

We have been focused on delivering manufacturing in a different light. I have been a strong advocate of carbon fibre manufacturing and a strong believer that small to medium-size manufacturers are an important part of our manufacturing landscape. As I have always said, 90 per cent of Victorian manufacturers are small businesses — that is, businesses with fewer than 20 employees — and if you add medium-size manufacturing enterprises, it accounts for 95 per cent. Yes, the remaining 5 per cent

account for a significant amount of employment and a significant amount of the supply chain, but I have always been of the view that manufacturers need to diversify — they need to not be so focused on one sector but be across different sectors. This government has been recognising that. We have moved development across into other areas — into defence, into the advanced manufacturing sector and into a range of new and transformative technologies in other areas.

There is a transformation occurring in manufacturing — it is moving away from some of the traditional blue-collar work — and as part of that there is a need to ensure that we continually skill up workers. I will get to Ms Tierney's motion, which talks about the skilling issue.

I was pleased to see that the government made a commitment to specialist manufacturing services. A lot of manufacturing starts in garages and backyards and is developed into small or even medium enterprises. Such manufacturers need assistance, so I was pleased that we were able to provide a service to manufacturers to overcome market failures and barriers. In this chamber we have had much discussion of the issue of productivity. Given the increased productivity needs across manufacturing it is important to ensure that manufacturers can remain globally competitive. I say 'globally competitive' because the other focus the government has always taken on board has been of ensuring that manufacturers can supply not only the local and national markets but also the international market.

I was very pleased with the recent trade missions, which have been a great focus of the government, and I implore members on both sides of the chamber to understand that small to medium size companies greatly benefit from these trade missions through gaining an understanding of some of the opportunities around the world. We have also been very focused on assisting small manufacturers with \$9 million of targeted assistance so that they can be supported through specialist workshops, improved access to information and encouragement of innovation.

When we had the Holden deal there was the Automotive New Markets program, to which the federal government made a co-contribution. We worked together to deliver an understanding that the supply chain to major automotive suppliers needs to diversify.

We always used the example, as I did in this chamber, of Hella. It has moved and diversified from supplying into the automotive sector right across to other areas.

Indeed with a co-contribution from the state government we have been able to support that company in creating a centre of excellence for the development of lighting opportunities outside the automotive sector. That has been outside the norm for Hella as an automotive supplier. It is now delivering different parts of manufacturing into the mining sector and indeed into the domestic and commercial lighting sector. This type of activity — diversification of companies — is the type of thing the government can support and encourage.

Yes, the closure of Ford will have a significant impact, but I note that there are three years before the final closure. I was directly involved, with the former federal Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, in the co-contribution that we made as a state government with the federal government to Ford, providing \$103 million towards the continuation of production of its updated model. I encourage members of this chamber to continue to support Ford right up to the time it moves on.

I note in terms of support funding that when the Alcoa issue arose there was a co-contribution by the federal government and the state government —

Mr Barber interjected.

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA — That issue will be coming around again. I am glad Mr Barber raised that, because one of the biggest cost imposts on Alcoa is the cost of energy, which has increased because of the carbon tax. The reality is that these industries will go offshore to where cheaper energy is available.

Mr Melhem — Blaming the carbon tax — they get a concession; you know that.

Hon. R. A. DALLA-RIVA — They will go overseas, where they will get cheaper energy. I cannot believe what the interjection suggests — that Mr Melhem, who should be supporting manufacturers, would encourage an increase in energy costs for our manufacturing base. It is not only Alcoa. Mr Melhem would know well, having spoken to manufacturing companies, that the increase in the cost of energy to the supply and manufacturing base has been significant over the last period. If Mr Melhem wishes to continue to support the carbon tax and the rise in costs to manufacturing because of the carbon tax, so be it. That is an interesting interjection, and I have taken it up.

Having said that, we have also improved our connections with manufacturing through what was the Department of Business and Innovation and is now the Department of State Development, Business and

Innovation. Victorian government business offices — VGBOs — are now located in five regions around the metropolitan area, including the inner city region, the southern region, the western region and the northern region. But I was also pleased, as the then Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade, with the Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business, Ms Asher, and the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Mr Smith, to open the eastern region office in Ringwood to support a significant number of manufacturers that are based in the eastern region. There are a further eight VGBOs in regional Victoria at Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Mildura, Shepparton, Traralgon, Wangaratta and Wodonga. As part of their business engagement model, which is a model drawn directly from that used by many companies around the world, the VGBOs are tasked with assisting businesses to understand what is going on and to implement strategies.

This is a difficult period for manufacturing, and the Ford issue is disappointing. I would have liked to have seen the Ford Motor Company continue its presence here in Victoria. I am a strong supporter of Ford, and if there are changes later on, I think I might just end up getting myself a Ford GT before they go into the never-never, because it is one of the great icons. Whilst we can reflect on the history of the Ford Motor Company, it is still producing great motor vehicles, and I encourage members to continue to support Ford right up to its withdrawal.

I now go to the employment figures which are referred to in the second part of Ms Tierney's motion. Victoria's unemployment rate for April 2013 is 5.8 per cent, as outlined in the motion. For the record, seasonally adjusted, there were 2 898 000 Victorians employed in April 2013. That compares to 2 844 600 in December 2010. In other words, there has been an increase of 53 400 jobs since the Victorian coalition government came into office. Victoria's employment growth since December 2010 is the third highest of all the states, behind only that of Western Australia and New South Wales. In the month of April 2013 Victoria's employment increased by 8100 workers. Victoria's employment growth over the month was the second highest of all states, behind only that of New South Wales.

Victoria saw solid growth in both part-time and full-time employment over the month of April, with increases of 6000 workers in part-time and 2100 workers in full-time jobs. The other good news is that Victoria's participation rate rose 0.2 percentage points to 65 per cent in April. The rise in the participation rate, together with solid employment

growth over the month, suggests that the rise in Victoria's employment rate is primarily the result of more workers entering the labour market. In Victoria the aggregate monthly hours worked also rose by 1.3 per cent compared to a rise of 0.7 per cent nationally.

If we look at the annual change, which is also important in the context of the motion, we see that in the year to April 2013 Victoria's employment increased by 16 100 workers — that is, 0.6 per cent. That increase has been driven by growth in full-time employment of 24 400 workers, while part-time employment declined by 8300 workers. Since December 2010 Victoria's employment has increased by 53 400 workers. That increase has been driven by an increase in both part-time and full-time employment of 36 500 and 16 900 workers respectively over that period. There no doubt has been job creation since December 2010 with solid growth in professional, scientific and technical services and the information, media and telecommunications fields. Again, Victoria's employment growth since 2010 has been the third highest of all the states behind the mining boom states of Western Australia and, more recently, New South Wales.

In terms of the regional labour force it is important to put on the record that in April 2013 there were 737 100 people employed in regional Victoria, representing an increase of 9000 workers over the previous month. Employment growth in regional Victoria in April 2013 was led by strong gains in part-time employment, up by 10 200 workers. Regional Victoria's unemployment rate fell from 5.7 per cent to 5.3 per cent in April, while the participation rate rose by 0.4 of a percentage point to 61.9 per cent. In April 2013 the unemployment rate for regional Victoria was the lowest of all regional state economies. Since December 2010 the unemployment rate in regional Victoria has declined by 0.1 percentage point to 5.3 per cent, and the regional employment participation rate since December 2010 has increased by 4900 workers.

I also add for the record that according to the most recent ANZ job advertisement series an average of 1285 positions have been advertised each week in Victoria since December 2010, which shows that new jobs continue to be created. I also note the most recent vacancy rates as at January 2013 in Melbourne's CBD are at only 3.7 per cent. There are more than 318 000 people in retail, representing 11 per cent of Victoria's workforce. The retail sector is the second largest employer in the state, just behind the manufacturing sector. In the year to February 2013 retail employment increased by 25 400.

As I indicated before, Victoria is not a resource-rich state. The former government relied too much on population growth and increased public spending to boost growth. The Australian dollar has maintained a high level, even though it is now just below parity. Manufacturing is under enormous stress from global competition, the Fair Work Act 2009 is biting hard and we are witnessing some of the effects of the carbon tax. We need a government that is committed to developing skills so we can depend on a combination of locally trained professionals and an adequate supply of skilled migrants.

The government has adopted a multifaceted approach to support further job creation. We have seen the government's economic action plan securing Victoria's economy, providing a basis for productivity and jobs growth into the future. We are working with businesses, as I have outlined before, to improve productivity, to grow export markets and to increase business investment in order to generate new, sustainable job opportunities in this state. In short, the government has been working with the private sector to support investment and employment. We have implemented a new business engagement model, and we are putting a lot more focus on industries with potential for the continuation of growth. Between December 2010 and 13 May this year the government has facilitated investment projects to the value of \$5.1 billion, and they are expected to generate over 13 000 jobs. In the 2012–13 financial year alone the government has facilitated over 120 investment projects valued at \$1.4 billion which are expected to generate over 3800 new jobs.

In terms of youth unemployment figures — and I know this was not really touched on by Ms Tierney in her contribution to the debate on this motion today, but it is covered in the motion before the chamber — the opposition has indicated that youth unemployment in Victoria has now reached 21 per cent. That rate is incorrect. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in April the youth unemployment rate in Victoria for persons aged 15 to 24 was 12.5 per cent and for persons aged 15 to 19 was 16.4 per cent. These figures are broadly in line with the Australian figures of 11.7 per cent and 15.3 per cent respectively. Data presented on Victorian youth employment is not seasonally adjusted. The labour force survey is based on a very small sample of 29 000 private dwellings and is therefore subject to high monthly variation. In April 2013 Victoria's rate of youth unemployment was in line with South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Western Australia have higher rates of youth unemployment. Over the past decade no Victorian state

budget has included projected figures for youth unemployment.

I was surprised to read about the cut in employment programs because the government has created the new employment start-up program, and that was announced in the 2013–14 budget. We are providing employment start-up opportunities for business. There is funding of \$7.5 million over four years to achieve 1750 employment placements in small to medium size enterprises, and this program will focus on small to medium size enterprises with unfilled vacancies and skills shortages in both regional and metropolitan areas.

We also have the Youth Employment Scheme, overseen by the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation, which places trainees within state government departments. This year alone 350 people have been given the opportunity to work and train in the public sector. I was very pleased also as part of my former role to be part of the Indigenous employment program which will assist the Aboriginal community by providing real, sustainable and ongoing employment for Aboriginal job seekers. I am pleased to see that this has worked and since December 2010 we have seen approximately 300 Aboriginal job seekers, with many more to come, who will have real long-term outcomes.

There are other statements made in point (5) of Ms Tierney's motion which will be covered by the next speaker and other speakers, so I do not intend to talk about that part of the motion. I know that some of the country members will be speaking about point (6) of the motion which relates to the Regional Growth Fund, so for brevity I am happy to defer my comments and ensure that other speakers have the opportunity to contribute to the debate.

In relation to the issue of TAFE cuts, which is covered in point (7) of the motion, I say again for the record that there have been no cuts to TAFE by the government. In fact it has increased funding for subsidised training to \$1.2 billion. This is a misnomer which has been fed to people. The reality is that there has been an increase in funding, and I know other members will speak about that.

With respect to point (8) of Ms Tierney's motion, the Victorian government does have a focus on generating jobs. We have a focus on ensuring the rebuilding of companies and on assisting them when they need to diversify. We have a focus on improving productivity growth and on more responsive and productive service delivery by government, and we are investing in high-quality infrastructure.

If we put all of those initiatives together, there are very sustainable, long-term opportunities for job numbers to increase. I have outlined in my speech a range of projects where there has been an increase in jobs in Victoria since the coalition government has been in office. We look forward to continuing to develop and support industry, including manufacturing, which, as I said, is going through enormous structural change at the moment. Having said that, government members do not believe they should be supporting the motion as it is presented. Therefore they will be opposing the motion by Ms Tierney.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I compliment Ms Tierney on bringing this motion before the Parliament today out of what I know to be her genuine and heartfelt concern for real people, which is what we are referring to when we debate the various matters covered by this motion. I am aware of great concern in Victoria when I travel around, as I regularly do, talking to people in all sorts of towns and in all sorts of industries about a whole range of issues in relation to the economy and the way both state and federal governments contribute to the wellbeing of people in those communities.

This motion addresses a number of matters which the government has responded to, in some ways quite specifically; but I would have thought there would have been an overall vision from this government as to how it intends to take the economy of Victoria forward. We know it spends a lot of time blaming the federal Labor government for all these problems. There are only 100-and-something days left until the federal election, and since the current polls and other estimates seem to think the Liberal government of Tony Abbott will be in power after that, I guess we would say that we are on a 100-day countdown to when this government runs out of excuses and people to blame and has to talk about its record and its intentions rather than simply duckshoving to another level.

Mrs Kronberg — The people of Australia are counting the hours, not the days.

Mr BARBER — For once I find myself in a small measure of agreement with Mrs Kronberg; it is a bit like a death watch, but all the more important for an alternative political force, which is what her party is putting itself forward as, to articulate a plan that can give some of these people that I have been meeting with a bit of hope and a bit of direction. It is like they are dying of thirst and the nourishment they are seeking is just plain and simple political leadership — a political party putting itself forward with a plan, something that will give people the courage to continue

on with their daily struggles knowing that those who seek power are offering them something.

In relation to the specific questions put forward in the motion and addressed in large part by Ms Tierney, the question of the day is manufacturing. We know that all manufacturing businesses have received an extraordinary challenge in the form of the high Australian dollar. We also know that the increase in the Australian dollar has been driven in large part by a minerals boom. People want to buy our minerals, and they need Australian dollars to do it. That drives up the price of the Australian dollar, which makes it extraordinarily difficult for those who are export exposed in their costs, in their inputs or in trying to sell part or all of their product overseas. That is why it is such a tragedy that the proposal for a mining super-profits tax never made it through the federal Parliament in any meaningful fashion.

The mining super-profits tax would have done two things: it may have cooled off some of that extraordinarily excess profit that was being made — and our only chance to ever tax those resources is as they come out of the ground; and secondly, the moneys collected would have allowed for a whole range of interventions which many are now calling for to fix the problems in manufacturing caused by the high Australian dollar, which is caused by the mining boom.

Now we see a federal government making desperate cuts to some really core programs — core now in terms of supporting people who are unemployed or underemployed; core now in the sense of investing in some of the very issues addressed in Ms Tierney's motion; and core now in the sense that we need to build for the future, starting now with research and development, investment in education and the very matters that Ms Tierney is calling for in her motion. That is where we passed that fork in the road. For a relatively small expenditure the mining industry managed to change the Prime Minister and get a grip on the federal government such that the opportunity was lost. It is an opportunity that many other countries looking at their mineral resource base or their petroleum resource base have taken. For example, Norway is collecting those taxes and putting them into a sovereign wealth fund, recognising that that is how it will build for the future.

Mr Drum — Julia and Wayne aren't going to do that, are they?

Mr BARBER — Mr Drum makes a good interjection, because when those desperate cuts which are now rolling through in the federal budget were

made, his party — the coalition — stepped up and backed them.

Mr Somyurek — What about The Nats?

Mr BARBER — I referred to the coalition. It stepped up and backed those same cuts. Mr Drum's party must understand the desperate situation that the federal budget is in as a result of the failure to collect on the super profits of this mining boom, which Mr Dalla-Riva reiterated is not something that Victoria has the benefit of. My colleague in the federal Parliament, Adam Bandt, who is the Deputy Leader of the Greens, has called for the mining tax to be reinstated and for some of the money to be used on a south-eastern Australia stimulus package. Of course neither Labor nor Liberal wants to address that question.

Let me turn to some of the issues raised specifically in Ms Tierney's motion. First of all, it addresses the question of youth. As we know, unemployment is incredibly corrosive. Unemployment is literally part of the process of destroying human capital, because the longer people are unemployed, the more skills and motivation they start to shed and the more difficult it is to get them back into employment. Therefore unemployment is something that we should be specifically targeting. We should be running the economy for full employment, but we should also be directly intervening and targeting those who are unemployed. When those unemployed people are youths there is a double difficulty, because some of them may not even have been seriously in the workforce before.

Points (2), (3) and (7) of the motion relate to each other, because if you are enrolled in TAFE, you are not on the unemployment queue; you are being prepared for work. I am not going to reprise the detailed debates that we have had in this chamber about TAFE, suffice to say that those cuts to which Ms Tierney refers are the direct outcome and intent of policies that the Labor government brought in — that is, the marketisation of the sector. The former Brumby government, through its policies, always intended that TAFEs would have to go out there and compete on a so-called level playing field with the private sector. It must have always been intended that the full service provider money given to TAFEs for all the extra benefits that offers was to be stripped away towards the goal of the full marketisation of vocational education.

We are now facing a twin crisis — a climate crisis and an economic crisis — and we do not have the TAFE system as a tool anymore. It was there to provide

vocational education and the future skills needs of the economy. We do not even have the skills body — because they abolished it — where employers, unions and others that had stakes in the provision of skills in the economy could get together and help steer the future direction. One of the last votes we had on this issue was whether to abolish that skills body. A typical pattern in this chamber formed — the Greens on one side of the chamber, Labor and Liberal on the other.

The motion makes reference to the Regional Growth Fund. I do not think it is news to anyone that while the headline states this is a \$1 billion fund, a proportion of it is actually allocated to the parliamentary term after this one. There are a lot of opportunities that could be created using that \$1 billion, particularly if the government of the day had a clear direction for what it was trying to achieve and what its future new economy would look like.

This is a very real question. Let us take as one example the community of Geelong. It is a cliché to say that the writing is on the wall there, but in fact the writing is very much on the wall in Geelong, where the Ford plant now has a closing date, the Shell petrochemical plant already has a 'For sale' sign up and the Alcoa smelter has its own deadline looming — that is, when the hundreds of millions of electricity subsidies run out. I do not believe that any government, Labor or Liberal, state or federal, is going to reinstate the hundreds of millions of dollars of electricity subsidies to keep the Alcoa plant operating.

Those subsidies completely dwarf any carbon tax impact on Alcoa operations in Victoria, and I have addressed that before in the chamber; it is actually a simple matter of mathematics and cost structures. Victorian aluminium plants are expensive, even by the standards of Australian aluminium plants.

The writing is very much on the wall. There is a very real risk that the three major manufacturers, within the term of the next Parliament, will shut up shop. We need a better strategy than the one we had. We need a better reaction than the one we got when Ford announced its closure, which consisted of 48 hours of blame shifting, recrimination and regrets, with no clear message sent to the community about what its future holds. We need a group of political leaders who can look at Geelong and imagine what it might look like without those three major manufacturers and who can develop a plan for Geelong's future based on that very real likelihood, if not certainty. As yet we do not have it.

As I said, there are a number of opportunities. Funds collected from the price on pollution are already

creating significant development opportunities, not just in and around Geelong but the whole of western Victoria. Real jobs are being created in the areas of renewable energy, building energy efficiency into businesses and homes and restoring carbon in the landscape. In the last couple of months I have visited a significant number of those enterprises. The thousands of workers are all dependent on funds collected from the price on pollution or on the existing pollution price being built in the form of energy efficiency schemes, renewable energy schemes and the carbon tax itself.

Amongst those businesses there is a great sense of optimism because they are setting up new enterprises and developing skills. The only cloud on their horizon is if an Abbott government is elected because, according to the rhetoric at least, it would wipe out all those pollution pricing mechanisms that are supporting these industries which are essential to our future in addressing the climate crisis and which offer a strong tool to get us through this economic crisis. It is those future industries to which we should be turning our minds. They rely in great part on the existing skill set. It would require very little to take a coal-based energy generation worker from the Latrobe Valley and give them work generating energy from the wind. The skill set is almost identical. You need a certificate to work very high up on top of a wind turbine; it would take a month or two to get the certificate through an existing training course, and then you would be in business.

This is something that we can control. We set the renewable energy target, but the planning rules the government has introduced are destroying the future of that industry. Just last week the Naroghid wind farm lost its planning permit. It is the first wind farm to involuntarily lose its planning permit in Victoria. It is down to the south from Camperdown where I was late last week meeting with a whole range of stakeholders. The Minister for Planning has come into this place many times in the past and said, 'Don't worry about it; there are many planning permits out there for wind farms. There are already thousands of turbines approved'. He cannot say that anymore; one of those permits no longer exists.

We need some certainty in both pollution pricing and the renewable energy target, which of course relate to each other, as one actually sets the price for the other. Despite some people having said they are overlapping and contradictory measures, they are actually complementary measures in that they collectively set the carbon price to be determined when setting up a renewable energy plant. If we had some certainty over pollution pricing and the renewable energy target, we would have certainty of construction and those who

make the components, including the towers, would have the ability to promise their groups of workers a future in Portland, in the Premier's own electorate.

When Keppel Prince Engineering runs out of orders for wind turbine towers there will be an almost immediate decision to be made by that company, and that is how many workers to lay off, but you would barely read about it outside the Portland local newspaper. When Ford makes a similar decision involving 1000 or more workers it is on the front five pages of the *Herald Sun* newspaper, and there are hours of commentary from anybody who can get near a microphone.

The steel industry rescue package, if you like, is in fact the clean energy system that we so desperately need here in Victoria, and western Victoria is rich with renewable energy sources. It has geothermal, wind, sun, biomass and an extensive coastline which in time will lead to the development of tidal energy. It is like Saudi Arabia for renewable energy, and we just need some industry certainty so that people can go out there and capture that free fuel. I would much rather stake my future on the sun coming up tomorrow and producing solar power than on Ford or any other car company's ability to continue to sell its product.

No certainty is offered to the solar industry either. When governments, state and federal, Labor and Liberal, decided to rip away the solar feed-in tariff — which represents the true cost of generating electricity, not a subsidy, as some have said — there was an immediate effect on the jobs of people in those small, often family-run businesses installing solar panels. I have met them. I always drop into the solar shop in any town I am in and ask them how it is going. I look them in the eye and ask what impact this government's decision is going to have on their business. This goes on all the time. Governments make decisions all the time about the futures of these manufacturing industries and of course the very important service providers to those manufacturers, but only some business closures grab the headlines, not others.

I said I would keep my contribution reasonably brief for the benefit of all the other speakers I know want to speak on this motion. What I have given here is just one flavour of a future direction the government can steer this state through, in the process addressing the twin crises of climate change and the economy. No political party should be able to get off scot-free by addressing one without addressing the other or addressing one at the expense of the other. They are both unavoidable political imperatives. The public has worked this out, and it is time for a genuine dialogue with our own

communities about what direction this state's economy needs to go.

Mr SOMYUREK (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise to join the debate on motion 581 standing in the name of Ms Tierney. It is unfortunate that we on this side are again standing to condemn the government for more manufacturing job losses. I was hoping that a new Premier and a new manufacturing minister would have instilled a little bit more creativity into how we maintain and sustain jobs in Victoria. After a week from hell for the Victorian workforce and their families, I say bring back Mr Baillieu, the former Premier, and Richard Dalla-Riva, the former manufacturing minister. I am sure they would not have sat idly by as a manufacturing icon went under during their watch.

I understand that Mr Hodgett, the Minister for Manufacturing, was in transit, returning from visiting Ford executives in Detroit, when Ford announced its decision to shut down its manufacturing activities in Australia. I do not know what the Minister for Manufacturing said to those executives whilst he was in Detroit, but whatever it was clearly they were not impressed. I take this opportunity to plead with the Premier not to send Mr Hodgett back to Detroit to negotiate with GM Holden or to Japan to negotiate with Toyota executives, because Mr Hodgett's powers of persuasion are manifestly deficient in this regard if not downright counterproductive.

Ever since this government came to office iconic businesses that operate in Victoria have either been cutting jobs en masse or shutting up shop altogether: Ford, Toyota, Alcoa, Bosch, Shell, ANZ — and the list goes on. The motion before the house gives a snapshot of the jobs crisis currently paralysing our state, a crisis this government is either incapable of understanding or simply unwilling to admit.

Let us now take a closer look at the figures contained in Ms Tierney's motion. According to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for the first quarter of 2013, 5700 more Victorians have lost their jobs, taking the unemployment rate from 5.7 per cent to 5.8 per cent. We need to understand that the unemployment rate is now the highest of any mainland state. According to the same data series, youth unemployment is at 21 per cent, which is also the highest rate in Australia. I am vexed by this figure, because the April figures show that youth unemployment has gone up to 21 per cent, and this has happened soon after the budget was handed down in May. Obviously the corollary of this figure will be some unpleasant consequences for many people. Surely if members of the government had taken this situation

seriously, they would have handed down a budget a month later which included initiatives and the rolling out of programs to target youth unemployment and youth in general.

What did this government do? A month after these statistics came out the government handed down a budget which defunds youth employment programs. I would love to hear the rationalisation for doing that. I think the word 'rational' is the wrong word to use in this context, because whatever the government has done has not been rational. I would love to hear about the motivations of government members for cutting or defunding youth employment programs when Victoria's youth unemployment rate is at 21 per cent, the highest rate of unemployment amongst youth in Australia.

I have just presented the macro data, the general data, across different sectors. That data clearly shows that Victoria has become the jobs-shedding capital of Australia. I will now drill down and look closely at the manufacturing and services sector.

I noticed the other day that Mr Hodgett referred to Victoria as — —

Ms Tierney — Who?

Mr SOMYUREK — Only two weeks ago Mr Hodgett referred to Victoria as the manufacturing hub of Australia, but he does not seem to understand that Victoria now does not hold that mantle, thanks to the Baillieu and Napthine governments. Measured by employment data and production, the Victorian manufacturing sector has lost its status as the nation's manufacturing hub to New South Wales, and it has done so under this government's watch.

Mrs Peulich — Magically, not decades of bad Labor policy.

Mr SOMYUREK — I am just the messenger. I am conveying to you ABS data.

The following damning statistics compare the performance of the Victorian manufacturing sector with the performance of the New South Wales manufacturing sector. This is the data I referred to when I said that the Victorian manufacturing sector had lost its prestige of being the hub of the Australian manufacturing sector to New South Wales. If members listen very closely to me relating this data — and I have not made these figures up; it is ABS data — they will hear that total employment in the Victorian manufacturing sector has decreased by a mammoth 17 000 positions. Just in case Hansard did not get

that — 17 000 positions were lost from the Victorian manufacturing sector between November 2010 and February 2013, which was the last time new data was available.

In contrast, total employment in the New South Wales manufacturing sector has increased by 5000 positions in the same period. We have Victoria going down by 17 000 positions and New South Wales going up by 5000 positions. The New South Wales manufacturing sector now employs a total of 304 700 people and the Victorian manufacturing sector now employs a total of 292 500 people, which means 12 200 more people are now employed in the New South Wales manufacturing sector. This is the sector that according to Mr Hodgett we are the hub of.

I now turn to full-time employment in the Victorian manufacturing sector. Full-time employment has decreased by 15 000 positions from November 2010 to February 2013. Full-time employment in the New South Wales manufacturing sector has increased by 600 positions in the same period of time. The decrease of 15 000 positions in Victoria is 15 000 Victorians losing their jobs, and New South Wales has actually gone up. That means there are now 13 800 more people employed full-time in the New South Wales manufacturing sector than there are in the Victorian manufacturing sector. Full-time employees number 262 300 people in the New South Wales manufacturing sector, while the Victorian sector employs only 248 500 people full time. I encourage Mr Hodgett to look at these statistics and to stop referring to Victoria as the hub of Australian manufacturing. Surely after looking at these statistics he cannot keep a straight face and refer to Victoria as the hub of the Australian manufacturing industry.

There can be no reasonable explanation for the poor performance of the Victorian manufacturing sector compared to the New South Wales manufacturing sector, except that the Baillieu-Napthine governments have abdicated their responsibility to assist with the maintenance and development of the state's vital manufacturing sector and thereby help secure associated jobs. Comparisons across jurisdictions are useful, especially in this environment where the government in Victoria and the federal opposition blame the carbon tax for everything and blame the high Australian dollar, global demand et cetera.

