

PROOF

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

DAILY HANSARD

Tuesday, 23 December 2014

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

The ministry

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

Joint committees

Environment and Natural Resources Committee — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Battin, Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson and Ms Ward.

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

President: The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President: Ms G. TIERNEY

Leader of the Government:
The Hon. G. JENNINGS

Deputy Leader of the Government:
The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:
The Hon. D. K. DRUM

Leader of the Greens:
Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFP	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmar, Mr Naih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFP

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP— Labor Party; ASP— Australian Sex Party;
DLP— Democratic Labour Party; Greens— Australian Greens;
LP— Liberal Party; Nats— The Nationals;
SFP— Shooters and Fishers Party; VILJ— Vote 1 Local Jobs

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10:00:00

Tuesday, 23 December 2014

**OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY
COMMISSION**

Proceedings commenced at 10.06 a.m. by the Acting Clerk reading the Governor's proclamation convening Parliament.

PROCLAMATION

Following proclamation read by the Acting Clerk:

I, Alex Chernov, AC, QC, Governor of the state of Victoria, acting under sections 8 and 20 of the Constitution Act 1975 and all other powers vested in me, fix 23 December 2014 at 10.00 a.m. as the time for the commencement and holding of the first session of the 58th Parliament of Victoria for the dispatch of business at Parliament House, Melbourne. The members of the Legislative Council and the members of the Legislative Assembly are required to attend at that time and place.

Given under my hand and the seal of the state of Victoria, at Melbourne, on 15 December 2014.

Alex Chernov, Governor

By His Excellency's command
Daniel Andrews, MP, Premier

The Commissioner, the Honourable Justice Marilyn Warren, AC, Chief Justice of Victoria, entered chamber and was conducted to chair by the Usher of the Black Rod.

Commission authorising commissioners to open Parliament read by the Acting Clerk.

10:07:30

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

Commission appointing the Honourable Justice Marilyn Warren, AC, Chief Justice of Victoria, to administer oath or affirmation of allegiance to members of the Legislative Council read by the Acting Clerk.

The Acting Clerk announced return of receipt of writ issued by the Governor for election of members to serve for regions set out below and endorsed to show election of following members:

Region	Member
Eastern Metropolitan	Bruce Atkinson
Eastern Metropolitan	Richard Dalla-Riva
Eastern Metropolitan	Samantha Dunn
Eastern Metropolitan	Shaun Leane
Eastern Metropolitan	Mary Wooldridge
Eastern Victoria	Jeffrey Bourman
Eastern Victoria	Daniel Mulino

Eastern Victoria	Danny O'Brien
Eastern Victoria	Edward O'Donohue
Eastern Victoria	Harriet Shing
Northern Metropolitan	Greg Barber
Northern Metropolitan	Nazih Elasmr
Northern Metropolitan	Jenny Mikakos
Northern Metropolitan	Craig Ondarchie
Northern Metropolitan	Fiona Patten
Northern Victoria	Damian Drum
Northern Victoria	Steve Herbert
Northern Victoria	Wendy Lovell
Northern Victoria	Jaclyn Symes
Northern Victoria	Daniel Young
South Eastern Metropolitan	Gavin Jennings
South Eastern Metropolitan	Inga Peulich
South Eastern Metropolitan	Gordon Rich-Phillips
South Eastern Metropolitan	Adem Somyurek
South Eastern Metropolitan	Nina Springle
Southern Metropolitan	Georgie Crozier
Southern Metropolitan	Philip Dalidakis
Southern Metropolitan	David Davis
Southern Metropolitan	Margaret Fitzherbert
Southern Metropolitan	Sue Pennicuik
Western Metropolitan	Rachel Carling-Jenkins
Western Metropolitan	Khalil Eideh
Western Metropolitan	Bernie Finn
Western Metropolitan	Colleen Hartland
Western Metropolitan	Cesar Melhem
Western Victoria	Josh Morris
Western Victoria	Jaala Pulford
Western Victoria	James Purcell
Western Victoria	Simon Ramsay
Western Victoria	Gayle Tierney

Members, except the Honourable Jaala Pulford, a member for Western Victoria, who was not present, took and subscribed the oath or affirmation as required by law.

The Commissioner withdrew.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

10:23:00

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I nominate Ms Gayle Tierney.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I second the nomination of Ms Tierney.

Ms TIERNEY (Western Victoria) — I accept the nomination.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I nominate Mr Bruce Atkinson.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I second the nomination of Mr Atkinson.

Mr ATKINSON (Eastern Metropolitan) — I accept the nomination.

The Acting Clerk — Pursuant to standing order 2.03 it is necessary to conduct an open vote. Before I put the nominees to the house, I remind members that, if present in the chamber, they must vote, but they may only vote for one candidate. I will put the nominees to the house in the order in which nominations were received. I ask members who support Ms Tierney to be President to stand in their places and to remain standing until I advise that the recording of votes has been completed. Each member's name will be recorded as voting in support of Ms Tierney if they stand. I ask those members who support Ms Tierney to stand.

I ask members who support Mr Atkinson to be President to stand in their places and to remain standing until I advise that the recording of votes has been completed. Each member's name will be recorded as voting in support of Mr Atkinson if they stand now.

The result of the open vote is 17 votes for Ms Tierney and 21 votes for Mr Atkinson.

The Acting Clerk declared Bruce Norman Atkinson duly elected as the President.

Hon. B. N. Atkinson conducted to chair by proposer and seconder.

10:30:00 **The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson) took the chair and read the prayer.**

The PRESIDENT — Members, I have never been more mindful of the responsibilities of this position. I extend my commiserations to Ms Tierney, who was an excellent candidate for this position and was obviously supported by the government. I have had the opportunity of doing an apprenticeship, which will help me to continue in this position. I assure the house that I will continue to act with the fairness that I believe I exhibited in the last Parliament.

My job is twofold in this house. The first part is to ensure that the house transacts its business in an orderly, effective and constructive fashion. The second part is for me to protect the entitlements of all members, in terms of their speaking rights and other responsibilities and entitlements they have in this place, and to maintain the respect of individuals in this place. I trust that all members will bring that level of respect to

debates that will no doubt be vigorous, because there are many diverse views in this place.

I welcome new members to the Legislative Council. It is an exciting day for them. It is the start of a very privileged term of service on behalf of all Victorians. Whether they voted for each of us or not, we serve all Victorians equally. We represent them. We speak on their behalf. We make decisions on their behalf.

Each member who has come to this place — no matter how they were elected, on what platform they were elected or by what margin they might have achieved at the poll back in November — has legitimately earned their place in this chamber. Each member therefore has the right to speak on behalf of all their electors and to participate fully in all the proceedings of this house. I will certainly uphold the right of every individual to do so.

I am very humbled right now, and I thank members for the honour they have given me and for the responsibility that they have entrusted to me. I trust that I will discharge that responsibility in line with their expectations.

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — On behalf of the government, as is customary, the Acting Clerk has given me the call to respond to the President's ascension to the Chair. As is customary within this place, the Acting Clerk gave me the call to indicate the government's preference for whom our President was going to be in this term. I say to you, President, as I have said publicly and privately previously on many occasions: I thought you were an outstanding President of the 57th Parliament.

I congratulated you on many occasions for your fairness and the degree to which you protected the values which represent the best qualities of this chamber and our parliamentary democracy. I believe you acquitted yourself of your obligations in an extremely professional and even-handed way in the 57th Parliament.

My reasons for not having you as my preferred candidate for the 58th Parliament had nothing to do with your track record but related to the way in which the government seeks to engage the business of the Legislative Council in the 58th Parliament, in circumstances where the diversity of members in this chamber may create challenges for it. In the spirit of cooperation the government sought the goodwill of the chamber to secure a majority for the government's nominee. That has not transpired today. However, that does not mean that the government will give up the

10:37:30

hope that it will be able to convince the Legislative Council, time and again, of the value of its legislative program and the proposals that it will bring to the Victorian Parliament.