Comparisons across jurisdictions are useful because they isolate and neutralise external influences on the economies of the various states, such as the level of our currency and demand in the global economy. Comparisons across time, of quarter on quarter or year

on year, are often deflected by poorly performing governments that disingenuously blame the external variables that I have just explained.

Mrs Peulich — Just say you're sorry. Just apologise.

Mr SOMYUREK — In other words, Mrs Peulich, the carbon issue, as I have just been explaining, is isolated and neutralised in the set of data that I am quoting. It is not an issue because all the states are faced with those same issues. The economies of all the states, including New South Wales, are faced with a high Australian dollar, the carbon price issue and suppressed international demand. One cannot just isolate the high Australian dollar, the carbon price issue or demand. This data isolates those variables. The data I have just presented clearly reveals — —

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr SOMYUREK — I would say our payroll tax rates are not very competitive, so maybe the budget should have had a look at that if you are talking about competitiveness.

The data I have just presented clearly reveals that the New South Wales manufacturing sector has significantly outperformed the Victorian manufacturing sector. It reinforces what I have been preaching to the government for a number of years now: that whilst state governments do not have control of the macroeconomic levers of the Australian economy, state governments do have policy levers at their disposal to influence sectors of the state's economy, such as the manufacturing sector. We know state governments do not have the macroeconomic levers, but they do have policy instruments at their disposal. It is a matter of using them.

This data undoubtedly demonstrates that the New South Wales government has been using those policy levers to the advantage of its manufacturing sector while the Victorian government has simply been sitting back and blaming the Australian dollar, in effect cutting the sector loose. Why is it that employment in New South Wales has grown so much and in Victoria it has shrunk? It is because New South Wales state governments, including the current coalition government, have been proactive in stimulating and driving their manufacturing sector. The New South Wales government has been using the policy tools it has at its disposal, whereas the Victorian Liberal-Nationals coalition has been sitting back, throwing its hands in the air and saying, 'Oh well, there is nothing we can do

about that. It is because of the high dollar; it is a carbon issue; it is a lack of demand in the global economy’.

Faced with this embarrassing employment data the Victorian government has failed to act, despite the fact that under its watch manufacturing in New South Wales has become the hub of the Australian manufacturing sector. Let us not make any mistake about that: the Minister for Manufacturing, Mr Hodggett, might believe for some reason that Victoria is still the hub of Australian manufacturing, but under his government’s watch we are now not the manufacturing hub of Australia. Let us hope he addresses these issues.

Even in the face of this embarrassing employment data the government has failed to act. The budget was the perfect opportunity for the government to introduce measures directly targeting the manufacturing sector, but tragically for the Victorian manufacturing sector there were no new initiatives. Despite this data there were no new initiatives in the 2013–14 budget directly targeting the manufacturing sector. Furthermore, at Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings held earlier this month, Mr Hodggett confirmed the Napthine government actually had no manufacturing jobs creation target. This backs up my view that the government has actually given up on the manufacturing sector — for example, the government reneged on its commitment to largely manufacture X’trapolis trains locally. Mr Hodggett could not answer what the government’s local content target was for the trains.

Mr Ramsay — Come up to Alstom in Ballarat and tell 100 workers there.

Mr SOMYUREK — Mr Hodggett could not tell us how much local content came out of X’trapolis trains. He basically confirmed that the government did not have a plan for the Victorian manufacturing sector.

The Napthine government is having its strings pulled by the federal Liberal Party leader, Mr Tony Abbott, who wants to rip millions of dollars from the manufacturing industry, which supports thousands of manufacturing jobs across Victoria. Dr Napthine and Minister Hodggett need to stand up and support Victoria’s manufacturing sector, because New South Wales is. In New South Wales they are New South Welshmen first and Liberal Party people second. They are standing up to the federal Liberal Party opposition and Mr Abbott. You can see this coming through in the data. You can see the New South Wales manufacturing employment rates going up, whereas our manufacturing rates are going down.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! Mr Ramsay has been an enthusiastic contributor to this debate via interjections. I ask him to cease his constant interjections. I am happy to put up with a little bit from time to time, but the constant barrage coming from Mr Ramsay is unacceptable to the Chair. I ask him to calm down a little bit and allow Mr Somyurek to continue his contribution unassisted.

Mr SOMYUREK — Of course the Acting President would never act in such a way!

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! Mr Somyurek would do better than to reflect upon the Chair in the way he may be attempting to at the moment.

Mr SOMYUREK — The decimation of the Victorian manufacturing sector is not all the damage this government has inflicted on the Victorian economy — there is a theme here. The services sector — yes, the services sector — has also taken a big hit under the watch of this government. If we take out the carbon issue, the global demands and the high Australian dollar — and again, we are comparing across jurisdictions and not across time — Victoria’s services sector is underperforming at the moment compared to other states. This is evidenced by the latest Victorian performance of services index, for April 2013, where Victoria comes in at 35 points. This is — —

Mrs Peulich interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! Mr Ramsay has very kindly taken my request on board, but it seems the baton has been passed to Mrs Peulich. Likewise I ask her to cease her constant interjections as Mr Somyurek continues his contribution on this very important debate.

Mr SOMYUREK — At the moment the Victorian services sector is underperforming compared to other states. This is evidenced by the latest performance of services index for April 2013, which has come in at 35 points, compared to the national average of 44.1 points. Again, this is a comparison across jurisdictions; therefore, the influence of external variables — such as the Australian dollar, demand in the international marketplace and the carbon issue — have been isolated.

Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, or ABS data source 6291.055, service sector jobs, such as administrative and support services, topped the list for the biggest job losses for the 12 months to November 2012. Other service sectors were near the top of the list.

A category in the data called ‘other services’ covers electricity, gas, water and waste services, and information media and telecommunications.

Furthermore, according to a report prepared by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, 20 000 Australian services jobs are moving offshore each year and the government is not willing to do anything about it. The Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business, Ms Asher, was asked a question about this matter in a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee budget estimates hearing, and she clearly showed no interest at all. The government does not have a plan for the jobs crisis we are currently facing. From opposition we have put out a jobs plan hoping that it would somehow galvanise the government into action, cause it to rise to the challenge and shame it into putting out a plan, but it seems this government is beyond being shamed.

As shadow minister I have put out a number of policies in the manufacturing and services portfolios which illustrate what can be done to stimulate jobs growth. For example, the government spends approximately \$14 billion on goods and services. Our policies aim to maximise local content to ensure that local businesses profit from that spend. These policies will have an impact in a wide range of areas, from maximising the purchase of locally made vehicles to greater local content in train and tram purchases, and from ensuring that local content is a key factor in government garment purchases to ensuring that the services work for the government is not offshored.

All in all, on the data provided in my presentation, this government has performed extraordinarily badly compared to other states and compared to the last days of the Brumby government. That data clearly shows this government has underperformed against the national average and against New South Wales in particular.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I am inspired by my upper house colleague, Mr Somyurek, to rise to speak on this very important motion and in particular rebut his claim that the coalition government here in Victoria has no plan to assist business and manufacturing. First of all, we have a number of plans. The very first plan is to keep Labor out of office. That is the very best thing we can do to assist business and manufacturing. What is Labor’s plan? It is to drive business into the ground. There is a litany of Labor policies that are bad for business and bad for jobs that have been introduced by the state and federal Parliaments. They reward by promoting people from the very bodies that are responsible for making

business and industry uncompetitive — the unions. Their members are promoted into office and parachuted into this place so they can continue supporting policies that are bad for business, bad for manufacturing and which destroy jobs.

Mr Barber, a Greens member, also claimed that this government lacks a vision for the Victorian economy. I would have thought the recent budget was absolute proof of a very strong vision for where Victoria needs to go in order to prop up economic activity, create real jobs and make sure that the state continues to prosper. I will talk about the budget at greater length later in my contribution.

A lot has been said about the very tragic circumstances of the announcement of the Ford Motor Company closure in Victoria. Before I move on to the more substantive detail of the motion moved disingenuously by Ms Tierney, I will quote from some articles about the Ford announcement which clearly indicate that — —

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Intralot: performance

Ms PULFORD (Western Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation, Mr O’Donohue. I refer the minister to the Intralot monitoring agreement, and I ask: can the minister outline what performance or compliance metrics are contained in that agreement?

Hon. E. J. O’DONOHUE (Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation) — I welcome the question from Ms Pulford in relation to the Intralot monitoring agreement. As Ms Pulford and members would know, Intralot Gaming Services has entered into a 15-year agreement for the monitoring of electronic gaming machine processes. As Ms Pulford would also know, this process flows from the changed structure of the electronic gaming machine industry in Victoria that flowed from the Labor Party’s bungling of the electronic gaming machine auction process, a process — —

Hon. P. R. Hall interjected.

Hon. E. J. O’DONOHUE — Yes, Mr Hall, it was indeed a mess. It was a process that has short-changed the Victorian taxpayer to the tune of \$3 billion. It is an absolute disgrace. It is something which the Labor Party should be ashamed of. Mr Lenders, the Leader of the Opposition in this house, was custodian of the

state's finances at the time these decisions were made, and he short-changed the Victorian community to the tune of \$3 billion. There are many consequences that flow from Labor's bungling of the electronic gaming machine auction process.

As I advised the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, not only did Labor short-change the Victorian taxpayer to the tune of \$3 billion, according to the Auditor-General, but it also spent \$25 million on conducting the auction. It is just like the old saying, 'How does Labor grow small business? It takes a big business and makes it small'. How did Labor turn a \$4 billion asset —

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am surprised that I have not had a point of order taken, because I think the minister is debating the answer when he reflects on this process. I understand that he has provided some context for his answer, but it is my understanding that the question was about the monitoring processes for Intralot. Whilst some of the information the minister has provided to the house is of interest to all members, I think he is starting to move into debating the answer, particularly when he talks about how Labor makes businesses smaller and so forth.

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE — Thank you for your guidance, President. I will move on.

As a result of the changed structure that the former government implemented, following the disastrous auction of electronic gaming machines, Intralot Gaming Services has provided monitoring services to gaming venues in Victoria since August last year.

Supplementary question

Ms PULFORD (Western Victoria) — I note that the minister did not even try to answer my question in any way at all. I remind the minister that the initial question sought to elicit some information about the performance or compliance metrics in the agreement, which he did not refer to once in an almost 5-minute answer. Perhaps the minister could inform the house — if he knows the answer; he did not appear to know the answer to the substantive question — whether Intralot is or at any time has been in breach of the terms of its licence agreement and, if so, whether the government has applied a penalty?

Hon. E. J. O'DONOHUE (Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation) — This question is remarkably similar to a question Mr Pakula put to me in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee process. What I can say to the member is that following the awarding of the 15-year contract to Intralot Gaming Services, which

commenced from August last year, there were some transitional challenges from the old Tatts and Tabcorp system to the new system. There were some teething problems in relation to that, but I am pleased that I have been advised by the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation that the monitoring system is now working well, Intralot is performing well and those transitional and teething issues are now behind us.

Ordered that answer be considered next day on motion of Ms PULFORD (Western Victoria).

Children: welfare report

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — My question today is to the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development, the Honourable Wendy Lovell. I ask the minister if she could inform the house of the findings of the Victorian Auditor-General's report named *The State of Victoria's Children — Performance Reporting*.

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development) — I thank the member for his question and his ongoing interest in the welfare of children in the state of Victoria. I welcomed the Auditor-General's tabling this morning of *The State of Victoria's Children — Performance Reporting*. The state of Victoria's children report has been released annually since 2006. The Auditor-General has looked at these reports and found that the state of Victoria's children reports contain valuable information about Victorian children's health, development and wellbeing, and also that they are recognised within government and beyond as a valuable tool for understanding how children and young people are faring in Victoria. The Auditor-General also found that the reports make an important contribution to the evidence base underpinning policy and program development and that they have the potential to significantly influence service delivery.

The report also found that the government's decision to publicly release the state of Victoria's children report reflects a commitment to make information about the welfare, safety, learning and development of children available to those in a position of influence in children's lives through policies and programs. It is pleasing to see that the Auditor-General has recognised the importance of the state of Victoria's children report in helping the wider community understand how young people in our state are faring. It is also wonderful to see that local councils are making use of the information to form their own policies and approaches to better care for children in their area. A great example of this is the Bendigo

community, which used the data available from the state of Victoria's children report to release its own report on the state of Bendigo's children.

I recognise that the report from the Auditor-General this morning has raised some issues, which are around clarifying the purposes of the state of Victoria's children report each year and the completion of the Victorian child and adolescent monitoring system (VCAMS) online data project and reviewing VCAMS to determine the ongoing relevance of that data.

The department will accept all four recommendations that have been made by the Auditor-General and implement them as a priority. It is important to acknowledge that there are always ways to build on and improve the work we are doing, and we are committed to doing that. We are committed to improving outcomes for young Victorians, and we are committed to helping local governments access this important information.

Legionnaire's disease: cooling tower inspections

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Health. The minister demonstrates time and again his command of the budget papers and also his command of the latest health statistics. In this instance can he reconcile the fact that the number of cases of legionnaire's disease has increased in Victoria this year compared to last year, yet in the budget he has reduced the number of cooling tower inspections that he anticipates being delivered? Can he explain to the Victorian community why at a time when there could be increased risk he is decreasing effort?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I take the member's question very seriously because one of the important roles of the Department of Health is managing legionnaire's disease and ensuring that there is an adequate inspection regime. My information and advice is that the department has altered its methods of inspection and is doing more detailed inspections than it was previously doing. But I very much understand the importance of maintaining a very strong legionnaire's disease protection regime, and I believe Victoria does have such a strong legionnaire's disease protection regime.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I take it from the minister's answer that he believes there should be better inspections but not necessarily more inspections. If his department continues to report to him

that incidents of legionnaire's disease are increasing, will he give an undertaking to the Victorian community that not only will there be better inspections but there will be more complete inspections to try to reduce that risk?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — What I can say is that the Department of Health under all governments has had a very strong record of managing legionnaire's disease and has a fine record in terms of the regulatory effort. In this area, as you would expect, I act on advice, and the advice I have from the department is that the quality of inspections is very high and has been increased.

Mr Jennings — The number of incidents are increasing.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I am endeavouring to be sensible here, because this is a very important area of regulation. In my experience and from the information I have from the department, it is undertaking a very strong regime of inspections and will continue to undertake those inspections to ensure public safety.

Merrifield employment precinct: development

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My question without notice is directed to my friend and colleague the Minister for Planning, and I ask: can the minister advise the house what action he has taken to bring forward employment land for Melbourne's northern suburbs?

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — I thank Mr Finn for that important question about jobs and growth in Melbourne's outer urban areas.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. M. J. GUY — Calm down, Mr Lenders, we are only just into the question.

This is an important — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. M. J. GUY — In the Ukraine they say, 'Keep fire away from straw', and I would have thought today was not the day for Labor members to interject, unless one of them wants to come over and headbutt me.

I was asked an important question by Mr Finn, and it deserves a detailed answer. I recently launched an employment precinct in Melbourne's northern suburbs, in the northern growth corridor — and that employment suburb is called Merrifield. It was my pleasure to be at that launch last week because that new precinct will

create 20 000 jobs for Melbourne's northern suburbs. This builds on the back of the Werribee employment precinct, which Mr Elsbury, Mr Finn and I launched last year, which will create 50 000 jobs in Melbourne's outer western suburbs. Between them these precincts will get jobs where people live, build on the 20-minute city concept and importantly get jobs to where people are going to move in our outer urban areas. This is a policy of the coalition government that we are getting right, and it is about getting jobs in place before the people come to those suburbs.

We will see thousands of people come to this area between Craigieburn and Wallan in the next few years. It is a major corridor in a major growth area. That is why the government is putting in place a works-in-kind process so that some of that infrastructure can be realised earlier than it would normally be realised. Importantly, that is why I was there to launch the Merrifield development — a 300-hectare business precinct, a 110-hectare town centre, future land for primary schools, secondary schools and open space. As I said before, it exemplifies the 20-minute city concept, actually getting Melbourne into a polycentric form by building jobs growth in outer urban growth areas so that people will have jobs at the time of residential development. None of this is rocket science. It is about getting jobs in place first. That is why the coalition government is absolutely committed to building a sustainable Melbourne and sustainable outer urban areas.

This contrasts with what we inherited when we came to government. Suburbs had been built but had had little infrastructure upgrade for 10 years, like Point Cook. There were suburbs that had many, many residents and structure plans approved with no level of infrastructure upgrade submitted before them. That is why this government and others, including Mr Elsbury, Mr Finn and me, are proud to bring forward \$72 million worth of infrastructure for the Werribee employment precinct and are proud to bring forward jobs and jobs growth in Merrifield so that the northern growth corridor will have jobs in place at the time people move in.

We are doing what is right, what is important, to build a sustainable Melbourne for the long term. It is not about short-sightedness. It is not about building a city based on press releases and spin, which is what we inherited. It is about putting in place the infrastructure, the building blocks and the jobs to make sure that Melbourne remains the world's most livable city.

Hospitals: waiting lists

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Health. When the minister became Minister for Health the waiting list for elective surgery in Victoria was 38 897. At the last count the longest elective surgery waiting lists on record — 50 565 — was achieved on his watch two years later. By the end of this financial year the hospital contracts that he has signed anticipate that number blowing out to 55 227. Can the minister give us any indication or hope that the latest data may show that he will do better than his anticipated targets for the contracts that he signed?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — As the member well knows, statements of priorities (SOPs) seek objectives for hospitals and health services. What he also understands is that during the very period that he is referring to, and the forthcoming period to 30 June, the hospitals faced and will face a significant impact from the commonwealth government. He will understand, having looked at the statements of priorities, that in fact more than 2000 patients — nearly 2300 — did not get the surgeries that they would otherwise have had because of the impact of the cuts by his commonwealth cousins. These were the cuts that Mr Jennings voted in favour of in this chamber. To the disgrace of the Labor Party in Victoria, its members voted in favour of the \$107 million commonwealth cut. Of course when you take the money out and you take three or four months to repay the money, hospitals have to cancel surgeries and are unable to treat as many people as they would have. That is why the number went up in the later SOPs — because of the commonwealth government's cuts and the impact of those cuts.

What I can say to Mr Jennings very clearly is that the government is putting more money into our hospitals and health care than ever before. It did so in the last budget and in the budget just gone. We will increase funding for all our hospitals across the state. We look to see hospitals do the best they can in terms of reducing waiting lists, trying to treat as many people as possible. Record numbers of patients are being treated in our hospitals, and I think hospitals are doing an exceptional job under the circumstances where the commonwealth pulled out money halfway through the year.

Mr Jennings will understand — although he would not want to talk about it — that the cuts that are to be implemented by the commonwealth government on 1 July are from money that was promised. A sum of \$99.5 million, and \$368 million over three years, is set not to be paid in the way that was promised by the commonwealth government. That will have a

significant impact. I would have thought that if Mr Jennings wanted waiting list numbers brought down, as I do, he would join me in fighting for the return of the \$368 million in commonwealth funding, which would make a significant difference.

What I can indicate to Mr Jennings is that the government is determined to work very hard on our waiting lists to bring them down, to get the very best results for communities across the state. In the forthcoming budget — or the budget that has just been brought down for 1 July on — the government has a waiting lists initiative that will see an elective surgery pool operate, and that will provide \$101 million in this year and \$426 million over four years in additional resources to strengthen our response on waiting lists. What is clear is that the elective pool has begun to deliver some dividends in Victoria already, and we intend to continue with that approach as part of a balanced approach ensuring that public and private hospitals work together — that public hospitals are able to compete for the lion's share of that pool but that there is a private component in there as well.

What I can also indicate to Mr Jennings is that hospitals will seek to do the very best they can. All of them, I know — doctors and nurses — are working very hard to get the very best result they can. I would hope that a better result than is outlined in the statements of priorities is achieved in Victoria, but I indicate that the increase there is in large measure due to the withdrawal of commonwealth money, which Mr Jennings supported.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — President, you know that I will not waste my time by refuting what the minister has concluded in his comments, but under the minister's own mathematics, which he has just provided in his substantive answer, the elective surgery waiting lists have increased by 11 668 under his watch, 2300 of which he blames the commonwealth government for, which means that he takes credit for the increase of 9368 himself because of his funding decisions and the decisions that he has driven within the hospital system. In the next year where the minister has outlined to us his investments, will those waiting lists go up and down or will they continue to increase, as they have, in the minister's own words, by 9368, according to his own maths?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — The member did not quite get it right. Let me be clear: during this financial year that we are in, following the last state budget and the federal budget in the previous year, the facts are that commonwealth funding has

fallen off in two major tranches. The first major tranche that directly impacted on health was the \$50.2 million withdrawal of elective surgery money that was known but was opposed by the state under the national partnership agreement. The \$50.2 million fell to zero, and that was from 1 July. That had a direct impact on waiting lists in Victoria.

Later — let me be quite clear — from August the government became aware that the federal government was seeking to claw back money. It was only a little later that we became aware of the scale of the attempted clawback — the \$475 million in total and the \$107 million cut into the financial year that we are still in. The government then returned that money. There are two significant tranches, aside from the GST, if Mr Jennings wants to talk about the GST as well, and the impact of the cuts in GST funding by the commonwealth.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The minister's time has expired.

Hospitals: federal legislation

Mr KOCH (Western Victoria) — My question without notice is to the Minister for Health, my colleague David Davis. Is the minister aware of any threats to Victoria's system of local hospital boards and local hospital governance, and what steps is he taking to ensure that this system is protected?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I thank the member for his question and note his strong advocacy for local hospitals in the Barwon region and across his electorate of Western Victoria Region. The state government is very concerned about a bill that is currently in the commonwealth Parliament, and I will outline this for the house because I think it is important for people to understand what this bill seeks to do and the likely implications for Victorian hospitals. It is the National Health Reform Amendment (Definitions) Bill 2013, which the federal Minister for Health is seeking to put into the federal Parliament to define hospitals and define hospital services.

To be honest, I do not detect as I move around Victoria that people have difficulty defining what a hospital is. The national health reform agreement, agreed to by all states and the commonwealth, says:

Under this agreement, the states will be responsible for:

- a. system management of public hospitals, including:
 - i. establishment of the legislative basis and governance arrangements of public hospital services, including the establishment of local hospital networks ...

But this bill seeks to do something different. It seeks to allow the commonwealth minister to define ‘networks’ and to potentially return to the plan of the former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, of amalgamating local networks across the state. We were very concerned about Kevin Rudd’s plan, and we were also concerned when a previous federal minister, Nicola Roxon — with whom I got on very well — was looking at amalgamating networks, and we said no and the Victorian health-care sector said no. We have established governance arrangements in Victoria and we have established hospital arrangements in Victoria, and they do not need to be changed or reformed. If hospitals want to work together, that is one thing, but it is very different to take these sorts of steps when the federal government takes it upon itself to start defining what our networks are, defining the names of hospitals and defining the arrangements.

I do not think, for example, the Kilmore and District Hospital, the Yea and District Memorial Hospital, the Alexandra District Hospital and the Mansfield District Hospital would want to be amalgamated. I do not believe that they would want to have the commonwealth minister tampering with the definitions of what those hospitals are, how those services are defined and what services are delivered. I do not think they need the help from the commonwealth minister to do that.

I do not think the East Grampians, Hepburn, Beaufort, Skipton, Ballarat or Djerriwarrh health services would need the help of the commonwealth minister in defining what a health service is. I think if you go to Djerriwarrh, you will find that the people there know what a hospital is, they know what a health service is and they do not need a commonwealth bill coming in over the top, trying to overturn the arrangements that are currently in place.

I do not believe that the health services at Terang, Mortlake, Hesse, Winchelsea, Colac or Timboon or South West Healthcare at Warrnambool need assistance from the federal minister in defining their hospital services, defining the shape of their health services or defining local governance. I do not think they want that.

We want local boards, controlled by local people in Victoria under state arrangements, not with the commonwealth minister sticking their nose in, a commonwealth minister trying to define boards and returning to the nasty Rudd plan that forced mergers of boards across the state. We should understand very clearly what Kevin Rudd was up to when he referred to ‘local hospital networks bringing together small groups

of hospitals’; it was four or five in a cluster being forced together against their will.

Victoria stood up and said no, and it will continue to stand up and say no. We will fight for the longstanding hospital governance arrangements that exist in Victoria under all levels of government. I will be writing to the federal minister, I will be writing to the Standing Council on Health and we will be working this through, but we are not supporting a bill that will seek to overturn the health agreement and force mergers of hospitals.

Hospitals: winter demand

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question, unsurprisingly perhaps, is to the Minister for Health. The minister has just given the commonwealth advice on the definition of a hospital. Maybe in his answer he will provide us with a definition of winter, because I am aware that the minister’s department is holding a symposium for hospitals in Victoria to deal with the increased call on hospital services over winter which happens each and every year. The minister’s department is holding a symposium on 25 June to share ideas and best practice between hospitals to try to deliver an appropriate service over winter, so I ask: does the minister think that this is a timely way of dealing with this matter, given that year by year there is an increase in winter admissions to hospitals, and that includes 25 June?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I will give the member one thing: at least he knows his seasons. He knows when June is and that it is winter. We accept that June is part of winter, and we are very much — —

Mr Jennings — How well prepared are you?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — Let me indicate that the previous Minister for Health and current Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Mr Andrews, regularly made excuses about the up-kick in the numbers of people going into emergency departments due to the impact of winter. I invite the member to go back and look at some of Daniel Andrews’s news releases. The member will see that he saw a significant impact occur during winter.

Mr Lenders — On a point of order, President, Mr Jennings asked the minister a specific question about the definition of winter under his administration. The minister is now debating the question by introducing extraneous material about what a previous government may or may not have done when the

specific question to him was about the definition under his administration. I ask you to direct him to cease debating.

The PRESIDENT — Order! In respect of this point of order, I understand what Mr Lenders is concerned about; however, I have to say that Mr Jennings on this occasion waxed lyrical in his question. The question meandered quite a bit and therefore gave some licence to the minister in terms of how he responded to a question that went far beyond simply requiring a definition of the word ‘winter’. The minister, to continue, but perhaps with a view to not entering into debate in his answer.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I can indicate that it is winter all over the country from 1 June onwards, in line with standard practice. On this Mr Jennings and I agree. But I can also indicate that one of Mr Jennings’s colleagues in another state ran a winter campaign recently. I can honestly indicate that the management of the challenge of increased numbers in our hospital sector in winter is something that governments of all political colours and persuasions have sought to work with over a long period.

Mr Jennings — Do it in a timely way.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — To me, 25 June seems to be squarely in winter, and Mr Jennings may understand that the flu cycle and a range of viral conditions in the broad spread of the community peak around July and August, so it seems to me that this is a reasonably timely approach by the department. I invite the member to have a look at the campaign about tissues, colds and flu run by one of his Labor colleagues in a neighbouring state.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The reason my leader and I obviously had not caucused to interrupt the minister’s flow when he referred to the steering of the health services by former Minister for Health, Daniel Andrews, is that every press release Daniel Andrews published as health minister included a winter blitz, which saw additional resources come into our hospital system to deal with that rising pressure during the course of each and every winter. With the symposium the minister is holding four weeks into winter, has he allocated any additional resources to back up hospitals and help them deal with the increased demand over winter?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I can indicate to the member that the government has increased funding to our hospitals all year round —

summer and winter There is more than \$14.3 billion in the health portfolio, a 5.4 per cent increase in funding for acute health this year. That is a very good outcome in a very difficult financial environment across Australia. I can indicate to the member that we have increased funding in all seasons across the year.

Higher education: university deferral rates

Mrs COOTE (Southern Metropolitan) — My question this afternoon is to the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Mr Hall. Can the minister update the house on the most recent research into the deferral of university offers?