The government will seek the Legislative Council's endorsement of its initiatives and priorities. In pursuing these, President, it will rely on your judgement, wisdom and acumen to secure the good order of this place at times when our patience and our wit and wisdom may be sorely tested. I look forward with great anticipation to what can be achieved by an incoming Labor government during the 58th Parliament. I look forward to working collaboratively and finding goodwill within this chamber to pursue the government's agenda. If you play a positive role in that, President, I will congratulate you continually through the course of the 58th Parliament. If we achieve that together, it will be a testament to our great tenacity, our perseverance and our good wit and wisdom, which I hope you will exercise from the chair.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise on behalf of the opposition to congratulate you on your election to the position of President. It is a pleasure to make some remarks. As you have said, you fulfil a vital role in this Parliament. We have a new, diverse and eager group of legislative councillors, who will use a range of skills and expertise, as well as passion, to represent their communities for the benefit of all Victorians. I know you will play a vital role in the good running of this house. The role of President requires an even-handedness and a willingness to provide for a fair hearing for all, and it requires integrity in dealing with the traditions of this house and the diversity of its members. I know that you will bring those values and that expertise to your role as President and that you will work to protect the interests of all in this house in a fair and impartial way, so that genuine debate can occur and the best outcomes can be achieved for the Victorian community. Congratulations on your role.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT — Order! We proceed to the election of a Deputy President. The Council is now required to elect a person of its number to that position. Are there any nominations?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I nominate Ms Gayle Tierney.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I second the nomination of Ms Tierney.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I have great pleasure in declaring that Ms Tierney has been elected as the Deputy President of the Legislative Council for the 58th Parliament. I congratulate Ms Tierney.

The new set of standing orders is about to be handed out. I expect all members to have read through them by 2 o'clock this afternoon and to be fully conversant with them — especially the new members. A card of contacts is also being handed out. New members should not hesitate to seek assistance from continuing members from anywhere in the chamber, because we have all been there. I think you will find that everyone is keen to assist new members in discharging their duties. The standing orders are the rule book, and they will help. The contact list consists mostly of officers of the Parliament, but members of the Parliament will also provide assistance wherever possible.

I advise members that I will attend the Governor in the north library later this morning to present myself to him as the choice of the Legislative Council as its President. I will resume the chair at midday, at which time the Governor will also be in attendance at the chamber. The house stands suspended.

Sitting suspended 10.43 a.m. until 12.08 p.m.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Presentation

The Usher of the Black Rod announced approach of the Governor.

The Governor entered the chamber.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, with the Speaker, attended in response to the Governor's summons.

The Governor addressed following speech to both houses of Parliament:

Honourable President and members of the Legislative Council:

Honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly:

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we gather today, the Kulin nation.

The general election on 29 November resulted in a change of government in Victoria.

Following the election, I commissioned the Leader of the Victorian Labor Party, Mr Daniel Andrews, to form a new government.

Accordingly, I have called you together on this day, the first session of the 58th Parliament, to outline the policy agenda and legislative intentions of this new government in its first term.

Summary

The government has promised to invest in hospitals, ambulances and schools, create jobs, improve public transport and take action on family violence.

The government will help Victorians find meaningful work and give everyone access to quality services and a lifestyle that is admired by the rest of the world.

The government describes its policy agenda as a positive plan for Victoria. Over the next four years the government will focus on:

- jobs and growth
- education and skills
- health and wellbeing
- world-class transport
- a safe and just society
- sustainable and livable communities
- reforming the Parliament and the public sector.

1. Jobs and growth

The government believes that Victorians deserve well-paid, meaningful jobs that are safe and secure. A strong economy means more jobs for Victorians.

The government sees its role as investing in Victoria's industries to create jobs and drive growth, and supporting education and skills so our next generation have a chance.

The government will immediately implement Back to Work, a landmark plan to work with business leaders to grow industries and help create 100 000 full-time jobs for the unemployed. The plan includes:

- the introduction of the Back to Work Bill to provide financial support to employers for hiring unemployed youth, the long-term unemployed and retrenched workers
- the establishment of the Premier's Jobs and Investment Panel — an independent body of senior business and industry leaders, providing direct advice to the Premier on the expenditure of a \$500 million fund for jobs and investment

the establishment of the \$200 million Future Industries Fund to support job-creating projects in high-growth areas, including pharmaceuticals, energy, food and fibre, and international education

the establishment of the \$200 million Regional Jobs Fund to support job-creating projects in regional Victoria

expanding the international Victorian government business office network and delivering a comprehensive program of inbound trade missions to Victoria.

The government understands that Victoria needs an infrastructure plan that supports a broad, long-term vision for the state.

The government will establish Infrastructure Victoria to provide independent, transparent advice on our state's priorities and fill a pipeline of projects.

2. Education and skills

The government understands that Victoria cannot have a prosperous future without an educated, highly skilled workforce that can seize new opportunities in a changing economy.

The government aims to make Victoria the education state — strengthening our economy and the skills of its people.

The government has outlined a plan to make our schools the best in the country by investing \$510 million to upgrade and rebuild government schools and \$120 million to upgrade and rebuild Catholic and independent schools

The government will also help struggling families with the extra costs of education by supporting State Schools Relief to provide new school uniforms and funding 500 breakfast clubs to feed 25 000 children across the state.

The government will also establish a Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund so no child misses out on outdoor learning and recreation.

Tech schools will be established across the state for students in years 7 to 12. The 10 new facilities focus on local industries and will be run by local schools, TAFEs, universities and businesses.

Tech school students will spend a set period of time each week enhancing their skills, while also maintaining their enrolment at their local secondary school.

The government will establish the Doctors in Schools program, which will see doctors visit schools on a weekly basis to treat students in disadvantaged areas.

The government has also pledged \$100 million to fund an asbestos removal program, so all Victorian government schools can be asbestos free by 2020.

TAFE and training

The government believes that our economy will be in danger without a strong TAFE system.

The government has created a \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund to reopen closed campuses, upgrade buildings, workshops, labs and classrooms, and save those institutes at risk of financial ruin.

A VET funding review will be conducted to develop stable funding methods to improve Victoria's training system, in consultation with public and private providers.

The government wants to encourage more young people to take up apprenticeships. In one initiative, the government will offer apprentices half-price car registration for the vehicles they use for their trade.

3. Health and wellbeing

The government will invest in Victoria's health system to give our loved ones the dignity they deserve and the care they need.

The government will enshrine in legislation the ratios of nurses and midwives to patients and improve these ratios over time.

Our growing and ageing population places pressure on Victoria's hospitals. This challenge will be met with \$200 million to open more hospital beds and operating theatres so more patients can be treated.

The government has also pledged \$100 million to reduce ambulance response times in an effort to save lives.

This fund will support initiatives that prioritise ambulances for the sickest patients and upgrade ambulance stations, vehicles and equipment.

Twenty-four-hour pharmacies, each with their own nurse on staff to provide medical advice and services after hours, will also be funded.

The pharmacies will give families, shiftworkers and others needing non-emergency care an alternative to hospital, reducing pressure on emergency departments.

The government will fund a major, \$106.3 million expansion of Casey Hospital to cater for 12 000 more patients, 8000 more surgeries and 500 more births and

build the hospital's first intensive care unit in one of Australia's fastest growing areas.

The government will build the western women's and children's hospital in Sunshine. The new five-storey centre will bring the best care closer to home for families in the west.

The government will build the Victorian heart hospital to transform our health system and bring the world's best cardiovascular care, research and training to Victoria.

The government will completely rebuild Orygen Youth Health's dilapidated Parkville facility, home to the world's largest research institute for youth mental health.

The government also wants Victoria to lead the world in medical technology, researching cures for chronic disease and developing devices that change lives.