Hon. P. R. HALL (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — I thank my colleague Mrs Coote for this question on a very important topic, and one I know members have shared my interest in over the years. John Polesel from Melbourne University has co-authored some very useful reports into university deferral rates and also the outcomes of students who defer university offers. He has done a number of those reports, and last Thursday I had the privilege of launching the fourth, I think, in the series of reports. This one was a further look at those students who completed their Victorian certificate of education (VCE) in 2009 and where they were three years on — whether or not they had taken up those deferred positions at universities.

I might add that this work has been supported by the Victorian government. Both the previous government and the current government have supported this longitudinal research to the tune of about \$500 000. I also want to compliment the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria and the local learning and employment networks that have commissioned this work and worked with John and his co-authors in putting those reports together.

Members would be interested to know that deferral rates have not changed significantly over the years. For a student attending a school in regional Victoria, the current deferral rate of a university offer is 16.5 per cent. That compares with students in metropolitan areas who have a deferral rate of 8.1 per cent, so there is a significant difference. Members would also be interested to know that of those students who are the subject of this particular study, I now find, three years on, that 63 per cent of those who deferred have taken up a university offer, so there is a significant dropout rate in those who were offered a place at university and who for some reason or other did not take it immediately.

I remind the house that the university application rate for students from regional Victoria is also much lower than those in metropolitan areas. If you combine deferral rates and lower application rates, you can conclude the following scenario — and these are facts. If you compare students who completed VCE last year in metropolitan schools and non-metropolitan schools, you will find that 38.6 per cent of students from non-metropolitan schools and 56.6 per cent of students from metropolitan schools are currently enrolled in universities. There is a disparity of 18 per cent between those two groups.

No-one has ever been able to convince me that country students are less academically inclined than city students. Obviously the reason for the disparity is one largely attributable to the cost of moving and having to live away from home. That is why my notice of motion 22, which goes back more than two years now, is as relevant today as it was then.

It is also important to record the efforts the Victorian government is making to address that disparity. The Regional Partnerships Facilitation Fund and the partnerships between TAFEs and universities have meant that more opportunities exist for regional students to live at home and study. There are 160 students, for example, currently studying a Ballarat bachelor of business at a TAFE institute at Traralgon. These are the sorts of things we need to encourage to help address that disparity between city and country students.

Hospitals: mental health services

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Health. In a very courageous move the minister released the Victorian health services performance report immediately after he appeared before the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. The report included the statistic that 3159 patients with mental health conditions who arrived at emergency departments waited more than 8 hours to receive care. Can the minister explain this, and also explain what he is doing about it in conjunction with the Minister for Mental Health and not at the expense of the responsibility of the Minister for Mental Health, because he is the minister who is responsible for hospitals and hospital delivery? What is the minister doing to remedy the situation?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — What I can indicate to the member is, as he correctly outlines, patients with a mental illness are indeed the responsibility in the first instance of the Minister for Mental Health in our system. I am very happy to take

on notice detailed questions on her portfolio, and will do so. We work together to seek good outcomes in our emergency departments, and work is proceeding in a number of areas in the state.

Additional announcements were made in the state budget — for example, additional mental health beds at Werribee. It was an important announcement to try to provide additional capacity into the system. In key emergency departments like Northern Health, where we are building a new emergency department, we work to ensure that there is a proper set of arrangements for people with mental health conditions, and we seek to work together to get a very good outcome. Mr Drum is very familiar with the planning at the Bendigo Hospital, and I can assure the chamber that the new emergency department that will be built there will be a remarkably well-designed emergency department that will deal with patients whatever their condition and enable the correct arrangements to be put in place.

I can indicate that at Frankston Hospital, where the previous government was not prepared to do the capital works and put in the additional support that was needed, we are building a new emergency department, although I notice that from time to time Mr Tarlamis likes to ask about this. I suggest he might like to take a drive past that area and see the diggers at work. In the case of the Frankston Hospital he tried to assert in the local paper the other day that work had not started. I think we are sending him a picture of the diggers at work, so I suggest that he gets out a little bit more into his electorate and drives past the new emergency department that is being built there. I accept that it is not actually built and functioning yet, but I also understand that large construction work takes time. You have to scope it, you have to cost it, you have to tender it, you have to put the tender out and get the result, and then you have to have it built. This takes a little time when you are picking up after 11 years of neglect, whether it be in the emergency department at Frankston or the emergency department at the Northern Hospital. I could go through the list.

Mr Drum interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I see Mr Drum nodding. The years that Bendigo did not get the extra support it needed — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! There is too much noise and interjection during the minister's answer. I think the minister is debating the answer. As I understood it, the question was in respect of mental

health, and I think the minister has moved into infrastructure facilities as distinct from the mental health services. No doubt infrastructure is important for the delivery of those services, so I take it that is where the minister is going, but I ask him to be mindful of not debating the matter, as discussing Mr Tarlamis's use of his car to visit various sites might have suggested.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I accept your guidance on this matter, President, and I probably strayed just a little. To directly answer the member's question, I work with the Minister for Mental Health. In terms of the precise detail of his question, I am always prepared to take on notice a question for the Minister for Mental Health and provide a response for the member. But we do work together with emergency departments to get better outcomes for patients, whether they are patients with a mental illness or a mental health challenge or patients who come in for the full variety of other emergency conditions. As the member knows, that is a very broad category. It includes some of the illnesses that often occur in winter.

Supplementary question

Mr JENNINGS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The level of confusion that was generated during the course of the minister's answer indicates some difficulty here. Can the minister make it crystal clear for us that the Minister for Mental Health actually negotiates with hospitals about the terms of the contracts and the performance of the services in relation to mental health and has a role assisting the minister or in her own right of giving direction to hospitals about the way in which that can be achieved?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — The member understands that I work collaboratively with my colleague and the department that we both share. He should not be surprised that we work in that way. We have very similar views on how we can get good results for our communities. For example, with the Bendigo Hospital the Minister for Mental Health has had significant input into matters around the design of mental health facilities in that hospital. I have been very keen to take — —

Mr Jennings interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I am giving the member a practical example. The practical example I am giving is the new design of the Bendigo Hospital. We are ensuring that mental health patients have the very best facilities. They are purpose designed, and they work in tandem and in synergy with the emergency department at the new Bendigo Hospital, which is being built —

the \$630 million hospital, which is far greater than the one to which the Labor government was prepared to commit. This government has gone to far greater efforts than the previous government was prepared to go to.

Colac: airfield upgrade

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My question is to the Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry, the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips. Can the minister update the house on the assistance being provided by the Napthine government to improve emergency services access in western Victoria?

Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS (Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry) — I thank Mr Ramsay for his question and for his interest in the Victorian government's commitment to regional airports. In 2011 the Victorian government created the Regional Aviation Fund because it recognised there was a role for the Victorian government to assist regional communities in upgrading their regional airport facilities. Many of these facilities date from the Second World War. They are very old, and in many cases they have not been upgraded since they were first established. The cost of upgrading those facilities is often prohibitive for municipal councils and other local operators.

In recognition of the role these facilities play in supporting flying training operations, regional businesses, tourism operations and indeed emergency services operations, the government established that fund to assist those regional councils and regional operators to upgrade those facilities.

Earlier this month I was delighted to join Mr Ramsay and Mr Mulder, the member for Polwarth in the other place, at Colac on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Colac Aero Club, which is the operating committee for the Colac regional airfield. During the course of that 50th anniversary celebration I was very pleased to announce, along with Mr Ramsay and Mr Mulder, that the Victorian government through the Regional Aviation Fund would contribute \$162 000 to the Colac Otway Shire Council for the upgrade of that facility.

This is a very important upgrade for that facility. It will allow the shire council and the committee of management to seal the main runway, it will allow for the strengthening of the shoulders of the runway and it will allow for upgrades to the apron and the turning nodes at that airfield. A very significant suite of works will be facilitated through this grant.

This upgrade will allow for the further growth of the flying training sector at Colac. The Colac Aero Club and other operators on the south-west coast are expanding their flying training operation businesses. It will facilitate 24-hour access by the air ambulance into the Colac community to support emergency evacuations from Colac, and importantly it will also assist the facility in its role as a fire base.

The Colac airfield is one of the closest facilities to the Otways in terms of supporting fire suppression activities throughout summer. It is a very important facility for those activities. These upgrades will assist in that facility continuing to be relevant and continuing to operate for the Colac community.

The Victorian government is delighted to be supporting this project. This fund has been strongly supported by the Premier and member for South-West Coast in the Assembly. Mr O'Brien and Mr Koch have also advocated for a number of projects under this fund. We are delighted to be supporting the Colac community in this important upgrade.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I have answers to the following questions on notice: 8091, 8731, 8768, 8798, 8799, 9212, 9214, 9220, 9223, 9224, 9226, 9236, 9253, 9255, 9325, 9326, 9333–5, 9338, 9339, 9340–73, 9391–3, 9395, 9399, 9405–25, 9438, 9440–52, 9457, 9459, 9462, 9463, 9465–7.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Members: conduct

The PRESIDENT — Order! Earlier today there was an unfortunate exchange in the house between some members. I understand the exasperation of Mr Leane, particularly in his role as Opposition Whip, in seeking to support a new colleague on this occasion. However, he unfortunately overstepped the mark in terms of making some unparliamentary remarks, as I understand it, and issuing an invitation to further discuss those matters outside this chamber. I certainly welcome the resolution of issues outside the chamber, but I am concerned that on this occasion the tenor of that invitation was perhaps a little more vigorous than might have been necessary.

Mr Leane was certainly mindful that a couple of the contributions to the 90-second statements were quite provocative today. Whilst members obviously have an

opportunity to speak their minds, particularly in 90-second statements, and whilst I do not think that members of Parliament ought to be particularly precious beings, the fact is that given the circumstances where we had a new member in the chamber and at least one of those contributions related to that member, I do understand, as I said, the frustration or the exasperation that Mr Leane felt in his role as Opposition Whip.

Certainly, though, I regarded those exchanges as fairly unedifying. I can indicate that I sought to establish what Hansard might have picked up with regard to those exchanges. I am advised that in all respects the comments that were made from both sides of the chamber were indistinct and therefore the *Hansard* record will simply describe that section of the proceedings as being 'Honourable members interjecting'.

Two members, Mr Leane and Mr Philip Davis, left the chamber to discuss aspects of that exchange and to resolve their differences. I understand there was a frank exchange between the two members; there was certainly no physicality associated with it. Both gentlemen displayed the maturity that I would expect from members of this Parliament.

Therefore from my point of view the matter has essentially ended. But I would advise members to be mindful of their responsibilities and their conduct in this place and to be respectful of other members, because this instance is a clear illustration that these things can get out of hand.

Mr P. Davis — On a point of order, President, lest the record be confused, you referred to some contributions in members statements in your preamble. I wish to make it clear that I made no remarks in relation to members 90-second statements this day. Whatever occurred in this chamber and elsewhere was a consequence of some commentary from members of the opposition.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I was not suggesting and would not suggest that the member made any such remarks. The context is that two other members on the government side made fairly vigorous contributions during 90-second statements and it was Mr Leane who actually responded to them. Mr Davis is right; he made no commentary on that. I did not hear Mr Davis make any comment at all. I am with Hansard. Any remarks that Mr Davis might have made do not even qualify as being indistinct; I did not hear them.

Mr Leane — President, I would like to withdraw any unparliamentary interjections I made this morning, and I apologise if my behaviour in this chamber was seen as unparliamentary.

Sitting suspended 12.55 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.

GOVERNMENT: PERFORMANCE

Debate resumed.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Before lunch I was setting the scene for this motion. In the circumstances one would expect a motion of this nature to be debated in the chamber, but I cannot believe the positions that have been taken by the Labor Party and the Greens. The situation reminds me of an email I recently received from a constituent who wanted to share a story. I do not know whether it is fact or not, but it is presented as a report from a newspaper and is titled ‘When grandma goes to court’. It reads:

Lawyers should never ask a Mississippi grandma a question if they aren’t prepared for the answer.

In a trial, a southern small-town prosecuting attorney called his first witness, a grandmotherly, elderly woman, to the stand. He approached her and asked, ‘Mrs Jones, do you know me?’. She responded, ‘Why, yes, I do know you, Mr Williams. I’ve known you since you were a boy, and frankly, you’ve been a big disappointment to me. You lie, you cheat on your wife, and you manipulate people and talk about them behind their backs. You think you’re a big shot when you haven’t the brains to realise you’ll never amount to anything more than a two-bit paper pusher. Yes, I know you’.

The lawyer was stunned. Not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked, ‘Mrs Jones, do you know the defence attorney?’.

She again replied, ‘Why yes, I do. I’ve known Mr Bradley since he was a youngster, too. He’s lazy, bigoted, and he has a drinking problem. He can’t build a normal relationship with anyone — —

Ms Mikakos — On a point of order, Deputy President, I am really at a loss as to where Mrs Peulich is going with this quote, because we are debating a jobs motion, and I am not quite sure of the relevance of this. It certainly sounds like it has nothing to do with the jobs motion.

Mrs PEULICH — It will take approximately 90 seconds for you to understand the relevance — —

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Does Mrs Peulich want to contribute to the point of order?

Mrs PEULICH — Yes. On the point of order, Deputy President, I have about 90 seconds to set the scene of the positions that have been taken by the

respective parties, the Labor Party and the Greens, on this particular motion, and I am comparing that to the story that has been forwarded to me in relation to this particular case. I ask the Deputy President to bear with me. I have read two-thirds of the story.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! I do not get the relevance of the story.

Mrs PEULICH — If the Deputy President will allow me to complete it, I am sure he will.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! It is an extensive quotation. Can Mrs Peulich enlighten me as to where this quotation comes from? I am sorry; I missed it at the beginning.

Mrs PEULICH — The parallel — and if I am allowed to complete it, it will be obvious — is that there has been no reflection in the contributions of the parties who have spoken on this motion to the very problems that we are here to debate. They are the antibusiness and job-destroying policies of Labor and the Greens.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Who is Mrs Peulich quoting?

Mrs PEULICH — It is a metaphor — —

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Who is it quoting?

Mrs PEULICH — It is an article from a Mississippi newspaper. It is a metaphor — that is, you do not bring things on if you are not prepared to consider all the answers. Allow me to finish, Deputy President. There is a little bit of licence; it is called a metaphor.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Mrs Peulich can take a seat and give me a moment to reflect on this. Is what Mrs Peulich reading from a newspaper from the United States?

Mrs PEULICH — It is.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! I am struggling with the relevance. I am concerned about where Mrs Peulich is going with some of the accusations that are being aired about people. I have no idea of the source — —

Mr O’Brien — On a point of order, Deputy President — —

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! I am ruling on a point of order! I will allow Mrs Peulich to continue but will ask that she make it absolutely clear as to how it is relevant to the debate before the house.

Mrs PEULICH — I will reconfigure my iPhone so I can complete reading it. The question was:

... do you know the defence attorney?

and the witness said:

Why yes, I do. I've known Mr Bradley since he was a youngster, too. He's lazy, bigoted, and he has a drinking problem. He can't build a normal relationship and his law practice is one of the worst in the entire state.

She went on to enumerate his less attractive attributes, about which I will not bore the chamber. The defence attorney was horrified:

The judge asked both counsellors to approach the bench and, in a very quiet voice, said, 'If either of you idiots asks her if she knows me, I'll —

deal with you. The point of my referring to the story is that in the contributions to the debate from members of the Labor Party and the Greens there have been no reflections on how their own policies have been manifested and in a sense highlighted by the recent announcement of the Ford closure in 2016, which is going to lead to a substantial loss of jobs. Both parties who put cases forward in this chamber have been asking this government to fix problems that they themselves have been implicated in creating.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mrs PEULICH — If you were in the chamber earlier, before question time, you would have heard members of the Labor Party say that members of this government have no policies and the Greens say that we have no vision for taking the Victorian economy forward. My response to that is that this government's most important policy is to make sure a Labor government is not elected in the state of Victoria and that the federal Labor government is defeated, because it is the unions and Labor, state and federal, who are significant contributors to making Victorian business less and less competitive, which is ultimately the problem that has led to the Ford situation.

The carbon tax is an iconic example of that. The Greens are responsible for a string of policies which have substantially undermined the competitiveness of Victoria's and Australia's business, and that is substantiated by the coverage that this particularly sad issue has received. I will quote briefly from an article on ABC News online, updated on 23 May, under the headline 'Ford Australia to close Broadmeadows and Geelong plants, 1200 jobs to go'. The article states:

Ford Australia says it will close its Australian manufacturing plants in October 2016, with the loss of hundreds of jobs.

Indeed it is very devastating for those families and for those individuals involved. The article continues:

Ford president Bob Graziano said approximately 1200 workers would lose their jobs when the Broadmeadows and Geelong plants were shut down.

He made the announcement in Melbourne this morning after announcing that the company had lost \$141 million over the last financial year — taking losses over the past five years to more than \$600 million.

Ms Tierney's motion calls on this government to fix the problem, and Mr Somyurek inferred that somehow it happened on this government's watch so members of the government are responsible for the problem. Both members have stuck their heads in the sand and have not reflected for one millisecond on the nature of the policies that they voted for in this chamber and that they supported through Labor Party policies — and federally with the Greens — that have undermined the competitive nature of these important businesses.

The article goes on to quote Mr Graziano:

Our costs are double that of Europe and nearly four times Ford in Asia ...

We are an uncompetitive nation, and regrettably I believe that this is sliding and can only be arrested by making sure that Labor's antibusiness policies are taken out. Mr Graziano goes on to say:

The business case simply did not stack up, leading us to the conclusion [that] manufacturing is not viable for Ford in Australia in the long term.

I will not comment on that part of it, except to say that having had a look at the figures in terms of sales, it is clear that the market share has not been with Ford. Yes, I do drive a Ford Territory, as I believe many members of this chamber do, but the bottom line is that Ford is simply not selling enough cars and is being beaten by cheaper — —

Mr Finn — We are doing our bit.

Mrs PEULICH — We are doing our bit, but Ford is being beaten by cheaper products on the market.

However, I was pleased to see the Prime Minister and the Premier working together and making some announcements to assist in workforce transition, and they have committed substantial funds to assist that. But I return to my initial point — that is, the nature of the policies that have led to this outcome have not been helpful.

Labor force costs are the most substantial contributor to the cost of business and services. Mr Somyurek spent

some time talking about services, yet whenever there is an enterprise bargaining agreement negotiation, members of the Labor Party are the champions of the most extravagant initial claims rather than espousing restraint so that we can protect Australian businesses and jobs, including those in Victoria. We have never seen that sort of self-discipline. Of course we know the close relationship between the Labor Party's elected members of Parliament and their union bosses, particularly when certain opportunities arise. I congratulate Mr Melhem, but I refer to the issue of union heavies being parachuted into Parliament. Nevertheless, we see a continuation of policies that are basically antibusiness and ultimately make our businesses less competitive.

The Victorian government has an economic and financial strategy to address the challenges facing Victoria, and it is focused first and foremost on rebuilding and strengthening budget capacity to fund infrastructure without accumulating unsustainable public debt. Our plans include some \$6.1 billion of infrastructure. We will soon debate Mr Barber's motion on the east-west link project. He is against east-west link; government members are for it, because it will mean we leave as our legacy an infrastructure project that will diminish congestion not just for private commuters but for business. The east-west link will also generate a huge number of jobs during its construction phase. Of course the Greens oppose this project.

Government members support improving productivity growth, and we have endeavoured to do so through our wage negotiation policies, which Labor has frustrated. Given that Labor members are champions of the union movement, they have never had a realistic position on improving productivity growth. Members of this government stand for more responsive and productive service delivery from government investing in high-quality infrastructure.

I turn to some specific initiatives in relation to the big picture that Mr Barber referred to, including the recent reorganisation of the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation, which will focus even more on jobs and investment. The government is working with business through initiatives like the business engagement model to support the growth of Victorian businesses by helping to resolve productivity constraints — something that Labor and the Greens have never been supportive of — through actions such as cutting red tape and, dare I say it, cutting green tape. Green tape can be just as much an impediment as red tape, because it slows —

Mr Barber — To? Give us an example.

Mrs PEULICH — It does not matter what to. There are lots of examples, and Mr Barber's opposition to the east-west link is a prime example. We will also focus on facilitating new investment and innovation, supporting job creation and increasing access to and growing new markets, especially export markets. We have seen a string of trade missions being led by the former Premier and current ministers and so on in order to grow that market.

Interaction with business will increase with the addition of two new Victorian government business offices to the network — one in Tottenham in 2012 and one in Ringwood in 2013. Since December 2010 the government has also facilitated investment projects to the value of \$5.1 billion, which are expected to generate over 13 000 jobs. So far in 2012 and 2013 the government has facilitated over 120 investment projects valued at over \$1.4 billion, which are expected to generate over 3800 new jobs. Significant investment facilitation has supported current jobs and will increase future job opportunities in Victoria.

There are numerous examples of new investments supported by the Victorian government, many of them spread right throughout Australia, including the Cotton On headquarters expansion, estimated at 500 jobs; the expansion of Interactive's Port Melbourne data centre, estimated at 300 jobs; the manufacture of new combat body armour at Australian Defence Apparel in Bendigo, estimated at 48 jobs; and the establishment of the Kraft Foods Asia-Pacific Confectionery Centre of Excellence in Melbourne, generating another 100 new jobs and securing 1000 jobs at Kraft's Ringwood manufacturing operations.

The Victorian coalition has also been a strong supporter of manufacturing in Melbourne's south-east. The Cake Syndicate Pty Ltd based in Hallam received a grant of \$250 000 to buy state-of-the-art cake decorating equipment to boost productivity and competitiveness. Popina Victoria of Dandenong South received \$250 000 to increase competitiveness by consolidating new and existing equipment to boost exports. There was \$140 000 to Diamond Dell of Noble Park to buy state-of-the-art production line equipment to improve the company's biscuit-making operations. Aerosonde will be delivering its 400th unmanned aerial vehicle from its Notting Hill headquarters. Dandenong bus builder Volgren Australia recently handed over the first of 38 new buses to the Ventura bus group. The new buses, being delivered as part of a \$6.5 million contract with Ventura, are the outcome of a \$3 million

three-year investment in a new design that both improves driver ergonomics and cuts operating costs.

We also have the Victorian Direct Manufacturing Centre network based in Clayton to allow manufacturing firms to collaborate on projects that boost their productivity and competitiveness. GlassCo Australia in Dandenong South received a \$250 000 grant to invest in new manufacturing technology. My colleague the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips opened a \$12 million state-of-the-art pharmaceutical distribution facility in Dandenong South, bringing 100 additional jobs to the south-east. Investment in the high-tech and high-scale pharmaceutical distribution centre will have flow-on effects for the local and national economies.

Over the past 18 months we have released a comprehensive manufacturing strategy, which includes a suite of programs to support local manufacturers to become more productive and competitive. In 2011 manufacturing generated 300 000 jobs and \$15.3 billion in exports in Victoria. Those are just some of the examples, many of which have been covered by other speakers, of the manner in which this government has supported manufacturing.

The government offers support to business. It plays an important part in providing assistance to businesses and investment in businesses but also in providing vocational education and training. We have heard from Labor time and again about there being cuts to education, which is just not true. The allocation to vocational education and training is \$1.3 billion, far in excess of the \$850 million that was allocated by Labor. When Labor set up the model that opened up TAFE provision to registered training organisations it would have expected that some money would move across to the private sector. Labor members are responsible for their policies, which they now come in here and criticise the results of. We have unashamedly increased the subsidies to the areas of national skill shortages where people can source jobs.

Government members have done a lot in the two and a half years that we have been in office, but we are not magicians. The coalition is not a magician. We cannot make disappear the damaging effects of Labor's and the Green's policies, which undermine the competitive nature of businesses and destroy jobs.

Mr Barber — This is what you are telling your constituents, is it? They are saying, 'Two and a half years; what has changed?', and you are saying, 'We're not magicians'.

Mrs PEULICH — We are not magicians. We have an outstanding budget, and the budgetary position is improving. We have made some necessary —

Mr Barber — With \$8 billion into a hole in the ground.

Mrs PEULICH — I know Mr Barber is at the bottom of the garden. Mr Barber and I are never going to agree on the importance of major infrastructure, especially roads. We won in the south-east predominantly because of congestion and the failure to invest in infrastructure. Mr Barber and I are in diametrically opposite positions on the importance of roads, as well as a decent public transport system, which this government continues to invest in.

Mr Barber — What? But you're not magicians, right?

Mrs PEULICH — We are not magicians; you might be jugglers. We are not the Cirque du Soleil; that is the domain of the Greens. Our domain is to make steady and responsible decisions and improvements. The allocation of \$100 million to the improvement of —

Mr Barber — Take a train some time.

Mrs PEULICH — I have been taking the train for the last month and a half. Mr Barber can get off his podium. He should get into a Ford motor vehicle; it might increase Ford's sales.

There is \$100 million set aside for the Frankston line and \$25 million set aside for improvements on the Dandenong line. This government continues to invest money into roads, public transport and supporting business. Most importantly, the government adopts policies which are pro-business, pro-jobs and pro-economy. The things that have been most destructive to our manufacturers and businesses are Labor policies and Greens policies combined. We have seen that federally. I look forward to the opportunity of having a new federal government. The election of Tony Abbott and his colleagues will give businesses and manufacturers not just across the south-east but right across the nation a better opportunity to thrive and prosper. At the end of the day those businesses are the ones that create the wealth, opportunity, prosperity and jobs for Victorian and Australian families.

With those few words, I indicate that I will not be voting for the motion. The people who are responsible for the destruction of the competitiveness of our businesses come in here, get on their high horses, get on their soapboxes and expect this government to wave a

magic wand and overturn 11 years of failed Labor policies. The champions of the union movement steadily undermined the competitiveness of Victoria's businesses, which is evidenced by the losses that Ford accumulated over a number of years. I will be voting against the motion, and I look forward to supporting policies — —

Mr Melhem interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! I advise Mr Melhem that interjections are disorderly and that continuous interjections are particularly so. Occasional ones slip through, but interjections are in fact disorderly.

Mrs PEULICH — He will get the hang of it after a while, no doubt.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! I do not need further contributions from Mrs Peulich that will provoke more response.

Mrs PEULICH — I am winding up. I look forward to hearing other contributions from people. I will listen with great interest to hear whether there is any reflection or any mea culpa from those who have been party to policies which have undermined Victorian and Australian manufacturing businesses.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! During the course of her contribution, Mrs Peulich relied upon the use of extensive quotations; I believe she said they were from a United States newspaper. In relation to the use of quotations I draw the attention of all members to a number of rulings from previous presidents and deputy presidents. They indicate that when quotations are used in a contribution they should be succinct and relevant to the point. In particular I draw the attention of members to one ruling made in 2002 by Deputy President Bishop:

Members should develop their own arguments during speeches and not read significant sections of a newspaper article.

I would like to add to that ruling, because there is very little reference to the example whereby Mrs Peulich used a significant section of a quotation in relation to making an analogous point. There are no rulings on that, but the intent of previous rulings emphasise succinctness and relevance to the debate. In particular when members wish to use analogies they should do so in their own words, rather than relying upon extensive quotations. There has not been guidance on this matter in the past, but in the context of the contribution today I offer that guidance to members.

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — I am very pleased to be able to contribute to this debate today. I thank Ms Tierney for bringing this very important motion before the house. It is unfortunate that not a day goes by when you read a newspaper or listen to the radio without hearing about more jobs being lost in our state. This is a very dire set of circumstances, and it concerns me greatly because I represent a community in the northern suburbs of Melbourne that relies very much on the manufacturing industry. It is a community that has been doing it tough, and these job losses only add to its difficulty. In over 2½ years this government has failed to attract an economic climate conducive to investment and job creation, and three budgets later we still have no jobs plan. Victorians are not only hearing about job losses but they are also feeling them. We have seen major employers, like Ford Australia, Toyota, Qantas, Alcoa, ANZ, Bosch and Heinz, either restructuring or shutting down operations in our state, resulting in massive job losses.