Plans include a \$60 million investment in the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery at St Vincent's Hospital — Australia's first research and education centre for biomedical engineering.

The centre will bring together leading doctors, scientists and researchers, create 1080 jobs and assist an industry that will support an estimated 10 000 jobs over the next 15 years.

4. World-class public transport and better local roads

The government will build a world-class public transport system and improve local roads. This will give Victorians more than a better commute to work — it will give them a better quality of life.

The government will embark on Project 10 000 — a landmark plan to transform public transport, reduce congestion and create 10 000 construction jobs.

Level crossings lock up roads, slow down trains and put lives in danger. The government will remove 50 of Victoria's most dangerous and congested level crossings, funded by the lease of the port of Melbourne.

The government will invest \$300 million towards Melbourne Metro Rail, a project that will double the size of the city loop, build five new stations and a new underground line, and reduce the gridlock in the train system.

The \$500 million West Gate distributor will take 5000 trucks a day off the West Gate Bridge and send them directly to the port.

Under the government's trial of the 'Homesafe' program, public transport will run 24 hours a day on weekends and 2.00 a.m. shuttle buses will take commuters to major regional cities.

The South Morang train line will be extended to Mernda. Melbourne's growth areas will also benefit from a \$100 million plan to add more bus routes and services.

V/Line services will depart Geelong every 20 minutes between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m., adding 22 more trips to the daily timetable, and Bendigo will get a dedicated suburban rail service.

The government wants to fix the local roads that Victorians use every day. The government will guarantee \$1 billion to repair and upgrade suburban roads and \$1 billion to repair and upgrade roads in regional Victoria.

Duplication of the Chandler Highway bridge will ease congestion for thousands of Victorians who use the bridge every day, and a \$175 million commitment will see Thompsons Road duplicated between EastLink and Clyde Road in Cranbourne.

The government has promised the largest ever investment in driver training and education for young people, to reduce the road toll and cement Victoria as the world leader in road safety.

Every year 10 student will be enrolled in a free defensive driving course. This program will help them make better, safer decisions on the road.

5. A safe and just society

All Victorians have the right to feel safe — on the streets, at their schools, on their computer and in their home.

The government believes family violence is the biggest law and order issue in this state.

Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence will be established, to examine a system that the government believes does not adequately protect victims or punish perpetrators.

It will be an investigation from the ground up, covering criminal law, the courts, support services, the health system, and alcohol and drug treatment. It will also look at the resources and tools available to hardworking police officers.

The government will implement all the recommendations of the royal commission once it

reports to Victorians. Until then, the government will also provide a \$22.7 million boost to relieve pressure on family violence support services.

More police officers will be put back on the front line, with custody officers introduced to take over the supervision of prisoners in police cells.

The government will support those who protect us, funding 350 additional firefighters for the Country Fire Authority and 100 for the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, as well as additional fire stations, trucks and equipment.

The government will also introduce presumptive rights legislation for firefighters who make cancer compensation claims relating to their work.

6. Sustainable and livable communities

Built and natural environments define our quality of life. The government understands it has a responsibility to protect Victoria's heritage and maintain its livability.

Environment

The Victorian renewable energy sector will be expanded to create new jobs and support a cleaner environment.

A \$20 million New Energy Jobs Fund will offer grants of up to \$1 million to firms specialising in high-growth renewable sectors. Planning restrictions will be amended so that more wind farms can be built in Victoria.

Arts, sports, culture and creativity

Public holidays are opportunities for families and friends to take a break from normal work or studies. Easter Sunday and the Friday before Grand Final Day will be declared as public holidays in Victoria.

Community sports clubs across Victoria will be upgraded as part of a \$100 million plan to improve grounds and facilities. A fund will also upgrade women's change rooms and facilities at clubs across the state.

Other upgrades include the Simonds Stadium in Geelong, the Eureka Stadium in Ballarat, St Kilda's Junction Oval, the Geelong Performing Arts Centre and the State Library.