Ms Tierney spoke at length, which I will not do, about the Ford announcement last week. We heard that 1200 jobs will be directly lost as a result of the Broadmeadows and Geelong plants being shut down in 2016. This situation will be exacerbated by suppliers and others in the supply chain who will probably also be affected by these job losses. This is a huge blow to my local community. My electorate takes in Broadmeadows, and I am very concerned about the community's future. Therefore I welcome the fact that the federal Labor government and also the state Leader of the Opposition, Daniel Andrews, have been prepared to make significant commitments to help those communities rebuild in the future.

This government has been caught very short. It has made a very small commitment in relation to rebuilding those communities. It is important that this issue not be forgotten. We need to work with the affected communities, the workers and their families to support them in the coming months and years ahead. I certainly will be taking a very keen interest and doing whatever I can to support them during these difficult times.

The industry sector with the greatest number of large businesses in Melbourne's north is manufacturing. The City of Whittlesea estimated that more than 70 per cent of residents employed in the manufacturing sector are classified as labourers and related workers, tradespersons, plant and machine operators or drivers. In its submission to Parliament's Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee inquiry into local economic development initiatives in Victoria, the City of Whittlesea highlighted the lack of education and

employment pathway options for young people as one of the main barriers to local economic development.

This is the one issue I want to focus on in my contribution today, because we have seen unemployment figures rise. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show our unemployment rates have risen from 5.7 per cent to 5.8 per cent — the highest of any mainland state. The thing that alarms me the most is that at the moment we have 21 per cent youth unemployment in this state. It is deplorable that out of the mainland states we have the highest number of young people searching for a full-time job.

We have a very significant problem, yet when the Minister for Youth Affairs, Ryan Smith, was asked at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings last week about the projected youth unemployment rate over the forward estimates, he confirmed that it did not exist. He said there was no projection in the budget papers or in the forward estimates for youth unemployment. It is very concerning that the government does not seem to care what the impact of its various policies will be. Many programs have been cut in this budget, which will impact on young people and youth employment, and yet the government does not seem to know what the consequences will be.

I have just come from a rally held on the front steps of Parliament House by a couple of organisations that have been affected by these cuts. They are the Whitelion employment and mentoring program and the St Kilda Youth Service Hospitality Employment and Training, or HEAT, project. These two very important programs work with vulnerable young people and provide them with sustainable pathways to employment. They are just two of four organisations that will be losing their funding from this government at the end of June this year. St Kilda Youth Service, which I have already mentioned, will lose \$220 000 from its hospitality program, HEAT. The service works with over 100 young people who are involved in the youth justice system and provides them with work experience in the hospitality industry. The program is very highly regarded by the hospitality industry; it certainly has the support of its patron, Guy Grossi, who is a very big supporter. Local member Martin Foley, the member for Albert Park in the Assembly, has also been a very big supporter over many years.

Young people graduate from the program with a certificate II in hospitality, kitchen operations, and a responsible service of alcohol certificate. The young people are attending training and learning skills not only related to future employment but also to better their lives. They are learning how to work as part of a

team and to be punctual and reliable, and these skills will help them gain valuable self-esteem, which is essential to their future success.

In 11 months of operation HEAT has provided employment to over 85 young people. A large percentage of young people succeeded in getting part-time and casual employment and were successful in returning to education. The funding loss may mean — and it is looking likely — that this program will have to wind up. It concerns me greatly that this award-winning program that helps young workers into employment will have to shut its doors. As I said, it is just one of four programs that I am aware of.

The other program I mentioned is the Whitelion employment and mentoring program. Whitelion will be losing \$150 000 in funding. It is an organisation that has been at the forefront of reconnecting young people to the community and employment. It has been doing it for 13 years, having been established to respond to an evident gap in youth services in Victoria. Whitelion is one of the few agencies that has worked with young people deemed to be the most disengaged and facing the greatest social barriers of homelessness, mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse, and juvenile justice history.

Whitelion's employment program predominantly assists young people in the youth justice system as well as young people in child protection and out-of-home care. Through this program Whitelion works closely with employers to create sustainable employment opportunities for young people in a wide variety of industries. Because of this industry-aligned approach Whitelion is able to assist organisations in recruiting staff and provide pre-employment and skills training specific to the requirements of the job. Its work is acknowledged by the community as being very important. Members will see that we are talking about two organisations that work with young people who may otherwise find it very difficult to get a job, so it is inexplicable that the government would decide to cease funding these organisations.

I want to briefly mention two other organisations that are set to lose funding. The first is Youth Connect, which works with the community to provide young people with the skills and knowledge to support them in managing a successful pathway through secondary education, further learning and employment. Its Work This Way Youth Employment Program provides young people with personal assistance and encouragement to engage in training and further education and then helps them find sustainable full-time employment. There are currently 145 young people registered in this program,

which has a contract requirement to have 30 young people engaged in sustainable employment for not less than 16 weeks and will achieve this by 30 June. A further 15 young people will have commenced in a job but will not have completed the 16 weeks at that point. Youth Connect will have to cease delivery of its program without state government funding, so I am very concerned about the future of the program.

Finally, another program that has been affected by these cuts is the YMCA Bridge Project. This project is a great example of how providing support, training, mentoring and employment opportunities to young people in the youth justice system can help them transition smoothly into the community. Since its establishment in 2005 it has helped secure 160 full-time jobs and has trained over 974 young people in a wide variety of work-related skills. Over 80 per cent of young people who have completed the 16-week placement through this program have used it as a pathway to sustainable employment, and it has been successful in dramatically reducing the rate of reoffending from 66 per cent to just 3 per cent.

In last year's budget the government cut funding to this program, and now it is set to lose a further \$150 000. Funding for the program was halved last year and is now due to go altogether. With a former chair of the YMCA Bridge Project, the member for Williamstown in the Assembly, Wade Noonan, Jill Hennessy, the member for Altona in the Assembly, and other colleagues, I attended the project's annual breakfast late last year. There were 600-odd people in the room, many of whom were small business operators who were very big supporters of this project. Those people will be quite shocked when they hear that the government has decided to defund this program.

These are all excellent employment programs delivered by highly regarded, reputable organisations. The funding across the four of them, which I have indicated will disappear, amounts to less than \$1 million per annum. Yet the government in its wisdom — which I think is lacking — has decided to defund them at a time when we are facing a youth unemployment rate in this state of 21 per cent.

We have seen no plan from the government to grow jobs in this state, and where it is creating employment programs they will not help young people such as those who are being supported by the existing programs. The Minister for Employment and Trade, Louise Asher, was asked about this issue at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing recently. She confirmed that these organisations are due to lose their funding. She said her preference is to invest in business

rather than community organisations. Minister Smith took no responsibility whatsoever for this issue at PAEC.

The budget includes funding for a new program in the youth portfolio which is designed to help youth entrepreneurship, yet it appears that the four organisations I have mentioned will not be eligible for this funding stream. It was interesting that Ryan Smith said the funding would not be allocated through a grants round or a competitive tendering process. It looks as if the government has already decided where this funding is going to go and who the recipients will be. Clearly it will not be social enterprises and it will not be community-based organisations.

I urge the minister to have a good look at these four programs and the outcomes they have produced over the years. It is particularly galling that these cuts come from a government whose youth minister released a youth statement last year called *Engage, Involve, Create* in which he said the following:

Providing an environment that supports young Victorians finding employment is a very important issue for this government. It's what drives our continued investment in education, skills and training and the provision of participation opportunities that offer young people as much chance to get a job as possible. We're also committed to assisting young people not involved in education or training to develop the skills and connections they need to find employment.

That is all fine and well, but the rhetoric is not matched by the reality. The government's youth statement talks about the importance of education, training and employment opportunities. However, this is the same government that is ripping apart TAFE, that has cut apprenticeship completion bonuses, that has cut education funding and that is now cutting youth employment programs. If it were serious about addressing these issues and delivering on the commitments it made in that youth statement, it would not be doing what it is doing.

The groups I have spoken about help young people who have dropped out of school. These young people might be involved in the youth justice system, at risk of homelessness, recovering from substance abuse or struggling to stay in employment. Cutting away their funding is a short-sighted move that will leave vulnerable young Victorians without the assistance they need to get a job and get their lives back on track.

It was disappointing that no-one from the government was there. These agencies are very keen to have their voices heard by the government. I hope the government pays attention to what I am saying about the importance

of these programs. I have raised these issues before in adjournment debates with the previous Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and with the Minister for Community Services, whose portfolio covers the youth justice system, but it appears that these words are falling on deaf ears to date. But we will continue to highlight this issue. These organisations are too important and these programs are too important to allow them to be wound up and disappear. Young people in our state deserve all our support, and programs like this are very important and should continue.

I know that the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) is also concerned about this issue and has issued a media release today calling on the Minister for Employment and Trade, Louise Asher, to continue funding this program. They referred to it as an invaluable program. The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria says the program, which is funded through the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation, has seen hundreds of Victoria's most at-risk youth enter training and gain employment through the work of reputable organisations.

I particularly want to quote from one part of this media release, issued by the CEO of YACVic, Ms Georgie Ferrari, where she says:

A small investment of \$150 000 to \$250 000 per program will ensure at-risk young people continue to get the training and employment support they so desperately need.

This is money well spent ... Every dollar spent now on these young people will save money down the track.

I could not agree more with that sentiment, because the smartest way to curb youth crime in this state and to address other issues which have been identified as causal factors in relation to youth crime is to invest in education and getting young people a job. I have spoken about this many times, and we have had debates about sentencing and other law and order issues. That is the approach that works. The research shows that even a state such as Texas in the United States is now realising that its policies of the past, which include mandatory sentencing, do not work. It realises that these types of policies, which the Victorian government has been engaging in, might grab a media headline and sound good at a simplistic level, but they do not work.

I am calling on the government to reverse its funding cut for these programs, to save these programs and to keep them going because they are providing such an enormous benefit to our young people across this state. I also ask the government to go beyond this and look at the other aspects of Ms Tierney's motion. It is a very

comprehensive motion. It asks the government to come up with a plan for manufacturing in this state and a jobs plan for this state and to develop a strategy that will take this state forward and enable the members of Victorian families to get a job, keep that job and be able to live a comfortable life. This government is not switched on to these issues. It is focusing on issues that are not priority areas for the community. The community thinks that a job and a roof over one's head are the no. 1 issues, along with education, training and employment opportunities.

I urge the members opposite to support Ms Tierney's motion but most importantly to deliver on the things that we are calling for that are contained within this motion.

Mr KOCH (Western Victoria) — My contribution will be short. A lot of the issues involved have been discussed, and I thank my colleagues Richard Dalla-Riva and Inga Peulich for their earlier contributions. They explained what the current situation is and what the government is doing. They explained the jobs plan that we are pursuing, which is something that in 11 years Labor never had the capacity to put together. Opposition members are on the back foot in arguing their position, but none of that is new in this house.

I refer to the motion that is before us today, which has been moved by my Western Victoria Region colleague Ms Tierney. Ms Tierney expanded on a couple of the points in her motion today. The motion asks:

That this house notes that over the last two and a half years the government has failed to create an economic climate conducive to investment and job creation ...

As part of that, Ms Tierney had eight different points she wanted to raise. She indicated that she would be speaking to point (2), which related to the April unemployment figures, particularly because she believed that 5700 more people became unemployed over the recent period. Point (3) is in relation to youth unemployment in Victoria and states that it is at 21 per cent. She also spoke on point (7), which I understand — although I probably need clarification — is in relation to TAFE.

Ms Tierney — No, point (8).

Mr KOCH — She spoke on point (8), which was the jobs plan. I will touch on that because in the whole time Ms Tierney and her predecessors in government were in office they never put a jobs plan before the house. That is something that I assure members was there throughout that period.

Ms Tierney — Because we were creating jobs.

Mr KOCH — Labor is always creating something, but it does not relate to jobs; it is usually more in the area of losing people's jobs than gaining them, and it is aware of that too.

I will touch briefly on TAFE. I always wonder where the opposition comes from in relation to TAFE. We have had an outcry for the last 12 or 18 months now in relation to some of the reductions that this government saw fit to make to the TAFE budget. As we all know, in the previous Brumby government \$850 million was made available for training in TAFE colleges statewide. The former Premier saw fit to open that up so that anyone who wanted to do a course would be accommodated. We saw that figure rapidly blow out to \$1.3 billion. When we came to power we knew that provision could not continue and we removed some of those funds, but at the same time we also reincorporated \$1.2 billion over four years into TAFE and made further apprenticeships available, with the underlying prospect that people who went to TAFE would gain employment at the end of their courses.

I would have thought that was something that industry and the union movement across Victoria would be supportive of; that was not to be the case. They said, 'Woe are we — TAFE will suffer badly, students will walk away in droves'. That was not the case, and as Ms Tierney and I know, the South West Institute of TAFE this year had 12 000 new enrolments under the stewardship of the new CEO and the Hamilton campus leadership, with its new leader up there. This is a fantastic outcome. They are very supportive of the program that this government has chosen to put in place. The statement in the preamble to Ms Tierney's motion 581 is just incorrect.

Ms Tierney saw fit to use the balance of her 35 minutes — I think it was 32 minutes in total — speaking about the regrettable decision the Ford motor company announced last Thursday to close its manufacturing operations in Australia from October 2016. Not unlike Ms Tierney, I took a phone call in my motor car on Thursday in which it was indicated to me what had taken place. I had an appointment; I did not have the opportunity to pull up on the side of the road and wait for a cup of tea, as I had to get on with my job. In saying that, I was on my way to launch the Geelong Innovation Expo 2013 at the Geelong waterfront on behalf of my colleague the Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business, Louise Asher. This program was put in place well and truly before the unfortunate announcement was made in relation to Ford and the loss of 510 jobs at Geelong, with the balance of

the 1200 jobs being lost at Broadmeadows, as we are all aware.

The loss of those jobs in Geelong is of concern to the government and to me in particular. In Geelong we are just now getting in front of an earlier loss only 18 months or two years ago of a large number of jobs — a number that exceeded the 510 jobs lost on this occasion. This government is very familiar with the hurt and emotion felt by the Ford workforce in relation to the situation being forced on them. I am concerned, as I am sure is my colleague Ms Tierney. This is not something Geelong wants to become used to. In recent times Geelong has had a lot of job losses, particularly in manufacturing. The government has seen fit to make plenty of funds available to assist in the transition period from — —

Mr Tee — Not enough — you did not even match the federal government.

Mr KOCH — I will take up Mr Tee's interjection, as unwise and revealing of a lack of knowledge as most of them are. Through you, Deputy President, I indicate that Victoria — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Tee and Mr Ramsay! Mr Koch, without assistance.

Mr KOCH — I make it clear to Mr Tee that Victoria has more than met what the federal government would normally expect. Normally with federal-state packages Victoria, or any other state, would make a matching contribution of 20 per cent of the federal grant. The federal government made \$30 million available; under normal circumstances there would be an expectation that Victoria would match that with \$6 million. We were asked to contribute \$9 million, and we were only too glad to furnish those funds towards addressing this situation.

I go further and say that not only were funds made available to the Ford Motor Company but the federal government made a large grant of \$10 million to the supply chain and, without request, the Victorian government also stumped up 20 per cent of that sum, and it was very happy to do so. In saying that, both the federal government and the state government would encourage the Ford Motor Company to at least match the state contribution of \$9 million.

Mr Tee — Why don't you match the federal contribution?

Mr KOCH — As the former President of this house would have responded, I was not aware that your ears were only painted on, Mr Tee. Did you not listen to what I just said?

Mr Tee interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Tee should not respond. It would be more helpful if Mr Koch would make his contribution through the Chair.

Mr KOCH — Thank you for your assistance, Deputy President, and I will endeavour to do so as we move forward. It is important also to indicate to the house that the Napthine government will do whatever it can to assist over the passage of time. We have three and a half years before Ford removes manufacturing from Australia. Hopefully through that period we will be able to secure other jobs and further training for the workforce at Ford, and hopefully we can retain those workers in the Geelong area.

As Ms Tierney said, if we are fortunate enough, and I certainly hope we are, to attract the headquarters of the national disability insurance scheme, that would be a godsend for Geelong, but it will not necessarily accommodate many of those blue-collar workers from Ford. In saying that, I think the negative comments from Ms Tierney in saying that she thinks all this could come to a head earlier, particularly from the point of view of marketing the new products for Ford, is such a negative attitude to take. Through the Chair, I wish Ford all the best with the release of its new Ford Falcon, indicated to be one of the best cars that will ever have been produced in Australia's history.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! I have asked members on several occasions to desist from making interjections. Whilst I understand that this is a very passionate debate, I think members have generally been allowed to make their contributions in silence, and I would like that to continue. I do not want to make members wait a further 30 minutes to participate in the debate. Would members assist me and allow Mr Koch to complete his remarks without further assistance?

Mr KOCH — It is important from the house's point of view that people should not be discouraged from buying Ford products. They are marvellous products; obviously there will be ample service and upkeep available for any products that are purchased from Ford into the future. They will be great products, and they do not need talking down at this stage of the whole

process. It appals me that the contribution from Ms Tierney went down that track.

I applaud the federal member for Corio for very quickly putting together a Geelong community leadership meeting at Kardinia Park last Thursday. There were some 28 to 30 people in attendance. All made very worthy contributions, and at the conclusion it was moved that a community task force be set up in Geelong. In doing so, employees at Ford's factory at Broadmeadows have not been forgotten in this equation, and I know the Geelong Ford family and representatives of Geelong are as concerned for their ongoing livelihood as they are for their own. In saying that, I express my disappointment that we did not have anyone from the management of the Ford Motor Company of Australia at that table, but I have been assured that any further task force meeting that takes place will have representation from the company.

In saying those few words, I believe we have a very solid jobs plan in Victoria. There was a recent announcement that \$170 million will be available for roads in Victoria; something that, as a western Victorian, I think is terribly important. If we hook that together with the \$160 million made available to local government to assist with the restoration of local roads — where we saw a huge cost shift by the former government away from local government — we would be talking about \$330 million going back into our road network. An extremely important characteristic of this government is that it has not forgotten our roads, particularly in regional Victoria, and what is more, provisions are now being made in the budget. We looked for federal support, but we did not get any in the current budget. We certainly look forward to support in the first Abbott budget — when, hopefully, the coalition will be successful, and I truly believe it will be — and support in relation to the east–west link, which will see a further 3200 jobs being created.

Importantly, although we have a motion before the house today, it has been ill thought through, it is inaccurate and it does not reflect the work that has been done by the Napthine government in securing further opportunities for employment, not only in metropolitan areas but also in regional Victoria. In saying that, I oppose the motion on the grounds that there was absolutely no rational argument put forward by anyone from the opposition benches today.

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I welcome the opportunity to say a few words on this motion. I congratulate Ms Tierney on moving this motion and on her active support for and engagement with the workers and their families at Ford in Geelong. She has stood

shoulder to shoulder with those workers, who would be devastated by what is occurring there. Those workers and many of their families will take a long time to recover from this. I welcome the motion, I welcome Ms Tierney's contribution and I thank her for sharing it with this house and reminding us about what is happening to those families. I only wish the Premier had been as quick to show support and be with those workers.

I want to point out that this motion is an opportunity for this government to put forward its record, and explain its agenda and its vision. It is an opportunity for the government to put forward its program and put on the record where Victoria is going under this Premier's leadership. Instead, what we get from the government speakers time and again is simply a litany of excuses. There is always a reason, and it is always someone else's fault. It is hard to believe members of the coalition are in government, because all they do is stand up and blame someone else every time. It is the carbon tax, it is the federal government or it is the dog that stole their homework — there is always an excuse. The reality is that life is hard, government is difficult and you just have to get on with it. You cannot simply turn up day after day and blame someone else. It does not get any easier.

Previous governments have all lived through tough times, and they got on with it; they delivered, and they worked hard. It is not that difficult, but you do need to work hard. You cannot simply throw your hands in the air and say, 'Oh, no! It's too hard. We have parity. GST revenues are down'. For goodness sake, get on with it! Life is not easy. People struggle; governments struggle. What works is a government that shows innovation and ingenuity, a government with vision and drive. No-one has ever accused this government of having any success in those areas. No-one has ever accused Dr Napthine of having a vision, and it is showing. It is showing in terms of business confidence, and it is showing in terms of families suffering because of this government's inaction. It is inaction, laziness, irresponsibility and an unwillingness on the part of this government to get up, roll up its sleeves and do some work, and we are paying the price.

When it got to this year's budget it was clear that the government realised its first two years of inaction had been noticed. It was noticed by families, it was noticed in the unemployment figures and it was noticed in business investment and confidence. So the government tried to pull the rabbit out of the hat with the east-west project. But again there was no funding — —

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr TEE — About 3 per cent funding, Mr Barber.

Mr Barber — Are you for it or against it?

Mr TEE — What a hollow gesture! If you are going to do a project, do it. Where is the funding going to come from? Is it going to be \$10 tolls? Where is it going to go? What is the route going to be? None of these questions are being answered because the government is using the project more as a smokescreen than as something it is going to deliver.

If members want to have a look at what impact this inaction is having, they should look at some of the building figures and construction activity reports. If they have a look, for example, at employment, they will see that in 2012 there were some 175 000 people employed in the building industry. You have to go back to 2009 to find a lower figure. In 2009 the figure was 168 000. What we have seen this government do in just over two years is take employment in the building industry back by more than three years. This government's record today is one of having fewer people employed in the building industry. Today there are fewer families with a wage earner in the building industry. What kind of record is that? Imagine going home at night and saying, 'What we have achieved today is a shrinking of the building industry. We have shrunk the building industry'.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr TEE — Mr Barber is right. They are magicians — they are going backwards. We have seen the biggest decline since at least before 1999 — coming up to 15 years. We have never seen the sort of drop-off that we have seen since this government was elected. As I said, you have to go back to 2009 to see figures such as those we are looking at now. What that means is that the building industry is now smaller than it was when this government was elected. If you look at building permits that have been approved, you will again see the devastation this government has brought to the Victorian economy. Last year we had 94 000 building permits approved — again, a dramatic drop. You have got to go back to 1998, when 91 000 building permits were approved, to see a similar situation. We have had more than a decade lost in terms of the devastation this government has brought upon the building industry and the families that have been affected.

Ms Tierney is right to point to the devastation in the manufacturing industry and at Ford in Geelong. Across Victoria, if we see that it is going backwards. We are looking at an industry that is smaller today than it was

when this government was elected. We are looking at an industry that is shrinking because of the inaction of this government and its inability to govern, to have an infrastructure pipeline of projects and to generate the sort of innovation and confidence that drives jobs. The economic activity in Victoria reflects the output of this government. It has gone backwards, and it is shrinking. This motion is an opportunity for the government to put forward its vision and agenda for how it will help the economy to grow. Instead, as I said, we have heard a litany of excuses and have had no explanation from the government as to what it is going to do to turn the economy around.

I welcome Ms Tierney's motion. I regret that the government has been unable or, really, unwilling to take up the opportunity and the challenge to use this motion to restore some confidence in the economy and to give some hope to Victorian families. What I have heard from the contributions of government members is that there is no hope, there is no vision, there is no energy and there are no ideas, and Victorian families will continue to suffer while this government takes a do-nothing approach and while it refuses to roll up its sleeves and do some work.

Whether it is in the manufacturing industry, which is our biggest employer, or whether it is in the building industry, which is our second biggest employer, the results are now coming in. The jury is coming in, and it is not a pretty sight. For every year this government is in power, Victoria goes back two years. The government is running out of time, and for the sake of the economy and for the sake of Victorian families this is now a call to action for this government to get on with the job, show some ideas and vision and deliver something.

If the government needs a starting point, if it needs a leg-up, the opposition has already put out its jobs plan. There is plenty to pick up there, and I welcome the fact that the government has picked up some initiatives in terms of buying Australian-made cars. We are not embarrassed, we are not offended and we are not hurt by the fact that the government picks up the ideas that we put out in our jobs plan. We welcome that, and we encourage the government to do more. There are plenty of ideas in the jobs plan, and we will be more than happy for the government to pick them up. We will not be embarrassed about it; we think a bipartisan approach when it comes to employment and jobs is not a bad thing. Government members have the levers of government; we are happy to deliver the ideas, and if they need to pick up our ideas, we are happy with that. As I said, we have seen it with the buy Australian-made

cars plan, and we are happy for the government to pick up any of the other ideas.

The government is running out of time. Victorian families are hurting, the economy is going backwards and the kids who are finishing school this year will have fewer job opportunities than they would have had under the previous government, and that is an appalling record. It is a statistic that those opposite must stand condemned for because we know how important jobs are to self-esteem and opportunities.

There are still a number of government members to speak on the motion, and I hope they take the opportunity to admit their mistakes, to admit that things have gone backwards over the last couple of years but also to start grappling with what is out there in reality. I welcome the motion, and I urge the whole house to support it.

Mrs PETROVICH (Northern Victoria) — That was a most enlightening contribution from Mr Tee, but I will just say for now that I think we are pretty right without his instruction on government 101. It almost seemed the story of his life in reverse.

Mr Finn — Government 303.

Mrs PETROVICH — Exactly, Mr Finn. From the outset I will say that we will not be supporting Ms Tierney's motion. The government is working very hard to produce outcomes for Victoria. Our budget reflects a vision for where we are going with clear direction on infrastructure projects around the Bendigo Hospital; the east-west road project, which will create 3200 jobs; an investment of \$330 million for roads across the state; and investment in public transport and schools. We have a vision for jobs and a vision for infrastructure.

This is in a climate where we have a federal Greens-Labor conglomeration — a minority government — combined with a carbon tax. We have a chaotic, self-focused federal Labor government that has killed economic confidence in Australia. It is doing its darnedest to kill it in Victoria, and we are not going to allow that to happen. We have a Labor Prime Minister who continually misleads the community, shifts the goalposts and makes petty grabs for cash, a Prime Minister who backflips, denies and causes difficulty for communities — —

Mr Viney — On a point of order, Acting President, this is a motion about the Victorian government, the economic climate in Victoria and job creation in Victoria, and it seems to me that Mrs Petrovich is making a pitch to the electors of McEwen about the

next federal election rather than responding to the motion before the Chair. I suggest that she be asked to come back to the motion before the house.

Hon. P. R. Hall — On the point of order, Acting President, this has been a fairly wide-ranging debate. The subject of the debate extensively canvasses unemployment and unemployment figures, which we know are related to federal government responsibilities. When one is talking about unemployment one cannot divorce oneself from talking about those who influence the very content of the resolution. I suggest Mrs Petrovich is quite in order to talk in that vein.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! I thank the minister for his assistance. At the time the point of order was raised Mrs Petrovich had been speaking for 2 minutes and 10 seconds. The motion is quite wide ranging, although it refers to Victoria in many places. Nevertheless, it is a wide-ranging motion and the member is well within her rights to make introductory comments. But I draw her attention to the fact that the motion is focused on Victoria.

Mrs PETROVICH — I think this highlights the lack of understanding about an economic environment and the impact that can have on individual states. You can never underestimate the creation of a lack of confidence by a chaotic federal Labor government.

I will go on to speak about what we are dealing with in Victoria in great detail if I am allowed to. It is interesting that during somebody else's contribution Ms Tierney made a comment about not knowing what it is like to work. I would like to highlight my background, which is in the building industry. I ran a small business for 20 years in construction and at many times employed 80 people, trained apprentices and put my money where my mouth was. I paid the wages bill, paid my overheads and fought union members who wanted to come in and give my workers a fair deal.

My workers used to say continuously to those union representatives, 'Please go away. We get a lot from our employer. We are working in very good conditions here, and we really don't need your help'. In spite of that there were some quite interesting times around union projects. I look at members on this side of the house and where we have come from and the vast array of skills and diversity of representation that we have brought with us. We on this side of the house are creators of jobs, we are employers and we are people who put our money where our mouth is. If you want to draw a contrast about creating jobs and creating an industry out of other people's jobs, you need only look

at those on the other side and what they represent. When I googled the names of members opposite earlier today I struggled to find one who has not been a union organiser — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mrs PETROVICH — You were a union organiser for the ETU, Mr Leane.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! Neither Mr Leane nor Mr Tee is in his place. I remind Mrs Petrovich to direct her remarks through the Chair.