The government will also introduce Music Works, a \$22.2 million plan to boost the local music industry and support local jobs in creative industries.

Planning

A truly livable Victoria is one where everyone can access the services and open spaces that are essential for a good life, no matter where they live.

The government believes new communities should be developed in stages, hand-in-hand with health, education, community, transport, and recreational services.

A \$50 million Stronger Regional Communities Fund will be established to help regional towns attract families and young people to set up their home and stay.

Communities will be given a fair go at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and a real voice in the planning process.

Under this government, councils will be also forced to cap their rates at the consumer price index and justify any further increases.

7. Reform of the Parliament and the public sector

The government will reform the processes that govern the conduct of this Parliament. Reforms will make government business more transparent and ministers more accountable.

So members of Parliament are not compromised in the performance of their duties, random breath testing will be introduced for all members during sitting weeks.

Reforms to the public sector will achieve \$334.5 million in savings. Initiatives include:

- more efficient government car fleet arrangements
- reducing the number of executive officers
- reducing the use of labour hire firms
- ending taxpayer-funded political advertising.

Conclusion

Honourable members, I have outlined for you the government's program for this Parliament.

It is an ambitious program designed to match the challenges the state faces and demonstrates the desire the government has expressed to create a better, stronger and fairer society for all Victorians.

I now formally open this Parliament, and pray that God may guide your deliberations.

Copies of speech handed to the President and the Speaker.

The Governor withdrew.

Members of the Legislative Assembly withdrew.

Sitting suspended 12.40 p.m. until 2.05 p.m.

14:00:00

SYDNEY SHOOTINGS

The PRESIDENT — I take this opportunity to make a brief comment on last week's tragedy in Martin Place, Sydney. I have conversed with Gavin Jennings, the Leader of the Government, in relation to this matter. On behalf of all members of Parliament, I convey the sympathies of this house to the family, friends and work colleagues of those people who went through the trauma of what occurred in Martin Place last week. This tragedy makes us realise just how fragile our multicultural values are in Victoria, values that we treasure and that are not just bipartisan but in fact are shared by members of all the parties represented in this chamber. The Martin Place tragedy also makes us realise just how much we ought to appreciate a democracy where we can change government without bloodshed, although perhaps with a few tears, but nonetheless with a great deal of respect for one another. I mark with respect those lives lost in Martin Place.

PAKISTAN SCHOOL MASSACRE

The PRESIDENT — I further take the opportunity to express the horror that I have and I am sure all members share in relation to a Taliban attack on a school in Pakistan that resulted in more than 130 lives lost, most of them children. It is a very sad thing that in some parts of the world there are people who resort to violence to prosecute their views, and I am not sure that I will ever be able to comprehend the use of violence as a means of changing the world according to one's positions or policies.

RECEPTION OF PRESIDENT BY GOVERNOR

The PRESIDENT — Order! I have to report that, accompanied by the Speaker, I presented myself to the Governor this day as the choice of the Council for its President, and he was pleased to address me in the following terms:

I have pleasure in congratulating you on your election to the high and distinguished office of President of the Legislative Council.

The able manner in which you have discharged the duties you have undertaken during your parliamentary career is

recognised by the members of the Legislative Council, who in their wisdom have selected you as the President. I have confidence that you will fulfil the duties of this important office and hold fast to its traditions and customs.

Hon. Alex Chernov, AC, QC
Governor of Victoria.

14:05:00 **COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH OR AFFIRMATION TO MEMBERS**

The President announced receipt from the Governor of commission authorising him to administer prescribed oath or affirmation of allegiance to any member of the Legislative Council who has not already taken and subscribed the same since his or her election to the Legislative Council.

MINISTRY

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I wish to advise the Legislative Council of the responsibilities that will be undertaken by ministers in this Parliament. In the Legislative Council I am the Leader of the Government and the Special Minister of State. I will answer on behalf of the Premier, the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Minister for Sport, the Minister for Veterans, the Minister for Emergency Services, the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation and the Minister for Industrial Relations.