Mrs PETROVICH — These people would much rather shirt front someone or give them a Glasgow kiss than create a job. I have to say that is not the reality on this side of the house. We are about being constructive and providing jobs for Victorians.

I will go on to talk about where we are in Victoria at the moment. In the year to April 2013 Victorian employment increased by 8100 workers. Victoria saw solid growth in both part-time and full-time employment over the month of April, with an increase of 6000 workers, or 0.7 per cent, and 2100 workers, or 0.1 per cent, respectively. Victoria's employment growth over the month was up by 19 700 workers, the second highest of all the states, behind New South Wales. Victoria's unemployment rate rose 0.1 per cent to 5.8 per cent in April, while the total number of people unemployed in Victoria increased by 5700. Victoria's participation rate also rose 0.2 per cent to 65 per cent in April.

If we are going to talk about what happens in industry, we need to look at who creates work. Who puts their money where their mouth is? Who stands on the sideline and knocks people who are prepared to do that — —

Mr Tee — Dr Naphtine?

Mrs PETROVICH — Denis Naphtine, our new Premier, has done a magnificent job. He is supporting the Ford workers. There have been continuous meetings on that issue.

Federally we have seen the creation of a lack of confidence. Ms Mikakos raised the issue of demographics and employment figures around the city of Whittlesea. She cited education and infrastructure as significant issues in this area. I would have to say after 11 years of seeing one of the fastest growing areas in Victoria suffer from a lack of planning, a lack of

thought about infrastructure, a lack of understanding about — —

Mr Tee — Jobs, jobs, jobs.

Mrs PETROVICH — About jobs — Mr Tee is right — and about education, planning, rail and road. We are seeing one of the fastest growing areas in the state being left high and dry. It needs a lot of work. Yes, it does need jobs; absolutely it does.

Mrs Peulich — You should say sorry.

Mrs PETROVICH — Mrs Peulich is right. There is plenty of scope for apologies in debating this motion today. In April 2013 there were 737 100 people employed in regional Victoria, representing an increase of 9400 workers over the previous month. Employment growth in regional Victoria in April 2013 was led by strong gains in part-time employment, which is very good for our young people — —

Mr Tee — Manufacturing — how are those figures?

Mrs PETROVICH — There is a reality to this, Mr Tee, and it is about the lack of confidence that is created by a scam about superannuation. People I have talked to in construction say, ‘Does this mean me?’. I say, ‘Actually, no, it probably doesn’t mean you’. They say, ‘Well, we don’t believe that Julia Gillard will not be after our superannuation too. We do not trust her’.

It is about an economy that has been degraded by a lack of trust, a lack of management and an introspective Labor Party, both at a state and federal level. I will not be supporting this motion today. We are about creating opportunities and a vision for Victoria — —

Mr Tee — And jobs.

Mrs PETROVICH — And, as Mr Tee says, jobs.

Ms Crozier — Creating jobs.

Mrs PETROVICH — Creating jobs, a strong economy, planning, infrastructure and a vision for Victoria, which is something that the previous government did not have for 11 years.

Mr VINEY (Eastern Victoria) — I am very pleased to support this motion, and I join with Mr Tee in congratulating Ms Tierney on bringing this motion before the house. I have been sitting here listening to people spinning their side of politics, particularly the conservative side, and talking about their great credentials in particular areas as well as saying that people on this side of the chamber have none.

Mrs Petrovich should note that I ran a business; I employed a lot of people. I might have taken a slightly different approach to Mrs Petrovich, because I was very happy for my employees to be members of a union. I had a very good relationship with the union. I was very happy to cooperate with the union to ensure that my employees had good pay and conditions and that we met our obligations as an employer.

In fact not only was I happy for my employees to be members of the union, I joined it too. As I said in my inaugural speech in the other place in 1999, when I was elected, I cannot find a record of anyone else in this place who was a member of both the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a trade union. That is what I was, because I believe that through cooperation and good relationships we can progress and give people jobs — —

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr VINEY — I can tell Mrs Peulich that my measure of success in running my business was not about how much money I made. My measure of success was how many people I gave a job to.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ramsay) — Order! Through the Chair and without assistance!

Mr VINEY — Mrs Peulich should not tempt me to get into a blue with her, because I will win. I am very proud of the company that I ran, and I am very proud of the people I employed. Many were young people who came to work in the late afternoon because of the nature of the work that we were doing.

I am not going to sit on this side of the house and be lectured to by Tories about how they have these great credentials in employing people that we apparently do not have. While I have been speaking, I received a text message from one of the senior managers who worked in my company, and they reminded me that not only were we members of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and of the relevant union, we were also members of the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This is because we approached the business of doing business in this state cooperatively, which is very similar to the approach the Bracks and Brumby governments took to the issue of employment.

The stark difference between what happened under 11 years of Labor government in this state and what happened in the two and a half years of this coalition government is that under Labor employment grew. It

grew every single month for 11 years. Employment grew in this state — —

Ms Crozier interjected.

Mr VINEY — I can see Ms Crozier is looking completely perplexed. What I have said is a fact. Employment grew in this state every single month for 11 years. Even during the global financial crisis it grew in this state because there was a government that was committed to jobs and to making sure that the relationships between unions, employers and employees was one of trust, cooperation, building and investing. The government was committed to investing in training, and it was committed to investing in infrastructure and all the things you need to build the economy and create employment.

What has happened in the state since these people came to office? Those investments, that nurturing and that cooperative approach has gone out the window. We have seen a crash in investment spending. The only infrastructure projects that are being opened these days are the ones that Labor initiated. What red ribbons will this government start cutting at the opening ceremonies after those Labor-initiated projects — like the Children's hospital and Labor's investment in roads and in every school in the state — run out? There are very few government-initiated infrastructure projects. Even the big one it is spruiking now — the east-west link — is not an east-west link; it is an east-to-nowhere link. It is not the complete project. It is the little-bit-east link, and it is going to cost \$8 billion.

We can apply to that what the government members applied to the desalination plant when through their analysis they somehow or other turned a \$3 billion project into a \$27 billion one over 30 years. By the same multiplier, the little-bit-east project's \$8 billion is actually \$64 billion over 30 years. How are they going to get value out of that? No justification has been given by this government. Government members need to spend some time explaining to Victorians how a \$64 billion project over 30 years is going to deliver value to Victorians and spend some time thinking about their priorities in infrastructure investment, because we know what their priorities are in education. They have ripped the guts out of TAFE.

We have a situation in Victoria where employment is declining — the relevant minister is here at the table, and I hope he is listening — and where we have the Ford jobs crisis that Ms Tierney referred to so eloquently in her contribution. She has worked with these people, and she represents these people. She knows them, and she knows the impact that this jobs

crisis will have. At the same time that the Ford closure is occurring the government has cut into TAFE expenditure by \$300 million.

Hon. P. R. Hall interjected.

Mr VINEY — Mr Hall knows he has ripped into it. He offered to resign over this matter; that is what he offered to TAFE colleges. He knows what he has done, and he is not happy with what he presided over.

Mrs Petrovich — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, as Mr Viney called a point of order on me in what is a wide-ranging debate, I think he is really off the motion in front of us.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! Just as the Acting President at that time made the point that it is a very wide-ranging debate and allowed Mrs Petrovich to continue, I will have to give Mr Viney the benefit of the doubt. I suggest that he might like to make his comments more relevant to the debate at hand, but at this time I will not rule in favour of the point of order. I call on Mr Viney to continue.

Mr VINEY — I do not know how I can be more relevant to the motion than to refer to its point 7, which refers to the cuts to TAFE. I was making two points: we are losing jobs and we are cutting funding to TAFE. Both of those things are mentioned in the motion. At a time when there is absolute pressure on jobs, what are we doing as a state? We are ripping into TAFE. At a time when young people and in fact anyone in the employment market needs to be thinking about — —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms Tierney interjected.

Mr VINEY — Has Mr Ramsay finished? There is pressure on the jobs market, the Victorian government has decided to cut into TAFE expenditure and cut into education generally by hundreds of millions of dollars. I think the amount is around \$800 million, but it might actually be \$625 million over three years. I do not have the figure in front of me, but it is of the order of that amount.

Hon. P. R. Hall — Then you should not quote it, because you are wrong again. You are nowhere near the mark. Funding for education has increased every year over three years.

Mr VINEY — Mr Hall is just fudging the figures, because he knows full well that every year expenditure needs to increase just to stay parallel with current dollar terms. If you factor in current dollar terms, the cut to

education over the course of the three budgets in this government's two and a half years in office is in the order of \$600 million to \$800 million. I am happy to get the exact figure and quote it on a subsequent occasion.

Let me give Mr Hall a few other figures, because this relates directly to the electorate he shares with me. The number of jobs lost in Gippsland, in our electorate, since Mr Hall's government came to office in December 2010 is 22 000 people, and 14 000 jobs have been lost in the last 12 months. These are factual figures. If Mr Hall wants me to quote facts, I will go through them: at Advance TAFE, 32 jobs have been lost; at the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, 17 jobs; at GippsTAFE, 45 jobs; at Drypac, whose employees presented a petition to this chamber just yesterday, 126 jobs; at the Telstra call centre in Moe, 114 jobs; at McCormack Demby Timber, 60 jobs; and at Murray Goulburn Co-operative, 74 jobs. These businesses are all in our electorate. Those are some facts and figures that Mr Hall cannot dispute.

More than 12 months ago I raised the issue of job losses at McCormack Demby Timber and at the same time the potential loss of a Telstra call centre at Moe. Mr Dalla-Riva, who was the employment minister at the time, made an inappropriate joke about Moët champagne. That is how much Mr Hall's side of politics cared about the loss of those jobs. That is what happened when I raised that matter in this chamber.

And what was the government's ultimate response? It was to set up a task force led by Mr Drum and comprising, I think, Mr Northe, the member for Morwell in the other place, and maybe Mr Blackwood, the member for Narracan in the other place. What has happened following the establishment of that task force about two years ago? All of the jobs I have just listed have since gone, apart from those at the call centre and at McCormack Demby Timber. All the other job losses have been since then. There are now 14 000 less jobs in Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley — in the electorate Mr Hall and I represent — than there were when the task force was established. That is how ineffective the task force has been.

Let us contrast this with Labor's record in employment during its 11 years in government. When we came to office in September 1999 the unemployment rate that year was greater than 10 per cent — a bit over 10 per cent. By November 2010 the unemployment rate in Gippsland — the electorate Mr Hall and I represent —

Hon. P. R. Hall interjected.

Mr VINEY — Mr Hall is questioning my figures, so here are some facts he might want to start thinking about. By November 2010, at the end of 11 years of Labor in office, the unemployment rate in Gippsland was 5.3 per cent. We halved Gippsland's unemployment rate during our 11 years in office. As I said, that came from significant investment in the region — that is, significant investment in the Latrobe Valley and in Gippsland and a significant focus on infrastructure, such as — for goodness sake! — the rail service returning to Bairnsdale, which has been stopped again under this government.

Let us look at the specific jobs Labor created in Gippsland when it was in office: 126 construction jobs at the Latrobe Community Health Centre in Morwell; 300 jobs at the Gippsland Water Factory; 1100 jobs on the regional fast rail project in Gippsland; and 10 500 jobs over the four years of the construction of the desalination plant, which peaked at 4500 jobs at one point.

Hon. P. R. Hall interjected.

Mr VINEY — Mr Hall can argue that every one of those jobs was temporary, but let me say to him that every one of those construction jobs is temporary. The job gets done, built and the people move on to the next project. But what happens if a government stops the pipeline and does not invest in infrastructure? Two things happen. Firstly, there are no jobs for people to move on to, and that is what Mr Hall's government has done. What else happens? The whole economy suffers because of the lack of investment in infrastructure and a focus on investing for the future of this state as a result of cutting the pipeline and cutting investment in infrastructure.

Where is the investment in Gippsland in infrastructure for the future of Victoria? Where is the investment in schools? The Labor government planned to rebuild every school in this state. We were putting new schools into new suburbs, but that has stopped under this government. And do you know what? Victoria will pay a price in the future. When this government finishes — whenever that is; when this government loses office, whenever that will be — it will be up to Labor, as it always is, to invest in the future of this state, to invest in skills training and the support of people in the education system in this state, to invest in new schools and in rebuilding schools, to invest in teachers, to invest in our health systems and to put money into the infrastructure of our hospitals. As members of the coalition government have cut, we have invested. Mr Hall can put whatever spin he wants to put on it, but the fact is that employment is declining in this state

because the coalition government has cut the pipeline of investment into infrastructure — that is one of the principal reasons for the decline.

Overarching that, the reason that employment is declining in this state is because coalition members like Mr Hall do not get that this is about nurturing. As I said at the beginning, this is about cooperation between employers and employees. This is about building the future because you believe in the people of Victoria and believe in what we can do and can deliver. Clearly the coalition government has decided to cut the pipeline, to cut investment and to stop investing in the skills and training that the people of this state will need for the jobs of the future. That is what Mr Hall's government is cutting. That is what it is cutting and what it has done. It is the government's policy, and government members will wear its legacy.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I have only a short time to make a very small contribution. I was not going to speak to Ms Tierney's motion at all, because I thought it was such a silly nonsensical motion that was not going to provide any sort of productivity for anyone, least of all the workers impacted by the closure of Ford in Geelong.

I had wanted to talk about some of the good investments this coalition government has made in the regions I represent, and in Ballarat in particular, including a significant upgrade to the Ballarat hospital; the Ballarat West employment zone and link road project, estimated to employ 10 000 people; the \$52 million Mars confectionery project, which former Premier Ted Baillieu announced; the \$18 million extension of Phoenix College, which is a consolidation of colleges; the announcement of Alstom manufacturing 8 X'trapolis trains by 2015, which involves the creation of 130 jobs; and the \$155 million expansion of the IBM University of Ballarat Technology Park project, which will create 1000 jobs during its construction phase and a further 1600 jobs on site.

I could talk about additional police — 72 in Ballarat; more ambos; the Ararat prison development, which is employing an extra 300 people; support for the Ballarat Turf Club; flood recovery funding; the \$20 million Fairfax printing facility investment, with jobs to follow; \$11 million of funding for the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka; jobs on the Western Highway duplication; the Lucas development; the work and learning centre in Sebastopol, which has created more jobs; and the Princes Highway West project, including its newly announced second leg to Colac.

All those projects mean more jobs, more investment and more growth. But I do not have time to talk about any of them, nor do I have time to talk about the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund, which is providing funding to extend reticulated natural gas to Avoca, Winchelsea, Terang, Invermay and now Bannockburn, which was only announced last week. Because I do not have the time, I cannot talk about the investment in the food precinct in the shire of Golden Plains. I could go on and on. Cotton On announced an extra 400 new jobs last year, and there was a recent announcement from Backwell IXL, which, I point out to Ms Tierney, is a great Geelong company that has been impacted by a number of global challenges and is looking at diversifying and making new products, like many companies facing significant challenges.

However, I want to get back to the subject of Ford, because I find it a disgrace. I understand that Ms Tierney's past profession was shop steward for an automobile industry union. She comes from Preston, and like many on the opposition benches, she was parachuted from her position of union shop steward or suchlike into a seat in this Parliament in which she has no history, no understanding, no belonging and no passion. She is here purely to play politics. I think the issue around Ms Tierney's motion this morning, particularly in relation to the Ford announcements, is a disgrace.

I refer again to the cheap politics played, particularly in relation to the Premier not being available on the day of the announcement of the Ford closure. That is disgusting in the extreme. Members of the opposition knew that the Premier had an earlier commitment to attend a disability school in Wodonga that he did not want to break obviously because a significant number of parents and children would have been disappointed if he had not been able to fulfil that commitment. Apart from that, the Premier spent the last 48 hours with the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, putting together a \$51 million rescue package that was to be announced following the Ford announcement the next day.

Ms Tierney knew all that, yet we had Daniel Andrews and his little group of Labor MPs huddled around the front gates of Ford that morning blaming the government for the announcement, blaming the Premier for not being there and blaming anyone else they could see who might have some association with the announcement. As a member of a fourth-generation Geelong region family and as someone who has lived in, worked in and provided to the economy of that region, I am disgusted that the opposition would seek to play politics over a very disappointing announcement by Ford Australia.

I remind the house that the Napthine government contributed \$15 million to the Geelong Advancement Fund — well before the Ford announcement on Thursday — to help industries that will be challenged and will be required to make a transition for a whole range of reasons that I do not have time to go into now. The fact is that all manufacturing industries are under the pump and challenged not just in Geelong but all over the country for a whole range of reasons. That is why the Napthine government committed \$15 million to help with the transition arrangements.

We were also party to the \$51 million joint financial assistance package with the commonwealth. The Premier when discussing the detail of that package with the Prime Minister first asked Ford what the state government could do to have Ford remain active in the manufacturing business, in Geelong in particular. Ford said nothing. The board of the company — I assume the board in the US — had already made the decision to close the manufacturing plants in Geelong and Broadmeadows.

The Premier also asked the Prime Minister what contribution she wanted the state to make to that package. The Gillard government requested the 20 per cent share that the state commits to under normal arrangements in these instances, and that share of the funding package was given. In fact the Premier also said that the state was prepared to give more, but the commonwealth did not want to increase the share of the assistance package coming from its budgetary funds. The Premier also committed to a supply chain fund. We were willing to offer more financial assistance, but again the Gillard government said no. It did not want to commit to any more funding under the shared agreement, so the package is as it is.

In relation to the waffle, myths, misconceptions and lies in relation to vocational education and training (VET) sector funding, we have increased VET sector funding by over \$300 million. A flawed model was introduced by the Brumby government. We have increased the subsidies for apprenticeship training and certificate III and certificate IV courses. We have made job-ready courses more available for trainees. The number of trainees going into accredited courses where there are jobs available at the end has increased substantially. We have also increased the Gordon's budget from \$50 million to \$80 million to help with the transition and the upskilling of workers, whether they be from Ford, Shell, Alcoa or any other manufacturing industry which will encounter significant challenges over time. This will help retrain those workers and get them job ready for other markets that are becoming available.

Hon. P. R. Hall — The exact figures are that Labor gave \$53 million to the Gordon; we are now funding it with \$80.176 million.

Mr RAMSAY — I thank Minister Hall. Those are the precise figures. I said an increase of around \$30 million, and we can argue the semantics, but it is very close. That was purely based on the fact that we wanted people to be able to access these training programs and come out of those programs with accreditation that will have them ready to go straight into the marketplace in a whole range of diverse industries. The government is already doing much to help in relation to the transition arrangements. There is the significant investment in infrastructure in the budget of \$6.1 billion, an increase on last year. We are creating surpluses to create the economic stability to continue to invest, and there is the Regional Growth Fund.

It is an absolute disgrace for Ms Tierney to put this motion on the table today without giving any sort of constructive commentary about how we might be able to help the Geelong community with the transition arrangements following the announcement by Ford of the closure of its manufacturing plants in 2016. The arguments she provided as the basis of this motion were equally disgraceful. I am not sure how she can hold her head high when she next comes to Geelong after this disgraceful motion that she has put before the house, which I totally oppose, I might add.

Ms TIERNEY (Western Victoria) — I rise to make a few comments, the first of which is that when I was first elected and came into this house in 2006 I was under the misapprehension that there would be some level of respect when it came to basic behaviours in this house. But all I have received since I have been here from the other side of the house is derisive descriptions of me, denigration of me, denigration of who I was before I came here and a denigration of the workers I have represented. After that last contribution by Mr Ramsay I am finally letting him know that I am not putting up with it any longer.

As Mr Ramsay knows, as a former leader of the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF), the VFF is quite skilled at parachuting people into this house, the other house and federal Parliament. Let us not talk about parachutes. One would have thought that Mr Ramsay might have done at least some of his homework. The fact is that I started work in the vehicle industry in 1988 and 1989. I was then elected by vehicle workers right across the state in elections conducted by the Victorian Electoral Commission on at least four occasions. I was also elected federal president of the vehicle division of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, and I sat

on the Australian Council of Trade Unions executive for at least six years. Do not try to tell me that I do not have a background in this, and do not tell me that I cannot speak on behalf of people I have represented for a long time.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms TIERNEY — Mr Ramsay continues to interject, which demonstrates yet again that he clearly has a problem with people who stick up for workers and represent workers.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms TIERNEY — I put that on the table because it is becoming a little bit tiresome, particularly given that you have also represented a group within our society — that is, farmers. You have never heard me denigrate the Victorian Farmers Federation; you have never heard me denigrate farmers.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! It would be very helpful to the Chair, and I am sure it would assist Mr Ramsay to fight his temptation to interject, if Ms Tierney were to direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms TIERNEY — In terms of the issues I raised at the beginning of the debate, there have been very few contributions from members opposite today about what they plan to do in relation to the 1200 blue-collar, non-trade workers who will be out of a job, whether it is in October 2016 or sooner, which it unfortunately may be. In saying that, I am not talking down the brand; I am not talking down Ford. All I am doing is trying to inspire some urgency into the problem we have at hand — that is, this government needs to put its shoulder to the wheel. It needs to get off its backside and come up with some targeted redeployment programs for the people who are hurting and who will continue to hurt over the next few years.

Mr Dalla-Riva tried to make a good fist of his contribution to the motion, although he failed to come up with some suggestions on what we can do for the redundant Ford workers. But you have to ask, where is the current Minister for Manufacturing? He is missing in action. At least Mr Dalla-Riva tried, although he spent most of his time blaming other people, including the federal government, but that has been the theme that has characterised the contributions from government speakers today. That is always the easy way out, because it means you do not really have to get a handle

on and focus on the issues at hand; you just flick it off and blame it on someone else.

Mr Dalla-Riva and Mrs Peulich mentioned that the sackings at Toyota last year were the result of longstanding industrial action at the plant. That is simply not true, and the record needs to be corrected. The fact is that Toyota had a down balance, and down balances mean you are required to shed labour. The problem I had with that particular situation last year is the way the company fingered workers, took minibuses onto the factory floor, shipped them over to another location, across the road from Grieve Parade, and processed them as sacked workers. Raising that issue was inaccurate and a complete mistruth.

In her contribution Mrs Peulich did not really want to talk about a plan for jobs for workers. Her plan, the only plan in town, is the government plan — that is, a plan to keep Labor out of office. All she cares about is herself and her own seat. She does not care whatsoever about Ford workers. Mrs Peulich kept on saying, ‘The unions are to blame’. All I could think about through her contribution, and a number of contributions from other members, was, ‘Bring it on. Keep talking about it’. The more they talk about it, the more it demonstrates to everyone, particularly all those people I am going to make sure read *Hansard*, how members opposite do not know the industry and do not get it. I do not think they ever will get it, because they do not want to understand the industry or the people who work within it.

In terms of what happened last Thursday, all I can say is this: we are all busy people. Premiers have lots of things in their diaries, but if it had been a natural disaster, the Premier would have been there. But it was not a natural disaster. It was a disaster in terms of people’s financial situations and a situation that was no fault of their own — and no-one was home.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! Mr Ramsay and Mr Koch! If we could have a little bit of decorum from both sides of the chamber, that would be very helpful.

Ms TIERNEY — The first part of Mr Koch’s contribution was fairly difficult to follow. His numbering of the motion was gobbledegook and, contrary to his suggestion, he talked to issues that were not raised in my original contribution on the motion. He finally got around to mentioning Ford workers, but not until at least two-thirds of the way through his speech.

Mr Koch — It is not a motion about Ford.

Ms TIERNEY — But the motion has been brought about as the result of a major announcement made in our electorate of Western Victoria Region. It is an opportune time for us to have a discussion given that this is the first week Parliament has reconvened since that announcement. I am totally disheartened by the inability of government members to seriously talk about what the real priorities are and to discuss our proper options, because on so many levels this is a bipartisan issue. Unfortunately it seems Mr Koch has gone out of his way to distance himself from those who have been hurt by this announcement, and he has distanced himself in terms of wanting to put work into what needs to be done.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Ms TIERNEY — I will take up that interjection too, because it is one that has been raised several times. It has been raised with the President, Mr Ondarchie — and Mr Ramsay and anyone else who wants to get involved. We can all smirk, can we not?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! I have requested previously that Ms Tierney direct her remarks through the Chair, otherwise there is a temptation for members on the government side to interject in a disorderly manner. It would be very helpful to me and to the proper proceedings of the house if she were to direct her comments through the Chair. Members on the government side may then find it within their power to resist the temptation to interject.

Ms TIERNEY — But in terms of the contribution I am making now and the attempts from the other side, in a meaningless way, to discredit me and what I represent and what I have represented, I will be pursuing that last interjection again with the President. He has made a ruling on this before. He has said, ‘Put up or shut up’, and I will be pursuing this because it is central to what I said at the beginning of my contribution this afternoon — that all this is about is bullying and harassment from those on the government side to members on this side when we stand for things and say things they just do not like. Unfortunately, guys, as a woman who was in the vehicle industry for many years, I have put up with better, I have put up with bigger and I am not going to drop it. I encourage all of you to stand up for people in your constituencies and vote vigorously for this motion.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 19

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

Noes, 21

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

Motion negatived.

EAST–WEST LINK: COMMUNITY IMPACT

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I move:

That this house —

- (1) opposes the Napthine government’s proposed east–west tollway, as it —
 - (a) lacks a robust economic case;
 - (b) will ruin the amenity of inner city neighbourhoods and destroy inner city parkland;
 - (c) brings more vehicles to inner city streets, worsening traffic congestion, air pollution and safety for pedestrians and cyclists; and
 - (d) will damage property values; and
- (2) supports alternative public transport projects which offer better transport benefits with fewer negatives than the east–west tollway.

The reason I have moved this motion proposing that this house should oppose the government’s proposed east–west tollway is that the project is misconceived. The project will not deliver the claimed benefits, the project has high costs that the government is trying to ignore and there are superior alternatives for moving people into and out of the city in the form of public transport.

I intend to go through my dot points briefly in a moment, and then when I sit down there is going to be a torrent of verbosity from Liberal speakers because they have convinced themselves, and they think they have convinced everybody else, that this east–west tollway is mother’s milk, that everybody is in favour of it, that nobody can say anything against it and that absolutely every citizen will stand up and cheer them for proposing this. But in fact these speakers from the Liberal Party have done no due diligence on the project. They know nothing about it. I would be surprised if they even have a set of government talking points. It is much better to engage in florid rhetoric, use diversions, talk about the motivations of other MPs or the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union or mention the carbon tax. They will come in here and talk about absolutely anything except the detail of the project.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr BARBER — Mr Ondarchie has to say I am efficient in how I deliver my presentations. I do hope we hear from Mr Ondarchie on this. That is why I am keeping it short. I am dying to hear what Mr Ondarchie has to say about this project. He has been a strong backer of the project in the past, but he is the only Liberal, apart from the Minister for Planning, Mr Guy, who actually represents the citizens who will be affected by this project. I really want to hear in relation to the government’s proposal — the one that it has been very busy on; the one that it has recently advertised and is seeking to provide various approvals for — what Mr Ondarchie is willing to talk to his constituents about in relation to the project.

Former Premier Brumby and Mr Pakula, if he were still here, would tell you that when you are going to do a major infrastructure project you do not just go around talking about the good news. You actually front the people who are going to be affected negatively by the project and you look them in the eye and deliver the bad news. The good news takes care of itself. Deliver the bad news and you might even win their respect, even if they oppose you. But this project so far has had no scrutiny. Nobody understands what the project is supposed to do. Nobody knows how many cars will drive on it. Nobody even knew where the project was supposed to start and finish until the government released a cartoon animation the other day.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr BARBER — We have a long, long, long way to go on this project I say to Mr Ondarchie, the occupier of the death seat on the Liberal Party ticket in the

Northern Metropolitan Region, the one who needs every vote he can get and the one you would think would be well and truly across all of the arguments and willing to engage anybody on the subject. No doubt we are going to hear from Mr Finn and Mrs Peulich. We will hear from everybody who thinks this project is the Good Ship — —

Mr Elsbury interjected.

Mr BARBER — Mr Elsbury wants some of the action. They think this is the Good Ship Lollipop and that everybody who is on it is bound for glory. But we have only just started talking about what this project is. Like I said, we will hear florid rhetoric from the cheer squad and the sheer volume of the number of yelling backbenchers you can bring up at one time — anything to avoid talking about the project in concrete terms.

I invite government members to put forward their case in relation to points (a), (b), (c) and (d) of the motion using facts, using argument and using the perspectives of the people who are supposed to benefit from the project and those who will suffer as a result of it.

The project lacks a robust economic case. The reason we know this is that the Labor Party in its previous term in government, when it was an enthusiastic backer and promoter of the east–west road tunnel, conducted an economic appraisal. It was conducted by a group led by Sir Rod Eddington, who is now the chair of Infrastructure Australia and who does economic appraisals on all sorts of projects that come up to him.

Hon. D. M. Davis — Among many other hats.

Mr BARBER — Mr Davis interjects, ‘Among many other hats’.

We know Mr Abbott does not like getting bad news, so it remains to be seen how many members of the board of Infrastructure Australia will still be there when they deliver the bad news to Mr Abbott, presuming he is Prime Minister, that this project lacks a robust economic case. It is a pretty simple piece of analysis. If you want to read the work of the previous government on this, you can find it still on the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure website. It was put together by Meyrick and Associates, and it said that the project in economic terms is a loser. It is a net economic loss. The benefit-cost ratio is less than 1. That means, to make it really simple — some here have economic training and others do not — if this project has a benefit-cost ratio of less than 1, it is like throwing a dollar coin into a wishing well and getting 70 cents back. That is not a very good deal — except the Napthine government plans to throw \$8 billion into the

wishing well and hope that magically something is going to come back.

The parameters of the project cannot have changed that much. The traffic modelling that went into that analysis was done by Veitch Lister Consulting; the current traffic modelling is being done by Veitch Lister. Unless it has radically revisited its previous assumptions, that set of numbers will not change very much. What will change is that the road will be tolled, which I would guess will mean even fewer drivers will want to travel along it.

The project lacks a robust economic case. One of the disciplines that all governments have to go through is the economic analysis of their projects. It is part of explaining yourself; it is part of overcoming the objections of the opposition and prevailing in the argument — you present an economic case for your project, and then you go ahead to try to build it.

I have heard some bleating from members of the Labor opposition about the lack of a business case being presented for this project. I spent four years in this Parliament under their government trying to get the business case for a range of projects — bay dredging, the north–south pipeline and the desalination plant — and never, ever were we given access to the business case. In relation to the economic case — the broader economic benefits, some of which are not necessarily monetary but are converted into dollar terms for the purpose of the analysis — we get to have a debate. Rarely do we see a project so large that has already been demonstrated to be a net economic destroyer of public value.

The project will ruin the amenity of inner city neighbourhoods and destroy inner city parklands. We know that because of what the government released. It did not release a set of plans, but it seems to be forging forward with a range of assessments. The project even received approval from the federal Labor Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities without the government showing him so much as a set of diagrams; it just showed him a blob on a map and said, ‘We’re going to build a freeway-like thing somewhere in this area’.

But we did get the cartoon version on budget day — a nice little animation showing a surface road absolutely ripping the guts out of the area made up of Parkville Gardens and Parkville West. There are 1000 households in that area, with many homes recently built as part of the Commonwealth Games village, which had a social housing component. Some of it is high density, some of it is made up of

townhouses, and there are a couple of aged-care facilities there, plus the original West Parkville houses, which in some cases have been there for more than 100 years.

The animation shows that the freeway will basically come bursting out of the side of the hill, go across the oval and destroy one of the newly constructed wetlands in its quest to connect up to the Tullamarine Freeway in both the northerly and southerly directions. There is absolutely no way to put a freeway through that area without destroying the amenity of the area, an area where apartments are currently marketed on the basis of the surrounding village green and billabongs. If you look them up on real estate.com.au, you will see they are being sold right now with pictures of the wetlands. The wetlands will go and be replaced with a piece of land with just about the lowest amenity you could ever imagine — a multilane freeway with cars rushing in and out of an at-grade intersection.

We know the Labor Party has this other, subtle position, which is that it wants a west–east freeway rather than an east–west freeway. It is trying to draw a distinction between the two. In fact Labor’s west–east freeway is a freeway on stilts in Sunshine. Labor figured it does not matter what it does to that area, but now the freeway is proposed to move into marginal territory for the Labor Party on the eastern side of the Tullamarine Freeway, Labor has found a reason to object to it. In fact they are identical projects put forward by two identical parties, Labor and Liberal, with an identical set of considerations — that is, whether they even care that they will lose the votes of these people.

The east–west link will bring more vehicles to inner city streets, worsening traffic congestion, air pollution and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. It must, because that is the job of the thing: to bring more traffic where it is trying to go, which is into the inner city. The modelling on where traffic from the Eastern Freeway is going has been done three times by the same company, Veitch Lister Consulting. It was done in 2004 for the north central city corridor study, where Peter Batchelor, then Minister for Transport, was promoting an east–west freeway idea. It was done again in 2008 for Labor’s east–west link needs analysis. It was another attempt simply to promote the idea that what we want is an east–west freeway that somehow inevitably reached the conclusion that what we need is better public transport going into and out of the city from all directions and that east–west travel is minimal.

Now Veitch Lister Consulting is busy doing it again. It is trying to pump up the numbers for the government to make the project look better. All those traffic modelling companies have experience at doing that. They normally work for private tollway companies, which just need a report that says what they want it to say so they can show it to investors and skim them of their money. This time it is the taxpayer who is being skimmed — and I refer to point (1)(a) of my motion.

The whole point is to bring cars into the inner city. That is where the traffic on the end of Hoddle Street in the morning peak is going. The only purpose of this tunnel can be to move a proportion of those cars currently on Alexandra Parade and Hoddle Street around to the other side of Royal Park and dump them onto Flemington Road. Flemington Road is to be the new Hoddle Street. It is pretty congested now; it is going to get a load more traffic from the proposed Elliott Avenue off-ramp, never mind what those cars might do when they reach the freeway and turn southbound onto the Bolte Bridge — a bit more congestion through West Melbourne, the western side of the Melbourne CBD and into Docklands. That is what it is all about. The project has to induce more traffic, or the economics will be even worse than they are now.

By the way I should say that when Mr Finn, who I am sure will want to educate himself a bit more, goes back and reads the Meyrick study he will say that the vast majority of those economic benefits claimed for the project are in the form of travel time savings, which would be very welcome if they could be made permanent. But Mr Finn need only read the last two Auditor-General reports in which the Auditor-General absolutely slammed the previous government's calculations of travel time savings, pointing out that they are largely illusory and quickly eaten up. Every increase in lane capacity is quickly filled up with more cars. The government, in its naivety, in its blindness to the people, in its servitude to the handful of people who stand to get very rich out of building this thing — merchant banks, construction companies and consultancies — does not understand that there is no sense in simply building more freeways, creating more congestion and then mounting the case that, gee whiz, we need another freeway.

Some of the rhetoric will be that this is the last freeway, this completes the linkage, that it is a logical connection and that it is a game changer. It is not a game changer, thank you, Mr Premier; it is the same old mug's game that this city seems to have been falling for for decades and that other cities — North American cities, European cities and many wealthy Asian cities — are

getting themselves off by investing into high-capacity, high-speed public transport.

I know this government has got absolutely no capacity to fix public transport. It has demonstrated that over the last two and half years, but that does not make my argument wrong. It is just vastly more efficient to move people by train, and the best place to start would be a Doncaster rail line straight down the middle of the Eastern Freeway with railway stations at Fitzroy, Lygon Street and the big Flemington Road roundabout. It could move tens of thousands of people into the city in the morning at a cheaper price, more quickly and efficiently, with none of the negatives associated with this project.

Lastly, this project will damage property values. It will damage open space, and that is precious in the inner city. In fact open space is precious in most places. I invite Mr Finn, Mr Ondarchie, Mrs Peulich, Mr Elsbury and all the people on that side to simply come down to the oval at Royal Park on a Sunday morning and walk up to the sporting clubs that are using it, to the people who are visiting there, and say, 'This is all going. We're going to take out this oval for a road tunnel. You have to support it. It is good for the city. Parkville Gardens has to take one for the team. Bad luck! And bad luck as to what it is going to do to your property values'.

There is going to be the usual slur against nimbys, but that is because this government does not have the guts to look those people in the eye and say, 'Your property values are going to take a major hit'. The government simply cannot talk in financial terms, that is why all the material that this chamber has previously ordered to be provided through a documents motion about traffic numbers, toll revenues and route options has not been provided. The Liberals all voted for the motion months ago, but the government never handed it over. It had no intention of handing it over.

I have got FOIs on this project from October last year that are still being persistently delayed by the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and by Linking Melbourne Authority using every trick in the book — but not for much longer. Delaying scrutiny of a project for as long as possible is a nice trick if it works. These government MLCs have lulled themselves into a false sense of security that everybody loves this project, that it is a great project and nobody will speak against it. The reality is that all we have really got are a few noddies down at the RACV, who can come and start my car if they want but should not tell me what the future direction of this city is going to be. They do not speak —

Mr Tee — You don't drive!

Mr BARBER — I sometimes drive. I do not own a car. They can jump-start my car for me, but they do not dictate to me and they certainly do not speak for me when it comes to the future direction of this city in terms of land use or transport.

Government members are getting back rubs from the top end of town, the merchant bankers, the construction firms and all those dealmakers who will get hundreds of millions of dollars in fees simply for arranging the private deal that leads to this monstrosity being built. They are feeling good about that because everybody they hang around with is telling them it is wonderful, but they will not go door to door in Parkville Gardens, as I did last weekend, and talk to those people about what is being proposed and explain why it is good.

Coming back to that, I heard earlier this morning — and it will be said again in a minute — that this project creates 3200 jobs. I do not necessarily dispute that. Presumably if you paid the same guys to dig the tunnel and then fill it in again, that would create 3200 jobs. There are many ways to create 3200 jobs when you have, as this government proposes to spend, \$8 billion to throw around. That \$8 billion should be spent on a project that also creates positive economic benefits to the state. This one does not do that. We know that because it has been studied by the previous government; and this government, despite having the opportunity, has not presented any alternative economic case. I have asked for it under FOI and we have agreed in this chamber that it will be tabled, but the government has not done it because it is running scared. It is not ready to enter into an economic debate.

Members of this government are demagogues; they do not talk sensibly to people about the future of their city — and let me tell you, that is what people are asking for. They are asking to understand what your plan is to get them out of their cars, or at least out of the traffic jam they are in. They do not believe that freeways will do it, and that means using public transport. You can do a lot of public transport for \$8 billion. Under this government's plan we get a car tunnel from Collingwood to Kensington.

I have news for the members who are not from ground zero, from the northern metropolitan area, and that is that 25 per cent of workers live and work in the same municipality. About 75 per cent of workers, particularly through the middle suburban area, live and work either in their own municipality or in the one next door. You may hear people ring talkback radio and say, 'I live in Werribee and I have to commute to Hawthorn every

day and I think this is the best project ever', but most workers who live in Werribee either work in Werribee or in the next council area down the road. What they need is a well-functioning train system they can actually rely on. They need a local bus system to get them to their, in many cases, local job.

Mr Elsbury — They need the Werribee employment precinct.

Mr BARBER — The Werribee employment precinct — I am up for it, and I am up for protecting existing jobs, for example, in the green wedge of Werribee. But you will find a small number of people who commute across Melbourne's north all the way from the west to the east and vice versa; it is a very small number of workers. In fact in the previous study — —

Mr Finn — What about the trucks?

Mrs Kronberg — The freight, the goods that that move around this economy?

Mr BARBER — Government members say, 'What about freight?' They should put forward the information that they have had Veitch Lister Consulting off analysing for the last 12 months and which they have refused to provide to me under the Freedom of Information Act 1982. They have refused to put forward for public scrutiny information about how many trucks will actually use this thing and what the origin and destination is. Just put it forward. If they want to make a freight argument, make a freight argument. Do not just say, 'What about freight?' They are the ones who want to spend \$8 billion worth of public money, so show me the economic return from freight that will occur as a result of this project. It will not be placarded loads, I can tell you that. We do not allow petrochemicals and things like that to be moved through underground tunnels for the obvious reason of safety. We know that trucks are great toll avoiders and are less likely than a harried commuter, possibly someone on a high income, to be willing to pay a toll to get through that short distance.

All of that information is available to Mr Finn. He could have sought a briefing on it from the government; he could have demanded to know more about this project. He says that he is the project's biggest backer but he actually knows nothing about it and he comes in here today almost completely unarmed.

Mrs Kronberg — He is not the project's biggest backer.

Mr BARBER — He is certainly the loudest backer; I will give him that — and my left eardrum is about 6 feet from him. He has come in here unarmed; he does not have any information that his government is currently wading its way through. He ought to have that. This project is just beginning to come under some hard scrutiny.

I understand that the Labor Party is going to move an amendment to my motion. It is not merely an amendment; it is actually something that completely wipes out my motion and substitutes its own preferred motion. It wants to send all of this off to a parliamentary inquiry. I say, ‘Good luck to them’. Government members should move their own motion and do that. If they want to know more about this project before deciding their position on this project — and Mr Tee seems to assent to that — good luck to them. But I think we know enough about this project because it was extensively studied under the previous government. The government is now beginning to put lines on maps — —

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr BARBER — No, I said that Mr Finn does not know anything about it, because his approach to these debates is quite a lazy one. In a minute he will be yelling, waving his arms around and screaming about the West Gate Bridge.

Mr Finn — I will.

Mr BARBER — But Mr Finn will not be able to tell us one useful relevant fact about this project. He is not ready to engage in debate about the merits of this project. He is unarmed. His government has sent him in here with nothing, bare-handed, because it has a strategy in place, which is to deny the public any information about this project for as long as it possibly can until it is a done deal, and Mr Finn will just keep telling himself it is a done deal. It is not a done deal.

To this day members of the Labor Party still do not know whether they are for or against the project, as far as I can tell, so they are calling for another inquiry. It is a simple yes or no proposition. They are either backing the project or they are not, so by voting for or against my motion they will tell Parliament whether they are for or against this polluting tollway. For that reason I am not going to support the Labor Party’s amendment, which simply wipes out the full intent of my amendment. It can use general business if it likes to move its own motion that will send this project off for further scrutiny.

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I welcome the opportunity to speak on Mr Barber’s motion. As he foreshadowed, I formally move an amendment to his motion:

That all the words and expressions after ‘That’ be omitted with the view of inserting in their place ‘this house refers to the Economy and Infrastructure References Committee for inquiry, consideration and report by 20 August 2013 the Napthine government’s proposed east–west tollway, and in particular —

- (1) the economic case for the tollway;
- (2) its impact on the amenity of inner city neighbourhoods and inner city parkland;
- (3) its impact on congestion, air pollution and safety for pedestrians and cyclists;
- (4) its impact on property values; and
- (5) whether alternative public transport projects may offer better transport benefits than the proposed tollway.’

I will speak to both Mr Barber’s motion and to my amendment. As Mr Barber indicated, the opposition has stated publicly that it has a number of other options that it prefers over the government’s option, not least of which is a second river crossing. The opposition is pleased to note that its support for a second river crossing has support from a number of quarters. We are particularly pleased at the support from the Minister for Roads, Mr Mulder, who at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing into the budget estimates 2013–14 made quite a compelling argument for why a second river crossing should be a priority rather than the priority that his government supports. We have a situation where at PAEC Mr Mulder made it very clear that there is an urgent need for a second river crossing, and yet the government of which he is a minister supports the east–west proposal that does not provide for such a crossing. Mr Mulder told PAEC:

The West Gate Bridge is currently carrying around 160 000 vehicles a day, and that is predicted to rise to 235 000 vehicles by 2031. The Eastern Freeway has more than 140 000 vehicles per day.

We have the West Gate Bridge with 160 000 vehicles going to 235 000 vehicles a day and, according to Mr Mulder, the Eastern Freeway is at 140 000 vehicles a day. He goes on to say:

Could you imagine the West Gate Bridge with 235 000 vehicles on it a day? For us to sit back as a government and not to recognise that that is a real threat to Melbourne and the Victorian economy, we just simply cannot do that.

We agree, and yet that is exactly what this government is doing. It is sitting back and not recognising that this

is a real threat to Melbourne and the Victorian economy. On the one hand he says we have to prioritise a second river crossing and we have to make sure that there is an alternative to the West Gate Bridge, but the government puts all its money — and I will come back to the money — and its policy position into a project that will not deliver a second river crossing. Mr Mulder goes on to say, according to the PAEC transcript of his evidence on 15 May:

... there are major works being undertaken on that bridge —

the West Gate Bridge —

all the time. It is a 1970s structure and with that in mind, with the thought of those — —

Hon. D. M. Davis — On a point of order, Acting President, can I just get some clarification from the member? He is reading from a PAEC transcript. I am not sure if the PAEC transcript is as yet public. I stand to be corrected on this. If it is a public transcript, I am happy for the member to be quoting from it, but if it is like many other of the other PAEC transcripts at the moment, they are not yet public documents.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Crozier) — Order! I ask Mr Tee to clarify what he is reading from.

Mr TEE — I am reading from the PAEC transcript. It is on the committee's web page, so I assume — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Crozier) — Order! If it is on the website, it is therefore public.

Mr TEE — Mr Mulder talks about the fact that the West Gate Bridge is a 1970s structure, and with that in mind, and with the thought of the additional vehicles, it makes absolute sense for any government or any opposition to support a second crossing. Mr Mulder said:

It is just too risky for us not to proceed with a second crossing.

The minister is saying that the priority has to be a second river crossing, and he has put an argument for that case. He talks about the ageing nature of the infrastructure of the West Gate Bridge and about the fact that the number of vehicles using the bridge is expected to increase dramatically. We think he makes a compelling argument, and yet his government supports a different project. His government supports a project that is not going to provide a second river crossing. His government supports a project that will go nowhere near providing a second river crossing. If the government's documents are to be believed — and in fact Mr Mulder has said so — the government will start

construction of the east–west road in 2014, and the construction period will take place over five years. We are looking at 2019 or 2020 before completion, based on the government's time frame, and before there is any consideration of the second river crossing that Mr Mulder makes very clear ought to be a priority.

As well as Mr Mulder's support for a second river crossing, it is very clear that the Linking Melbourne Authority in its report of March 2011 supported a second river crossing. Its report, which has been released under freedom of information, is titled *East–West Link — An Opportunity to Transform Melbourne*. It argues:

... the most important need is an alternative to the West Gate Bridge ...

... WestLink stage 1 is able to be procured and constructed some 24 months ahead of the alternative [Eastern Freeway to Tullamarine] and also provides the crucial alternative Maribymong River crossing ...

According to the Linking Melbourne Authority, construction could begin at the start of 2013, while starting at the Eastern Freeway meant work could not begin until 2015. We have the curious position of the minister supporting a second river crossing, we have the Linking Melbourne Authority supporting a second river crossing, and yet the government does not.

It is pleasing that the opposition in its priorities has the support of Mr Mulder and the Linking Melbourne Authority, but it is also pleasing that we have the support of government members in this house. Mr Elsbury is a big supporter of the opposition's position on this. In this chamber he advocated for construction to start in the west. In August last year he talked about the project commencing in the west and said it is:

... a very important road project that will bring great benefits to the western suburbs of Melbourne as well as to the greater Melbourne area.

He said it will:

... provide improved access to the port of Melbourne, making this state a greater competitor in getting products out into the global market. It will also improve traffic flows, which will mean greater fuel efficiency. It will take cars off the roads in the northern suburbs, which will mean that people who choose to ride their bikes can do so without having to worry about the traffic congestion that currently chokes the northern areas of metropolitan Melbourne.

Mr Elsbury went on to say:

At the LeadWest post-budget breakfast Mr Barry Harvey, AM, the independent chair of LeadWest, made it clear that it

was his opinion that tunnelling from west to east was a priority —

and Mr Elsbury says that he tends to agree. Here we have the Linking Melbourne Authority, Mr Mulder and Mr Elsbury all passionately advocating for construction from the west and all passionately providing evidence as to why the priority for Melbourne ought to be a second river crossing, and yet for some unknown reason the government takes a different course. We know that the work had been done within the bureaucracy in terms of the Eddington report, and yet inexplicably the government takes a different course.

It is in that context that we come to Mr Barber's motion. Mr Barber raises a number of important issues and asks a number of important questions about this case. Unlike the second river crossing, unlike the west to east proposal, there is no economic case. The government says it has a business case, but it has not even provided it to Infrastructure Australia. The government is asking the community and the Parliament to accept that it has changed its mind. It now has a proposal without a business case and expects everyone to pick it up sight unseen.

Mr Barber raises issues that require further investigation. My amendment to Mr Barber's motion proposes that we have a look at the issues that he has raised, including the economic case and the impact on congestion. I note in relation to the impact on congestion that the Auditor-General in his report found that there will be an increase in congestion as a result of the east–west proposal as more cars come onto the roads to use the freeway. There will be more cars and more traffic on the roads leading up to the freeway. We believe these things ought to be investigated. We believe that a proper process needs to be implemented — not a long process — so that we can make an informed decision and so that we can ask Mr Mulder to expand on his views about whether this is the right decision or whether his preferred view, which we share, is for a second river crossing.

If you have any doubt about the need to explore these things further, then I would urge you to have a look at the Linking Melbourne Authority east–west link project proposal. That document, released this week, sheds some light on the sorts of issues that we on this side think ought to be investigated.

The project design talks about the tunnel construction, which may involve blasting, tunnel boring and cut and cover. Whether there will be cut and cover and whether Royal Park will be effectively taken apart for a number of years so that the tunnel can proceed is something that

we ought to consider. We ought to have a look at it and the Parliament ought to have a view on it.

The project design looks at the construction of ventilation structures. Again, these are issues in which the community has an interest. How large will they be? How much pollution will there be? Where will they be? The installation of noise and screening barriers is also proposed, and this again raises an issue for the community. Where are those barriers going to go? Why are they needed? What increase in noise will occur as a result of this project?

The description of the works set out by the Linking Melbourne Authority this week talks about the upgrade to the existing Eastern Freeway bridge across the Merri Creek and the construction within the Moonee Ponds Creek environs. Again these are matters for which there will be a great deal of public interest, and we think they ought to be properly examined.

This report is very interesting because it talks about the size of the community that will be affected by this proposal. It includes Clifton Hill, Collingwood, Abbotsford, Fitzroy, North Fitzroy, Carlton, North Carlton, Parkville, North Melbourne, Kensington, Flemington and West Melbourne.

Mr Finn — He is going through the bloody Melway.

Mrs Peulich — Is there a telephone book you can read?

Mr TEE — Those opposite will scoff at the large part of Melbourne — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Crozier) — Order! Mr Tee should address his comments through the Chair.

Mr TEE — Those opposite may scoff at the people who will be affected by this, but their own report says it is very extensive. The number of people who will be affected covers a large area. Mr Finn cannot walk away from that.

The report goes on to talk about the tunnel portals and elevated roadways which could have a significant visual impact. Air quality is another concern raised in the Linking Melbourne Authority report. Changes to noise levels near residential areas will need to be considered. There are a number of issues that we think ought to be examined. There are a number of issues that have been identified, both in the Linking Melbourne Authority work and in the Auditor-General's report, that we believe ought to be reviewed. The changes in

traffic volumes, the impact on businesses from the acquisition of land and the impact on residents from the acquisition of houses are all matters that are identified in the Linking Melbourne Authority project proposal that we believe need to be examined.

That is why we are putting forward an opportunity for the Parliament, and through the Parliament the community, to be made aware of these issues, to have a look at the cost benefits of the proposal and the alternatives and to talk to Mr Mulder about some of the alternatives he has already canvassed. We also want to have a look at some of the environmental impacts. We know through the Linking Melbourne Authority report that a lot of this land is quite contaminated and that there is an issue with the disturbance of contaminated soils and what that will mean, including the discharge of polluted stormwater.

We on this side think these issues need to be ventilated. We believe a quick report to the chamber would be helpful, but we do not believe that Mr Barber's motion should be supported. We do not believe that the case put by Mr Barber warrants support. We think it warrants investigation, and that is the proposal that we are putting forward. We think Mr Barber's motion is premature. We will not be supporting his motion at this stage, but we do support further consideration of these issues.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I will endeavour to wake myself and indeed the chamber after having listened to a huge dose of human Mogadon for the last half hour or so.

Mrs Peulich — It was his usual stuff.

Mr FINN — It was his usual stuff, it has to be said. What we heard from Mr Tee throughout his contribution was an attempt to divert attention from this motion. It was not a very successful attempt, but this amendment that the Labor Party has put forward and the speech by Mr Tee, which, as I said, was pretty dozy stuff, is all about trying to get us to concentrate on something else — anything else — because the Labor Party has had a lot of trouble with this issue over an extended period of time. The Labor Party of course used to support this motion.

Mrs Peulich — So did Mr Melhem.

Mr FINN — Mr Melhem may well want to speak on this motion, and I hope he does. The Labor Party used to support this motion, then came the Melbourne by-election and for purely political reasons Labor dumped the people of the western and the eastern suburbs out the window in its hunt for votes in the inner

city. The western suburbs used to be Labor's happy hunting ground, but it felt that it had to turf its traditional people over in the west and the marginal people in the east in pursuit of a vote in the inner suburbs of Melbourne. It is pathetic when a political party puts its own political interests ahead of what is good for this state, what is good for the people of this state and, from my point of view, what is good for the people of the western suburbs.

I am here today representing the western suburbs, Mr Melhem is here representing the western suburbs and Mr Elsbury is here representing the Western suburbs, and we all have the same view: we all support the east–west link. Mr Tee might like to get excited about it, but the fact is that the view opposing the east–west link on the opposition side of the house is hardly unanimous, and if he does not believe me, he should turn around and asked the bloke behind him, because Mr Melhem will be able to tell him all about it.

I say only one thing to the Labor Party: get on board. Let us make a decision here today to support the east–west link — with no more delays, no more inquiries and no more committees — because it is good for Melbourne and Victoria. I say to the Labor Party it is decision time. It is time that ALP members got on board, put aside their own parochial interests and decided what is best for the people of Victoria. It is most certainly the east–west link.

If Labor members wanted to look at it in political terms, perhaps they could look at it in these terms: do they want to win Melbourne or do they want to win Macedon? Do they want to win Tarneit? Do they want to win some of those seats out in the eastern suburbs that I cannot quite think of at the moment? Do they want to win those seats that are occupied by people who at the moment are stuck in gridlock on the Tullamarine, the West Gate, the Eastern and the Monash freeways and who would use the east–west link in their thousands every day? These people are desperate for an east–west link, and the Labor Party is saying to them, 'Forget it. We're putting our political interests ahead of yours', and that is pretty pathetic. I will be opposing the amendment moved by Mr Tee. It is just another delay that Victoria can do without.

I turn to Mr Barber's contribution, and what a fascinating contribution it was, because he told me what I was going to say and he got some of it right. I say to Mr Barber that if he happens to come adrift from his seat after the next election, as may happen because I think the Greens are well and truly on the way out, I may consider taking him on as a speech writer because

he told me at some length exactly what I was going to say. What I really liked was Mr Barber's reference to the Good Ship Lollipop bound for glory. It is a cross between Shirley Temple and Angry Anderson. I wondered out loud who this cross between Shirley Temple and Angry Anderson might be, and my good friend and colleague Mr Ondarchie informed me that he was probably referring to federal Greens leader, Christine Milne. I do not know if that is the case, but it is something to speculate on as we continue this debate.

I have to say to Mr Barber and this house that having been around this place for a fair while I heard many of the arguments that Mr Barber and Mr Tee put today used against CityLink. It is almost as if they picked the arguments up from 20 years ago, put them down on the desk, opened the book and are using them all over again. They say that history repeats itself, and ain't that the truth, because we are hearing today exactly the same arguments we heard nearly two decades ago against CityLink. We now know just how important CityLink is, and the importance of the east–west link to this city and to this state was illustrated, far too graphically, just a couple of weeks ago when we had that dreadful accident on the Bolte Bridge, which caused the whole road network in Melbourne to shut down. Our network was gridlocked from one end of Melbourne to the other.

If we had had the east–west link, that would not have happened. We would not have had gridlock; we would have had an alternative that people could have used to get to where they wanted to get to whether they were commercial travellers, truck drivers or commuters heading to work. I point out to Mr Barber that it has been estimated that some 40 per cent of people who use the West Gate Freeway do not want to go into the city; they want to go to the other side of town and if they want to do that, clearly they are going to use the east–west link. It makes sense. I am not sure where Mr Barber gets his figures from, although I suspect it will be from a place that is possibly not all that hygienic, but I can assure you I will not go into that in any depth.

I particularly enjoyed this motion as much as anything else for its first component, where Mr Barber opposed the Napthine government's proposed east–west tollway because it lacked a 'robust economic case'. I did have a bit of a chuckle to hear the Greens professing concern for the taxpayer and professing that they have some sense of economic responsibility. Give me a break! Since when have the Greens cared about the taxpayers of Australia? Since when have the Greens cared about any economic responsibility at all? They show every day in Canberra that they do not care where the money

comes from. They just want to spend it; that is what they are on about. They make Wayne Swan look genuinely stingy, and that is really saying something. The highest spending Treasurer in Australia's history is tight compared to the Greens, so for the Greens to come into this house and start talking about a robust economic case really makes me laugh. I find that extremely amusing.

I would dearly love to make a number of other points on this particular motion, but unfortunately I have been asked to keep my comments as brief as possible, so I will do so. However, I make the point that the east–west link will bring enormous benefits to the western suburbs of Melbourne. I know that Mr Barber does not care about the western suburbs of Melbourne, nor does he care particularly about any outer suburb of Melbourne. As far as Mr Barber is concerned, he goes with the old tradition that Victoria ends at the end of the tram tracks. He does not particularly care what happens in Werribee, Melton, Sunbury or any of those places you travel through as you go out through eastern, western or northern suburbs. He does not care about those areas, but I can assure him that thousands and thousands of people are desperately waiting for the east–west link to be built, and it will be very much welcomed, as most of Victoria very much welcomed Tony Abbott's offer of \$1.5 billion to get this project up and running.

What a great pity it is that the outgoing Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, has refused to make any contribution to the east–west link at all. She has kicked in huge sums of money for the western suburbs of Sydney, but of course that is where the marginal seats are. That is the only thing the Labor Party cares about. Just as Labor's members do not care about what is beneficial for the people of Victoria with regard to the east–west link, they do not care that this project needs the federal funding that Julia Gillard is denying it. That money is going to where Julia Gillard needs the votes. I will tell you what: it is going to be a huge waste of money, because she is not going to get the votes up there anyway, so she is wasting her time.

I will say to the house what I have said to the house before. I really hope we do not get to the point of debating this matter every week because it could become almost as boring as Mr Tee, and that is really saying something. I say to Mr Tee and to members of the opposition that every day thousands of people are caught on the West Gate Freeway and the Tullamarine Freeway, and all they want to do is to get to work. Every morning and every night all they want is to get to work and then to get home. At the moment they are prevented from doing that in any speedy and reasonable

way by virtue of the fact that the congestion is beyond all reason. We need the east–west link. Those people stuck in the traffic need the east–west link.

What time is it now — a quarter past five? We are talking about the peak hour. Right now the Tullamarine Freeway and the West Gate Freeway outbound will both be chock-a-block; they would be jam-packed. Mr Tee should go out and tell those people that he does not care how long they sit on the freeway, that he does not care how long it takes them to get home, that he does not care how long it takes them to see their families and their loved ones, because that is the attitude of the Labor Party, the attitude of the Greens and most certainly not the attitude of this government. We want the east–west link built, built now and as soon as is practically possible. From my point of view and from those of Mr Elsbury and Mr Melhem, it will be a huge benefit and a great boon for the western suburbs; indeed it will be a major plus for the city of Melbourne, for the suburbs of Melbourne and indeed for the state of Victoria.

I urge those members of the opposition who are very keen to see the east–west link built to come and join us on this matter. I urge them to make their views known, not just in their party room, if they were allowed to do that, but also in this Parliament. Some may not have had the opportunity for all that long to make their views known on this matter within this house, but I ask them, very humbly of course, to make their views known, that they support the east–west link just as we — Mr Elsbury and I, as representatives of the western suburbs — support the east–west link, because we know it is best for the people of the west, and that is what we need. As a member of this place I support the east–west link and, as a result, like the government, I will be opposing both the amendment and the motion.

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I thank the house for the opportunity to speak on this issue. It is correct that the Australian Workers Union made a submission to the Eddington east–west link needs assessment commissioned by the former government. I remind those on the government benches to read the whole submission and not only part of it. My understanding is that the east–west link proposed by this government leaves out one very important piece. The current proposal is to connect the Eastern Freeway only with the Tullamarine Freeway. Where is the West Gate?

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr MELHEM — Let me finish. The West Gate Freeway is missing — the western link. The argument

is not about whether the east–west project should go ahead. A number of points need to be made, and that is why we need to refer the amendment to a committee so we can explore these options. I definitely support the project. The questions are: where are the priorities; where is the money going to come from; where is the business case? The government does not have one.

Mr Finn — The money won't be coming from Julia Gillard.

Mr MELHEM — The government does not have a business case. Let me tell you: good luck getting the money from Tony Abbott, if he gets in. The whole argument is where the money is going to come from and what the business case is. I care about the western suburbs. I have lived for 25 years in the western suburbs, and I know what it is like driving to the city. We want the west link to be done as a priority. We need to get the trucks off the residential streets in Yarraville and Maribyrnong. We want tunnels from the West Gate Bridge, another crossing, for the people coming from Geelong, from Werribee and other suburbs.

If someone is going to come to you with a bucketful of money and say, 'I can do the east–west link as you are proposing, get the traffic off the West Gate Bridge, do the rail tunnel as well', then we will do all these projects. But let me tell government members that they have sat on their backsides for three years. They wasted a golden opportunity when two-and-a-half years ago Infrastructure Australia had the project ready to go. What did the former Premier do? He did nothing. Why did he not put in a submission to get the project going? Senior ministers of that cabinet did nothing, and guess where the money went? It went to New South Wales and to Queensland, so that is why there was no money left in Infrastructure Australia to fund this project. Let us get the facts right.

I am proudly standing here, and I support all the recommendations made by Sir Rod Eddington. The question is: which one comes first? Let us record reality instead of talking crap about caring about the western suburbs.

Mr Elsbury — On a point of order, Acting President, I believe some unparliamentary language was used in the last sentence of Mr Melhem's contribution.

Mr Finn — You're not at Trades Hall now.

Mr MELHEM — I am proud of my union — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmár) — Order! Have you got anything on the point of order?

Mr MELHEM — Yes, I do. On the point of order, Acting President, I will withdraw the comment, but let me finish by making a point on the last comment made by the member.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! The member cannot debate it. I ask him to withdraw without any qualification.

Mr MELHEM — I withdraw the comment. In the interests of time, Acting President, I will leave my contribution at that.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — As I predicted earlier, Mr Ondarchie did not front up to explain to his constituents why he thinks this is a good project despite all of its negatives. As I predicted, Mr Finn talked about everything else except the merits of the project. He talked about the Greens. He invited me to be his speechwriter. He referred to Christine Milne. He basically said, ‘If you like CityLink, you will love the east–west link.

Mr Finn clearly has not checked his own government’s map of this proposal, because he made the claim that the truck accident on the Bolte Bridge last week, which was quite tragic, demonstrated why this project is needed. If Mr Finn checks the map, he will find that his east–west link feeds straight onto the exact section of the Bolte Bridge where the accident happened. Instead of having two freeways shut down Mr Finn would have had four freeways shut down. That shows why freeways really cannot be relied on for the transport system. All it takes is one truckie to lose it, and the \$8 billion piece of infrastructure takes a holiday for the day.

Mr Finn said I do not understand anything outside the tram tracks. I ask Mr Finn when the last time was that his government put up a proposal to extend the tram tracks or, for that matter, the rail line — not in our lifetime. He said we do not care about the outer suburbs. How about extending the Mernda rail line to the outer suburbs using some of the \$8 billion? Of course one would not expect an economic appraisal from Mr Finn. He is from the Tony Abbott school of left-wing economics and right-wing social policy. In terms of his case for the project he said 40 per cent of the cars on the West Gate Bridge go to a place he referred to as ‘the other side of town’. Who needs to pay Veitch Lister Consulting millions of dollars for its traffic modelling to try to show the case for this project when we have Mr Finn saying it is 40 per cent of cars and they are going to some place called ‘the other side of town’?

I should mention that the economic appraisal conducted by the former government had a few assumptions in it that we would not all necessarily agree with. For example, one of the assumptions was that public transport patronage would grow by 50 per cent over the 10 years to 2021. In fact patronage on public transport has grown by 60 per cent over the last five years. With these pessimistic assumptions about the ability of public transport to move large numbers of people around the inner city, of course the government is sandbagging the case for rail lines while pushing forward with this wealth-destroying project, the east–west road tunnel. Mr Finn would not even have bothered to research this thing before he came here. There was just the usual florid rhetoric. He is incapable of addressing the community on the alternatives for public transport in Melbourne.

House divided on amendment:

Ayes, 16

Broad, Ms	Mikakos, Ms
Darveniza, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Pulford, Ms
Eideh, Mr	Scheffer, Mr
Elasmr, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Tarlamis, Mr
Leane, Mr	Tee, Mr
Lenders, Mr	Tierney, Ms
Melhem, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Viney, Mr

Noes, 23

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

Amendment negatived.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I understand we are out of time and should be onto statements on reports and papers, but by leave, and with the agreement of the parties, I move:

That statements on reports and papers be deferred until after the completion of the division on my motion.

Leave granted.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 3

Barber, Mr
Hartland, Ms (*Teller*)
Pennicuik, Ms (*Teller*)

Noes, 36

Atkinson, Mr	Senders, Mr
Broad, Ms	Lovell, Ms
Crozier, Ms	Melhem, Mr
Dalla-Riva, Mr	Mikakos, Ms
Darveniza, Ms	O'Brien, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Davis, Mr D.	O'Donohue, Mr
Davis, Mr P.	Ondarchie, Mr
Drum, Mr	Petrovich, Mrs
Eideh, Mr	Peulich, Mrs
Elasmar, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Pulford, Ms
Elsbury, Mr	Ramsay, Mr
Finn, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Guy, Mr	Scheffer, Mr
Hall, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Tarlamis, Mr
Koch, Mr	Tee, Mr
Kronberg, Mrs	Tierney, Ms
Leane, Mr	Viney, Mr

Motion negatived.**STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS****Auditor-General: *Managing Traffic Congestion***

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Auditor-General's report of April 2013 entitled *Managing Traffic Congestion*. Before the report was published there was talk of how heavy the traffic is, but members should listen to this now. I read this report and was not at all surprised by its contents. The report simply confirmed what we all know about Melbourne's peak-hour traffic. Some of us in this house are fortunate to not have to face the daily grind of driving to the central business district to access our workplaces — that is, unless Parliament is sitting, when we all experience the sheer drudgery of bumper-to-bumper traffic wherever we are driving from in the suburbs.

Travel times have increased exponentially, car ownership has increased, drivers licence numbers have increased and the overall result is bedlam in peak-hour traffic. In fact the peak hour has been extended to a 3-hour period during the morning and the evening. Disturbingly, the report highlights the absence of an overall planning strategy, and without this forward planning, traffic congestion can only get worse. Stinging motorists with a congestion tax or raising parking rates is not really tackling the problem. Express bus lanes are effective and efficient, but only for the passengers on the bus. The sheer volume of cars on the road and the imperative of motorists to get to their

destination are a daily source of frustration, and we are seeing more instances of road rage.

At the end of the day the commuter needs more cost-effective alternatives. The state government is not investing enough in the public transport system. The findings of the Auditor-General's report indicate that because communication and prioritisation are not centralised and no single portfolio has carriage of determining priorities for developing strategies for dealing with traffic congestion, we are literally at a standstill. Other capital cities experience congestion too, but it would appear that some metropolitan cities — New York, London and Paris, to name just a few — have invested wisely in their public transport infrastructure. Their workers are shuttled to their workplaces within reasonable time frames.

However, one thing is certain in Victoria: there will be more cars, more pollution and most definitely more congestion heading our way if the observations of the Auditor-General's report are ignored. It is timely now for this government to consider other methods of decreasing traffic congestion. There is no golden instantaneous solution, but I am sure that every avenue should be explored to make Victoria a calmer and more pleasant place to be in peak-hour traffic.

Office of the Public Advocate: community visitors report 2011–12

Mrs COOTE (Southern Metropolitan) — It gives me enormous pleasure to speak today on the Victorian government response to the community visitors annual report 2011–12. I have spoken in this chamber before about the importance of community visitors to this state and to the most vulnerable Victorians. I want to express again at the outset my praise for all the volunteers who are community visitors and for the extraordinary work that they do. In this document it says that in 2011–12 there were 360 dedicated community visitors and they conducted an astonishing 5104 visits across the state.

Community visitors are supported by the Office of the Public Advocate, and I would like to acknowledge the great work of Colleen Pearce, the public advocate, and the work that her team, including Rosemary Barker, does across the board. I meet on a regular basis with the combined boards of the community visitors, and they give me very good insight into what is happening at the grassroots level, at the coalface. It is particularly interesting and pleasing to have this interaction and dialogue that I can take back to the Minister for Community Services and to the Department of Human Services so that we can start to address any major problems that are identified as a matter of urgency.

I think I have said before that community visitors celebrated 25 years of service last year. This is volunteer work. These are people who do this work in their spare time, and they are quite extraordinary. Their knowledge, their understanding and their compassion are paramount. I praise their work enormously.

I want to remind the chamber that on 28 March 2012 this government tabled the very first official response to a community visitors annual report in the Parliament. It was an election commitment in recognition of the critical work undertaken by community visitors in upholding the rights of vulnerable Victorians, and it was a very clear message of how valuable community visitors are to this government. We wanted them to have the recognition from this Parliament and beyond.

Many of the themes in this report that I am speaking on today were similar to those which were identified in the 2010–11 annual report. That highlights the fact that systemic change requires careful consideration and sustainable and focused efforts. As a means to achieving this the Department of Human Services and the community services area, particularly under Minister Wooldridge, have been working very closely with the Office of the Public Advocate and with community visitors to make quite certain that issues are addressed and that anything that is identified as a systemic problem is addressed properly.

Some issues that community visitors have identified are discussed in paragraph 3.2 of the government's response, headed 'Serious incidents, abuse, neglect and violence'. Any violence is unacceptable, any abuse is totally unacceptable, but incidents do happen. There is now a much better regulatory system of reporting and looking at what these incidents are. All these systems can be improved, but it is important to address them as they arise. One of the things the community visitors have identified is that the resident-to-resident abuse seems to be increasing slightly, and it is certainly something that is being monitored very carefully. Since 2004 the Department of Health has offered free training programs to all the proprietors and staff in supported residential services (SRSs), and the inherent theme of this training is to provide a safe environment free from any form of abuse.

Courses which incorporate material to address abuse, violence and neglect issues include support planning, which was previously called care planning, and managing challenging behaviours. An increasing issue right across the board in disability services is challenging behaviours, and it is something that this government is working with a whole range of stakeholders to address. Another area is understanding

and assisting residents with mental illness. As members will all be very aware, Mary Wooldridge, as Minister for Mental Health, has done some extraordinary work in the mental illness area, and indeed in the last budget she poured a significant amount of money into the mental illness area.

Substance abuse is also increasing. This is being looked at and being worked on, together with the other issues presenting themselves in SRSs and community residential units. It is very important that community challenges in these areas are being dealt with as a cooperative approach by the Office of the Public Advocate, community visitors and DHS.

Coroners Court: report 2011–12

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — I would like to make a statement tonight on the *Coroners Court 2011–12 Annual Report*. This is the court's third annual report since its establishment as an inquisitorial court in November 2009. The report contains a wealth of information as to the types of inquests the court has held, which I think members would find very interesting. It has held 148 inquests in this period. But it is concerning that the court is struggling to perform its functions due to serious funding constraints that are outlined in the report.

The court recorded a deficit of \$1.248 million. More than half of this is attributed to costs incurred by the court for external legal counsel and medical and expert opinion. The notional amount budgeted by the department for these expenses was just \$121 200. This figure was reached without reference to the actual cost of these services to the court as demonstrated over a number of years. In this reporting year the actual cost for these services was \$970 347, resulting in a deficit of \$849 147. This method of budget allocation will continue to result in a deficit being recorded as during the past three financial years these sorts of costs to the court have not been below \$600 000. Interestingly, the cost of reimbursing lay witnesses who incurred loss of earnings or other expenses as a result of being required to attend court to give evidence during an inquest budgeted by the department to this court in the financial year was just \$4900. The actual cost was \$36 200, resulting in the court recording a deficit of \$31 300.

The annual budget afforded to the court by the department and the method of striking the budget require serious examination. The court requires a realistic budget that reflects both its past and predicted expenditures if it is to continue to provide the Victorian community with the services required of it.

The former CEO of the Coroners Court, Judy Leitch, commented in the report that the court's:

... recurring budget deficits reflect an inadequate funding base rather than any deficiencies in financial management.

The court does not have enough staff as a result, and this has led to cutbacks on important services such as counselling and community education, which is something I mentioned in debate on legislation yesterday. I have been hearing stories of people not receiving the amount of counselling and advice from the Coroners Court that they should, and this is due to a lack of resourcing and staffing.

According to Judy Leitch, KPMG's post-implementation review of the Coroners Court, following the introduction of new legislation:

... found that the court's cost per case finalised compares favourably with other coronial jurisdictions and that the court delivers more services for this cost than other jurisdictions. KPMG noted that their benchmarking activities and analysis of the court's major cost categories suggest that its recurring budget deficits reflect an inadequate funding base rather than any deficiencies in financial management.

Apart from these financial difficulties, that the government really needs to address, former coroner Judge Jennifer Coate pointed out that:

Tragically, the need for the Family Violence Death Review process commenced inside the court in 2009, remains as pressing today as it was when it commenced. During the 2011–2012 reporting period there were 66 suspected homicides reported to the court. Of that number, preliminary investigations indicate 20 of those deaths appear to have occurred within a context of family violence. Despite no ongoing funding being provided for the program, the court has strived to continue doing its best to produce in-depth analysis and review of each of these deaths to learn whatever is possible from these tragedies and give this information back to the family, community and service system.

Each year in Victoria more than 40 per cent of all deaths attributed to homicide involve intimate partners and other family members. Many of these deaths feature a clearly documented history of family violence that precedes the fatal event. The Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths was established to assist with the coronial investigation into the incidents. It has a prevention focus that is directed toward strengthening the response to family violence across the state. Clearly we need more attention to the funding of the Coroners Court to make sure that it is able to continue in its general inquests and in particular in this important area of family violence.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank both the metropolitan and regional coroners and their staff for the excellent work that they do. I hope the government

will read the report and take on board the need for more staffing and resources at the Coroners Court.

Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE: report 2012

Ms DARVENIZA (Northern Victoria) — I am pleased to rise and make some comments on the *Bendigo TAFE Annual Report 2012*. Firstly, I congratulate the board president, Margaret O'Rourke, and the CEO, Maria Simpson, on this report. The Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE, or BRIT as it is known locally, services a significant geographical area in my electorate of Northern Victoria Region. It provides services in Bendigo, Castlemaine, Maryborough, Kyneton, Echuca and Kerang.

The Bendigo TAFE, or BRIT, is one of many TAFE institutes that have had to urgently review their operations in the last 12 months as result of the 2012 savage cuts to the TAFE sector. The BRIT board president, Margaret O'Rourke, has admitted in her report that the budget cuts were the most significant set of issues BRIT had to deal with. Regardless of these issues, BRIT should be commended for the list of its achievements in the past 12 months. It has celebrated many milestones.

Some of the highlights, which are included in the report, include the following: the horticulture and agriculture team received the Vocation Education Training section of the Business and Higher Education Round Table (B-HERT) awards for their outstanding collaboration with the fertiliser industry in developing training; Bendigo TAFE graduate Holly Byrne was awarded the 2012 AWEX National Graduate Woolclasser of the Year at the Australian Wool Exchange competition at the Sydney Royal Easter Show in April 2012; Jim Field, primary industries teacher, received the 2012 Dennis Teasdale Perpetual Trophy from the national Australian Wool Exchange Awards; Bendigo TAFE plumbing teacher Lyle Kelson, recognised by the Plumbers Industry Commission, was named winner of the trainers award, which recognises an educator who has made a difference to learning by inspiring, encouraging and assisting students beyond the norm. Emily Woosnam was awarded the Bendigo business excellence awards trainee/apprentice of the year.

The 2012 graduate survey shows that Bendigo TAFE graduates are highly successful in achieving employment on graduation, that 90.9 per cent of Bendigo TAFE graduates were satisfied with the overall quality of their training and that 87.7 per cent of

them fully or partially achieved their main reason for undertaking the training.

Following the budget cuts announced last year, TAFEs were alarmed to discover that then Premier Ted Baillieu was not prepared to throw them a lifeline after all. Leaked transition plans clearly showed that TAFEs across Victoria were running a real risk of operating in deficit unless they received some support from the government, which was certainly not forthcoming. Without that support, TAFEs across the state, including BRIT, only have a few options left. They include raising fees, sacking staff and cutting courses.

Other documents outlined the future plans of the institutions to deal with government funding cuts, which included campus sell-offs and closures, amalgamations, course reductions and in some cases steep increases in student course fees. This further fuelled distress and rage throughout the sector.

In a story in the *Australian* last year Bendigo TAFE CEO Maria Simpson is quoted as saying the 'very difficult decisions' on redundancies had been necessitated by the \$9 million budget cut it had received and that remaining staff would be required to work longer hours, which will add further stress. The article went on to say that the Bendigo job cuts were the steepest of some 290 redundancies announced at that point. As members can see, these cuts have been severe and have impacted greatly on BRIT.

When the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Mr Hall, was questioned recently at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing, he admitted that there is not \$200 million of new funding for TAFE in the most recent budget. Of the \$128.4 million that is in the budget, \$28 million is national partnership funding from the commonwealth. Any closure of a TAFE institution is robbing rural and regional students of a future.

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee: livability options in outer suburban Melbourne

Mrs KRONBERG (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to make a statement on the report of the Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee's inquiry into livability options in outer suburban Melbourne. I will pick up the thread from my previous contribution and talk about the subject of residential densification.

It is important to make the point that metropolitan Melbourne comprises one of the largest urban

settlement areas in the world, but it has a significantly smaller population than other cities of comparable or smaller size. While this pattern of urban development is one that has delivered a high standard of living for a number of decades, it increasingly presents challenges to livability in terms of access to physical and community infrastructure; challenges to community wellbeing and social cohesion due to a lack of local employment, long commute times and relative isolation; and the loss of land that was previously valued for agricultural, recreation and conservation purposes.

The typical Australian suburban density of 12 net dwellings per hectare is extremely low compared to many other cities around the world, including cities in Europe where the typical residential density is 250 net dwellings per hectare. Stated in terms of land use, in order to house the same number of people, Australian cities typically require almost 21 times the land area that European cities require. The relatively low residential densities in Australian cities has a significant impact both on the natural environment and on land that could be utilised for a range of other purposes, including agriculture and recreation.

It is important to note that there are a range of densities and a variety of methods for increasing residential densities in selected areas. It needs to be said that the committee is not advocating a one-size-fits-all approach to residential densification or advocating the adoption of a particular density level or urban form. Rather, the committee considered that Melbourne's livability can best be preserved and in fact enhanced through the encouragement of a gradation of densities appropriate to the neighbourhood character and uses of a particular area. Such options include the model of secondary and tertiary suites, which I have mentioned before. I am absolutely convinced that the adoption of this model to increase housing density, based on the model the committee saw in great abundance in the Canadian city of Vancouver, in British Columbia, is a game changer. It is certainly a way forward in terms of providing increased densities, increased activity and access to affordable housing stock.

Increased residential densities also offer a potential pathway to more affordable housing through the ability to spread the cost of infrastructure provision across more households, and that is a no-brainer.

The committee's view was that there is a need to introduce or increase the use of each of these densification strategies within Melbourne's new and established suburbs if the metropolitan area is to accommodate the significant population growth that is

forecast for coming decades. The committee discovered during the overseas study tour that a number of the world's most livable cities are currently implementing one or more of these three densification strategies, to a greater or lesser degree, to address some of their own emerging challenges to livability. It cited the example of Vancouver, which is arguably Melbourne's main rival for the title of world's most livable city, as having achieved impressive results in the implementation of all three forms of densification.

In Melbourne the successful combination of these densification strategies offers great potential to meet the current and future challenges to livability — particularly the growing demand for physical and community infrastructure associated with rapid population growth — while also significantly enhancing the livability of many existing suburbs.

Chapter 3 of this report provides greater amplification of this point. The committee identified the relevant lack of housing diversity in outer suburbs associated with low-density development. That also contributes to housing affordability problems. Through its potential to provide a greater range of more affordable housing types, residential densification therefore also represents a key strategy for improving what is for many Melburnians one of the most important measures of livability: the opportunity to purchase a home. The committee received evidence from a number of stakeholders who expressed their support for increased residential density.

Children's Court of Victoria: report 2011–12

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to make a contribution on the Children's Court of Victoria annual report 2011–12 tabled on 21 March this year. The report makes reference to the significant increase in workload in the family division of the Children's Court relating to child protection matters. It states that in 2011–12 the number of applications initiated in the family division grew by 13.3 per cent on the previous year. That was described by Judge Paul Grant as 'an extraordinarily large increase in workload'. I take this opportunity to thank Judge Paul Grant for his seven years of distinguished service as President of the Children's Court. His dedication and tireless commitment to children's rights and advocacy is to be commended.

In this report at page 3, however, Judge Grant commented:

... the court is unable, within its existing resources, to match the rate of finalisation of cases to the rate of inflation.

According to Judge Grant this increased workload has led to delays and overcrowding in the courts; delays which are not in the best interests of children. The report found that in some country areas the growth in cases was so significant that it was 'difficult to see how some courts will be able to cope with the demand'.

Already we have seen the problems that can arise when there are delays in the Children's Court. Only recently we debated legislation in this place that sought to limit the rights of children to legal representation in child protection proceedings before the Children's Court. That was flagged in the report at page 4. I express the very serious concerns that the Labor opposition had about these provisions, which sought to remove the rights of children aged 7, 8 or 9 years to provide instructions to an independent lawyer on matters that directly impacted on them. Opposition members were also concerned at the coalition's motives in that instance, which we could only conclude were about saving money. Given the funding challenges to Victoria Legal Aid as a result of the government's cuts, it was all but impossible for the Children's Court to operate under the legislation as it was previously.

The report also deals with the criminal division of the court. The report shows that there has been an increase in the number of criminal matters taking more than 24 months to finalise; 144 in 2011–12 compared to 97 in 2009–10. I note that at page 7 of the report the CEO of the Children's Court refers to the success of the group conferencing system and the Children's Koori Court, both of which were Labor initiatives and of which I am a very strong supporter.

I am happy to say that the current government has continued these initiatives, but we are still waiting to hear from it as to what it plans to do in terms of diversion options for youth offenders. The Minister for Community Services released a discussion paper last year in August entitled *Practical Lessons, Fair Consequences — Improving Diversion for Young People in Victoria*. After nine months we are still waiting to hear from the government about the response to the discussion paper. It was extremely disappointing to find that the recent state budget did not provide any new initiatives to divert young people from the criminal justice system.

Under this government there have been cases of young people locked up in adult prisons. I have raised this issue in the past. We were very concerned about why that was occurring. When the matter was first raised a number of ministers were asked about the issue, including the Minister for Corrections, the Attorney-General and the Minister for Community

Services, but no-one was prepared to front up and take responsibility for that particular situation.

I am also concerned that we are now hearing reports from youth justice workers who support youth offenders experiencing mental health issues, and they are expressing concerns about the inadequacies of the current system to address those needs. In particular, I highlight the fact that the Ombudsman made a recommendation with respect to this issue, which the Minister for Community Services sought to ignore. The Ombudsman's recommendation was that there should be a specialised mental health facility in the youth justice system to support these young people. Without these issues being addressed, are we going to see more young people reoffending and ending up back in the youth justice system and also ultimately in the adult correctional system?

These are all serious issues that the government needs to do more about. I particularly look forward to hearing from the government about the response to its discussion paper on the diversion issues, and I hope that will be soon. As I said, it has been nine months so far, and the stakeholders are still waiting. I hope the Minister for Community Services delivers the response to that discussion paper very soon.

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee: livability options in outer suburban Melbourne

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I rise this evening to make a contribution on the Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee's report on the inquiry into the livability options in outer suburban Melbourne. It is a matter that attracts my personal interest because I have lived in the outer suburbs for quite some time. This report, to say the very least, is thorough. I commend the committee and in particular its chair, Mrs Kronberg, whose enthusiasm for this report knows no bounds, it would seem, and understandably so because it is an excellent publication.

The report is very well put together. It covers a whole range of matters that one would regard as being pretty important if you live in the outer suburbs — the interface suburbs. They are things such as population growth and other demographic trends; housing affordability and the cost of living; planning for livability in outer suburban Melbourne; community cohesion; livability and the environment; medical, health and support services; state planning policy framework; and a whole range of matters which clearly affect those who live in outer Melbourne. I understand

that the Acting President may be in that situation, as indeed am I and the many thousands — a number that is increasing — of people who are finding themselves in that situation as well.

I have lived in the city of Hume for many years. I used to live in the former city of Broadmeadows before the changes in council boundaries and the amalgamations, and I recall when I was first elected to the seat of Tullamarine back in 1992 that I was the only member of Parliament representing that area who actually lived within the city of Broadmeadows, which tells you a lot about the representation by the Labor Party in that area even back then. Unfortunately, very little has changed in that regard.

I live out there and I well recall the old Shire of Bulla of which Sunbury was, I suppose, the capital. The Shire of Bulla had the slogan City Living, Country Style, and I think that is something that appeals to people who live in that part of the world because we live in the country. I live in Bulla now and we very much live in the country, but at the same time I can be in the car park at Etihad Stadium in 15 minutes if I really need to be, although it would probably take me a little bit longer if I slowed down a little.

The joys of living in that area are something I hold very close to my heart, and it is of particular interest to me that the government has this last week announced that Sunbury will be given the option of forming its own municipality. This is something that has been pushed within the Sunbury community for many years. It is a promise that was made by the former Labor government back in 1999. The then member who was running for the seat of Tullamarine made that promise back in 1999 and is interesting to note that 14 years later it is the coalition government that has actually come to the party.

I would like to congratulate Mrs Petrovich, who I know has been working very hard on this matter. I know she takes a particular interest in what happens in Sunbury and in Bulla and we appreciate the work she puts in and give her thanks in anticipation of the work she will do as the federal member for McEwen later this year. I am particularly looking forward to having her as my federal representative in the national capital; I think she will do a fantastic job. She has done a great job as a member for Northern Victorian Region and I am sure that work will continue in Canberra.

As I said, this is a sensational report which is well worth a read, and when members are not reading it they can use it to keep the door open.

Auditor-General: *Managing Traffic Congestion*

Mr SCHEFFER (Eastern Victoria) — I rise to make some remarks about the Auditor-General's report entitled *Managing Traffic Congestion*. Mobility is a key issue right across the Eastern Victoria Region, and while the specific concerns vary from place to place, traffic congestion on our roads is a key issue in the Casey-Cardinia growth corridor. It is obvious that excess traffic congestion has a range of undesirable economic consequences like increased travelling time, additional running costs for vehicles and increased pollution and noise. The Auditor-General's report estimates that by 2020 the annual cost of road congestion to the Victorian economy will have doubled to more than \$6 billion. Less obvious though equally important are the social costs, both direct and indirect, and they include increased stress among drivers, less opportunity for exercise and possibly a rise in road rage incidents.

The scale of the challenge detailed in the report is vast and growing steadily, and the Auditor-General attests to that. Between 2001 and 2010 Melbourne's population grew 17 per cent, with 63 per cent of that growth occurring in the outer metropolitan zone. The number of vehicle kilometres travelled during this time corresponds closely with the increase in population; that is, around 25 per cent. Conversely, the inner Melbourne zone has experienced population growth of 25 per cent while only seeing a 4 per cent increase in vehicle kilometres travelled. This is a reflection on the better public transport options and shorter car trip lengths available to residents of the inner Melbourne zone.

The Auditor-General in his report describes managing traffic congestion on both the supply side, by the provision of infrastructure, and the demand side, by pricing roads, limiting parking, planning travel outside peak periods, mode sharing and the use of public transport. That is why it is particularly troubling that Public Transport Victoria (PTV) no longer has an explicit mode-sharing target against which it can monitor and assess achievement of its statutory goal to increase the share of public transport trips. In fact, the Napthine government's commitment to increasing the share of public transport trips seems weaker still when you consider its priorities in this month's budget.

No new money has been allocated for the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel, and this comes on top of the news that not one single cent of the \$50 million allocated in last year's budget for planning this project has been spent. The old adage of 'use it or lose it' rings true here in that \$50 million has shrunk now to only \$10 million

for planning this vital piece of infrastructure which has been given the highest ranking by Infrastructure Australia and is a Project of National Significance. This government instead is providing funding for a toll road with no business case that will deliver just 50 cents worth of benefit for each dollar invested.

The government's lack of policy rigour impacts directly on the lives of Victorians, and none more so than the residents of the Casey-Cardinia region. The Cardinia shire has done a power of work in developing a mobility strategy that takes account of the fact that difficulty in getting places prevents people from doing what they need to do. In Casey-Cardinia an estimated 102 000 residents leave the region every day for work — 15 000 more than in 2006 — costing these commuters around \$384 million; and each person spends an average of 300 hours in transit. Around 400 000 tonnes of carbon is emitted by Casey-Cardinia residents when they drive to work. The population of Pakenham and Officer combined will increase by around 70 000 over the next decade and more.

The shire has plans for the improvement of Pakenham and Officer railway stations and the upgrading of a number of roads to give residents and business access to local services and workplaces. It is clear that the completion of these projects will contribute to relieving traffic congestion by reducing the need to travel outside the region.

The Auditor-General urges the government to take on board some of those measures, and Cardinia Shire Council has developed land use plans that will assist in the creation of local jobs, which is why local roads are important for not only private vehicles but also buses and rail. This report into managing traffic congestion makes important recommendations to the government to urgently bring a greater level of policy implementation coherence to its transport activities.

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee: livability options in outer suburban Melbourne

Mrs PETROVICH (Northern Victoria) — I also rise to speak on the inquiry into livability options in outer suburban Melbourne. This is a very fine piece of work, and I know the Acting President was a part of that committee, which was ably chaired by Jan Kronberg. The committee has every right to be very proud of this substantial piece of work on the livability of the outer suburbs of Melbourne. Much work was done both locally and internationally on the issues of managing growth, mortgage stress and the livability of Melbourne and its outer suburbs. The report notes that:

There are a range of options for preserving and enhancing the liveability of Melbourne's outer suburbs, many of which are increasingly being adopted by residents, community groups and local governments. The government of Victoria has also indicated that preserving and enhancing the liveability of Greater Melbourne will be a major priority for the new Melbourne metropolitan planning strategy.

The Minister for Planning, Matthew Guy, has given real teeth to local government, something that previous Labor ministers were not able to do. They treated local government with some contempt — —

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Mrs PETROVICH — You are right, Mr O'Brien, and they took a nanny-state approach to planning. We see now that local government has been given real teeth under this planning minister, and it has real responsibilities to provide those communities with a vision for their unique areas. Local government needs to fulfil those obligations and responsibilities for its communities. Each of these communities will have their own unique style and influence, and it is always a balance for decision-makers as to how these things are developed, but input into planning profiles is now very much the responsibility of communities and local councils. Many of the areas I represent in Northern Victoria Region are in peri-urban or interface council areas, which means the communities in those areas have complex needs and need to demonstrate their unique style. Council areas like Hume, Mitchell, Macedon Ranges and Whittlesea all come under the parameter of the peri-urban or interface community.

There are many challenges for those communities, as is noted in the report. Some of the statistics around mortgage stress are concerning. In relation to rates, the report notes:

MAV has estimated that Victorian council rates will rise on average \$75, or 5 per cent, over the next year. Council rates on median-valued residential property in the growth areas of Melbourne for 2012–13 are expected to range from \$1150 in Whittlesea to \$1430 in Mitchell. On average, council rates in growth areas for the 2012–13 period sit at \$1300.

Of course this is a variable issue. There was also a great piece of work done on water costs in Victoria. The report notes:

In the past four years, capital construction costs associated with the Victorian desalination plant — —

which I thought was an interesting legacy to note —

the north–south pipeline and the Tarago Reservoir placed pressure on capital and operating costs, increasing the price of water delivery significantly. Melbourne Water states in its draft 2013 Melbourne water plan that the operational costs

associated with these projects will continue to increase water prices in the coming years.

That is a dreadful legacy of increasing water costs which has been left by the previous government, and coupled with the cost of the carbon tax it is driving the cost of living and the price of services up for families in the areas I represent and in the broader community. The report notes:

The cost of living, which includes a diverse array of possible household expenses such as transport, groceries, electricity, water, gas, council rates, medical expenses, school fees and child care, is a vital determinant of housing affordability.

The report includes statistics which show that 30 per cent of average income is being spent on mortgages, which is causing many families to suffer mortgage stress. This is becoming evident to me as I move around my communities talking to people and listening to their concerns. From their point of view cost of living is causing them real stress and dismay as they try to provide for their families.

This is a very good report, and I will continue to read it. As Mr Finn says, it makes a heck of a doorstep, but it is also a significant piece of work of which this Parliament should be very proud.

Auditor-General: Student Completion Rates

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Auditor-General's report of November 2013 on student completion rates. The opening paragraph of the summary says:

The completion of year 12 or equivalent is an important predictor of future health, employment and welfare prospects and improves the ability of Victorians to participate socially and economically in their community.

What does it say when despite considerable money being spent and efforts being made for well over 10 years there has been negligible improvement in year 12 completion rates, particularly, as the report notes very clearly, amongst those from socioeconomically depressed communities, of which my electorate is the standout in the state. No-one in this house could be proud of that, and it is certainly something that no government can afford to have continue — that is, unless they have an unacceptable mentality from decades gone by of retaining people for what was negatively known as factory fodder.

The report's audit summary says:

DEECD's programs to support students at risk of disengaging from education have failed to make a significant impact on completion rates and DEECD does not know whether these programs are being delivered efficiently and effectively or if

schools have sufficient resources to address vulnerable students' needs.

I am glad the Minister for Education, Mr Dixon, heads that key portfolio, supported by the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Mr Hall, two honest and experienced leaders within the field of education. But they are struggling against a Premier, a Deputy Premier and a Treasurer who have no idea about education and no interest in the future of this state. The deliberate decision to execute the Victorian certificate of applied learning (VCAL) hits those very same kids — the ones from poorer communities and from rural Victoria. The Auditor-General attacks the decision to cease funding VCAL as a poor one without proper evidence or a thorough understanding of the costs and effects of such a woeful decision. But when I turn to the report's summary, in the section under 'Strategies to improve student completion rates' I am shocked, dismayed and disheartened to read a very damning criticism of the education department under several categories. It states that:

... programs do not have clearly identifiable goals or measures to allow program effectiveness to be measured or compared. DEECD does not monitor or evaluate programs to analyse how — or whether — they have supported students to remain engaged at school. There is, therefore, no evidence that these programs are positively impacting on completion rates.

DEECD does not coordinate programs, advise schools about which programs would work best in particular circumstances, or tell them what outcomes are likely for students.

Each and every point informs us of our duty. We must look very closely at this report and take action in the new year. By that I do not mean the slash-and-burn practices of the government to date; instead I mean the implementation of real policies based on educational success stories which have worked elsewhere.

We need to support good teachers who work hard for the students, and we must pay them what the Premier openly and repeatedly promised back when he was chasing votes. We need to review the decisions to kill the Victorian certificate of applied learning and slash TAFE and the Victorian Skills Commission, as their impact will only eventually result in an even more negative report by the Auditor-General.

Having spoken with many teachers, I believe we must ask them what they need to help kids improve their education and we must examine their working conditions, which range from extremely small desks in cramped staffrooms not fit to be chicken coops to a lack of heating and air conditioning, which affects learning, as well as rotting buildings and small and inadequate libraries. The list goes on.

We must also think about our policy to keep kids at school until year 12. Schools alone are not enough to make kids learn. Many kids want technical-type courses, and thus we should expand TAFE to include trade skills for year 10 upwards instead of the Baillieu policy of 'Kill TAFE, Kill'.

From examining the full report and speaking with some current and former teachers within my electorate I cannot help but feel that we need to better scrutinise what schools do. I have been shown a leaflet by one government secondary college, which is a few years old, in which it created its own pass rate. Its level was less than half of the standard universally accepted rate of 50 per cent. This can only be seen as an attempt to make that school look better than it was in actuality — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! I thank Mr Eideh very much for his statement.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: financial and performance outcomes 2011–12

Mr O'BRIEN (Western Victoria) — It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) *Report on the 2011–12 Financial and Performance Outcomes*. I note that Mr Philip Davis, the former chair of the committee, has entered the chamber. I congratulate him on his service. I also congratulate Mr Ondarchie, who has been a significant and valuable addition to the committee. He is someone who understands business and accounts. He has been in business and understands the importance of surplus budgets and of delivering on the budgetary surpluses that you promise.

That is why Victorians are right to put their trust in the coalition government in these tough economic times. During my attendance at the PAEC estimates hearings we heard about the terrible announcement at Ford. I just want to say that we should be adopting a bipartisan approach to this important issue. My heart goes out to the workers. I could not attend the plant on Thursday and Friday because I was doing my job on this important committee and scrutinising the government's budget.

That scrutiny has revealed that this government can deliver surplus budgets. It budgets for what it plans for. It delivers on what it says. It is important to have people like Mr Ondarchie who know business scrutinising the government and holding it to account. On that account this government has come up very well.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Nillumbik planning scheme: amendment

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am pleased that the Minister for Planning is here, as this is an issue for him. It concerns planning scheme amendments C51 and C53 to the Nillumbik planning scheme. It has been seeking approval of those planning scheme amendments since January 2012. These two planning scheme amendments are important because they define growth and development for the Eltham major activity centre and the Diamond Creek major activity centre. There are now a number of proposals that are ready to go in terms of providing high-rise residential development and some commercial development but which cannot proceed because of the delay in the rezoning of these two areas.

The request is that the minister provide an explanation for this delay but more importantly that he consider these amendments, which as I have said have been with the department since January 2012. I know the council wrote to the minister on 18 January and in August 2012 expressing concerns about the delay.

The council indicated in its letter to the minister that the delay is sending mixed messages to the owners of the properties located within the activity centres who may be contemplating redevelopment scenarios, and this uncertainty needs to be clarified because it is costing jobs and holding up development in the area.

As I said, the council is concerned about the delays and has not received any explanation for them. The planning scheme amendments will effectively shape those activity centres and allow a massive injection in terms of investment, jobs, housing and businesses. It is concerning that it has taken this long for there to be any progress, particularly when you look at the number of jobs, houses and other investments that have been held up.

My request is that the minister provide us with an explanation and more importantly that he expedite consideration of these matters, which have been with him for some period of time.

Retail tenants: legislation

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Premier. It concerns the matter of Bob and Dianne Heller, an elderly couple

who incurred large legal fees and lost their small business and eventually their home after they challenged being locked out of their business premises without notice by their landlord in 1998.

This is a complex case that raises public interest issues regarding the rights of retail tenants as well as the personal circumstances of the Hellers. It is my understanding that it has been brought to the attention of MPs and ministers in both the previous and current governments without a fair or satisfactory response to date.

In brief, whilst Mr and Mrs Heller were successful in the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal in their original case against their landlord, subsequent litigation involving a damages claim in the same courts was unsuccessful. I am informed that the damages claim was pursued with the encouragement of the then Attorney-General and small business commissioner to avoid the government having to amend the existing legislation and was therefore undertaken by the Hellers in the public interest as well as their own.

Following the unsuccessful damages claim the Hellers sought special leave to appeal to the High Court of Australia, but in 2005 the government introduced a bill to amend section 146 of the Property Law Act 1958 while the Hellers' application to the High Court was still pending. The government appeared to be of the view that it could not wait to legislate to overcome the effect of the second Court of Appeal judgement which left tenants without protection where a landlord claimed to have accepted common-law repudiation of a lease. The government would have been aware that this would mean that the Hellers' application for special leave to appeal would not succeed and so they were basically hung out to dry.

It is therefore of concern that I have been informed of legal opinion that retail tenants still do not have the full protection of the law that they deserve due to the inadequate wording of section 146(12) of the Property Law Act and that therefore what has happened to Mr and Mrs Heller could still happen to someone else.

My request to the Premier is that he consult with the Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business regarding the need for a subsequent amendment to section 146(12) of the Property Law Act and any other legislation that is necessary to afford retail tenants full protection from forfeiture by re-entry without notice. While the Hellers have lost everything as a result of court proceedings on this very issue, it appears that protection for tenants has still not been achieved. I also ask the Premier to exercise his discretion to grant an ex

gratia payment to Mr and Mrs Heller for the considerable financial loss, hardship and distress they have suffered over 15 years as a result of this matter.

I believe the Hellers have suffered a huge injustice and have been left to carry the can for the resolution of an important public interest issue. For years the Hellers have had words of sympathy from MPs and ministers from the previous and current governments, but no-one seems to fully grasp the extent of the injustice that has been visited upon them. This is a unique case. It will not open the floodgates, and the situation should not be allowed to continue any longer without fair recompense to them. As I have mentioned, this is a unique and exceptional circumstance. I am advised that an ex gratia payment is extremely meritorious due to the highly unusual facts outlined in this case and that the involvement of the previous government carries over to this government.

Sunbury: postal services

Mrs PETROVICH (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Honourable Louise Asher, and relates to the inadequate postal services in the Sunbury community. The Sunbury community is growing all the time. It is estimated that the current population of Sunbury is around 35 000 people. Many of these people either work or run small businesses locally.

In November 2011 I raised this issue in the house and asked the federal government to take action to provide the Sunbury community with additional postal services, yet here we are nearly two years later still waiting for the Gillard government to take that action. The local federal member for McEwen, Robert Mitchell, has let down the people of Sunbury and ignored the needs of the community.

The current Sunbury post office is swamped by people wanting postal services, and the federal government should be ashamed. At peak times it is not unusual for queues to extend out around the footpath as people are left waiting to pick up their parcels and mail. Sunbury businesses are among the many groups within the Sunbury community that have had enough of the lack of attention to this growing issue. Sunbury is a vibrant community; there is a strong local economy and a strong sense of community identity, and it is essential that the needs of the people of Sunbury are represented. I ask that the minister writes to the federal Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy to highlight the difficulties being experienced by the Sunbury community.

Landmate: future

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — The matter I raise tonight is for the attention of the Premier but covers the jurisdiction of several ministers, including the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, arguably the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and arguably the Minister for Environment and Climate Change. It deals with the Landmate program, an innovative program that has been in place since the last millennium. It was established in 1991, and since then Landmate program work crews, mainly sourced from prisons, have planted thousands of hectares of native vegetation, cleared hundreds of hectares of weeds, dealt with rabbits and provided emergency labour for fire and wood recovery — activities that many people in our community see as good things for people to do.

Last year there was a fair bit of debate when funding for the program was drying up. After much agitation from a number of regional municipalities, particularly the Ararat Rural City Council, the government decided to restore funding. Following that criticism the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith, reinstated support.

I have had representations from a number of Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) groups in particular but also from a number of citizens, particularly in the north-east, who are concerned that as we are now five weeks away from the end of the financial year there is again uncertainty about the future of the program. The action I seek from the Premier is that he takes heed of the calls from the VFF, Landcare groups, Landmate coordinators, farmers and citizens generally and brings together the relevant ministers to keep this worthy program going and give it some certainty into the future so that it can continue the good works that these community members and groups think should be done.

Wodonga West Primary School: funding

Ms DARVENIZA (Northern Victoria) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Education, Martin Dixon, concerning the dire conditions students and staff are having to endure at Wodonga West Primary School. The school is sinking due to rotten stumps, and windows are drooping due to decaying wood. Acting principal Sharon Mawby was reported in the *Border Mail* of 9 May as saying that Wodonga West was the only school in the city, public or private, that had not received any state funding for a rebuild.

The school completed costings for a rebuild a few years ago and put a \$6 million price tag on getting the job

done. Ms Mawby said that they are spending money on buildings that should be spent on education and that they are trying to maintain buildings so they at least look reasonable. According to Ms Mawby:

The government acknowledges that — they haven't put forward any extra money towards maintaining our school buildings because they know they're not worth spending any money on.

Ms Mawby said the school had worked during the past 18 months with the community, the member for Benambra in the other place, Mr Bill Tilley, and the Minister for Education, Mr Martin Dixon, 'to put forward our desperate need'. Ms Mawby wants a commitment from the government to fund a rebuild in the next budget so that the school can get updated costings and be ready to go when funding comes through. Prior to the 2013 budget being handed down, a new school at Wodonga West was on Mr Tilley's wish-list for the Victorian budget. He was quoted in the *Border Mail* as saying, 'Certainly another school up here would be ideal.'

The specific action I seek is that the minister gives a guarantee that the Wodonga West Primary School will be funded in the 2014 Victorian state budget for a complete rebuild so that the dire and most unsatisfactory conditions the school population are housed in now, and in which teachers are trying to educate our children, will not continue into the future.

Youth services: program funding

Ms MIKAKOS (Northern Metropolitan) — My matter is for the Minister for Employment and Trade. As the minister is aware, four organisations which run youth employment programs that support vulnerable and at-risk young people are set to lose their funding at the end of this financial year. The minister is aware of this because she confirmed it during the hearings of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC). These organisations include the St Kilda Youth Services Hospitality Employment and Training (HEAT) program, Whitelion's employment program, Youth Connect's Work This Way youth employment program and the YMCA Bridge Project. These are programs that assist vulnerable and at-risk young people to find sustainable employment.

The St Kilda Youth Services HEAT program is set to lose \$220 000. Whitelion will lose \$150 000 and will have to drastically reduce the number of young people it supports. Youth Connect is set to lose \$250 000 from its Work This Way program that provides young people with personal assistance and encouragement to engage in training and further education and then helps them

find a full-time job. The YMCA Bridge Project is set to lose \$150 000 that provides support, mentoring, training and employment opportunities to young people in the youth justice system to help them transition back into the community.

The Minister for Youth Affairs, who also appeared before PAEC, seemed to take no responsibility for these programs losing their funding despite having released his youth statement last year — *Engage, Involve, Create* — which states:

Providing an environment that supports young Victorian's finding employment is a very important issue for this government ... We're also committed to assisting young people not involved in education or training to develop the skills and connections they need to find employment.

The government's decision to end funding to these reputable organisations shows just how completely out of touch it is with the difficulties young people face whilst looking for work. These are the young people who will find it most difficult to find employment. These are the groups which help young people who have dropped out of school, who are involved in the youth justice system, who are at risk of homelessness, who are recovering from substance abuse or who have struggled to stay in employment.

At a time when youth unemployment is at a staggering rate of 21 per cent in this state, the Napthine government should be investing in these programs, not cutting them. The cuts are the latest in a long line of cuts to TAFE, to the Victorian certificate of advanced learning and to the apprenticeship bonus. Government members are looking backwards, not forwards, in terms of creating more employment for young people.

I call on the minister to recognise the true value of these programs and to continue funding the four organisations I referred to to enable them to continue their important work in the community.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! Before I call on the Minister for Planning to respond, Ms Mikakos referred to a couple of ministers in her adjournment matter. Could she be clear about which minister she is directing her matter to?

Ms MIKAKOS — My matter is directed to the Minister for Employment and Trade.

Responses

Hon. M. J. GUY (Minister for Planning) — The first matter, which was addressed to me, was from Mr Tee and concerns Nillumbik planning scheme amendments C51 and C53. The Acting President is a

former resident of Eltham and I grew up in the shire of Eltham, so we know Eltham and central Eltham very well. Mr Tee asked me, and I will use his words, about high-rise development stalling in central Eltham because the planning amendments C51 and C53 — the latter being for Diamond Creek — have not been approved. Let me make it very clear to the chamber that while I am the planning minister there will be no high-rise development in the activity areas of Eltham or Diamond Creek. I will not approve amendments that facilitate high-rise development in Eltham or Diamond Creek while I am the planning minister.

Mr Tee — That is not what I asked. I just asked you to move them along. They have been with you for two years.

Hon. M. J. GUY — Does Mr Tee realise what he has said?

Mr Tee — They have been with you since January 2012, just after — —

Hon. M. J. GUY — Does Mr Tee realise what he has said? Mr Tee said that high-rise development had stalled in Eltham, as had planning amendments C51 and C53. I say again on the record, Acting President, there will be no high-rise buildings approved — —

Mr Tee interjected.

Hon. M. J. GUY — Your words; check *Daily Hansard* tomorrow.

Mr Tee — Just do your job.

Hon. M. J. GUY — For the third time I will repeat the words Mr Tee used in the adjournment matter he has raised with me tonight — that is, for me to facilitate the C51 and C53 amendments because I am stalling high-rise development in central Eltham and Diamond Creek. I simply say that there will be no high-rise development under any amendment I approve for central Eltham or central Diamond Creek. Obviously that stands in stark contrast to Mr Tee's intentions for central Eltham and central Diamond Creek. For Mr Tee's benefit, I will communicate that point very clearly to the Shire of Nillumbik.

On the massive injection of housing, to use Mr Tee's words, that I am stalling for central Eltham and central Diamond Creek, again I say there will be no massive injection of housing in central Eltham or Diamond Creek while I am the planning minister. The areas of central Eltham or Diamond Creek are not appropriate areas for a massive injection of housing or high-rise development. I know those areas very well, as does the

Acting President. I would oppose any amendment that would facilitate a massive injection of housing or high-rise development for those suburbs, as would this government.

Ms Pennicuik raised a matter for the Premier, Dr Napthine. I will refer that matter to him.

Mrs Petrovich raised a matter for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Ms Asher, regarding Sunbury. I will refer that matter to her.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Lenders, raised a matter for the Premier regarding the Landmate program, a very good adjournment matter. I will refer it to the Premier.

Ms Darveniza raised a matter regarding Wodonga West Primary School for the Minister for Education, Mr Dixon. I will refer that matter to him.

Ms Mikakos raised a matter for the Minister for Employment and Trade, and I will refer that matter for the minister's response.

There is one written adjournment response, being to an adjournment request made by Mr Lenders on 15 November 2012.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ondarchie) — Order! The house now stands adjourned.

House adjourned 6.50 p.m.