The Honourable Jaala Pulford is the Deputy Leader of the Government, Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Regional Development. She will answer on behalf of the Minister for Public Transport, the Minister for Industry, the Minister for Energy and Resources, the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Minister for Ports, the Minister for Equality and the Minister for Creative Industries in the other place.

The Honourable Steve Herbert is the Minister for Training and Skills and will answer on behalf of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education in the other place.

The Honourable Adem Somyurek is the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade and will answer on behalf of the Minister for Employment, the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water and the Minister for Planning in the other place.

The Honourable Jenny Mikakos is the Minister for Families and Children and Minister for Youth Affairs. She will answer for the Minister for Housing, Disability

and Ageing, the Minister for Mental Health, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Ambulance Services, the Minister for Women and the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence in the other place.

In the Legislative Council Cesar Melhem is the Government Whip, and the member for Yuroke is the Government Whip in the Legislative Assembly.

I am also pleased to inform the chamber of the arrangements for parliamentary secretaries for the 58th Parliament. In this place Mr Shaun Leane is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Special Minister of State and the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport. Mr Daniel Mulino is the Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury and Finance.

In the other place the member for Bundoora is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, the member for Narre Warren South is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier, the member for Ivanhoe is the Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, the member for Niddrie is the Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, the member for Yan Yean is the Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, Major Events and Regional Victoria. The member for Wendouree is the Parliamentary Secretary for Human Services. The member for Clarinda is the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Asia Engagement. The member for Broadmeadows is the Parliamentary Secretary for Medical Research, the member for Macedon is the Parliament Secretary for Health, the member for Dandenong is the Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers.

For the duration of the compassionate leave of the Honourable Jaala Pulford, I wish to advise the Council that I will be answering in respect of her responsibilities as Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development, as well as her representative responsibilities for ministers in the other house.

14:10:00

I seek leave to table a list of these ministerial responsibilities and those ministers in the chamber who will be representing ministers from the Legislative Assembly.

Leave granted.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I indicate to the house that I spoke with Jaala Pulford today and conveyed to her the thoughts and prayers of members of this house. In a separate communication with Jaala this week I indicated to her that it is my view that there is another angel in heaven. We have Jaala, her family and friends very much in our hearts during this difficult time of the year. There is absolutely nothing worse than having to

confront the circumstances she has had to confront, where a parent must bury a child. We look forward to Jaala returning and congratulate her on her ministries.

I also extend congratulations to all ministers, parliamentary secretaries and office-bearers.

SHADOW MINISTRY

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — As Leader of the Opposition I concur with and support your comments in relation to Ms Pulford. I also congratulate the government ministers on their new and important roles.

I wish to advise the house that I have been elected Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition in this place. The Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips is Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I have portfolio responsibilities for health. Mr Rich-Phillips is shadow Special Minister of State and shadow assistant treasurer. Georgie Crozier is shadow Minister for Families and Children, shadow Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and shadow Minister for Women. The Honourable David Davis has responsibility for planning, local government and equality. The Honourable Edward O'Donohue has responsibility for police, community safety and corrections. Craig Ondarchie has responsibility for investment and jobs, as well as trade, and Inga Peulich has responsibility for multicultural affairs and scrutiny of government. I would also like to inform the house that the Honourable Wendy Lovell is the Opposition Whip.

GREENS LEADERSHIP

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I am delighted to report that at a post-election party room meeting of the Greens I was re-elected Leader of the Greens. Ms Pennicuik will continue to be the whip. We have published a list of the shadow portfolios on our website, and I am happy to make them available to any member who is interested.

THE NATIONALS

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — I congratulate Mr Jennings and his government. I also congratulate Ms Wooldridge on her election as Leader of the Opposition and Mr Barber on his election as Leader of the Greens. In relation to my responsibilities within the coalition, I will be taking on board the shadow portfolios of regional development, veterans and sport.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

14:15:00

Small business

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. Can the minister advise how many small businesses and how many Victorian jobs have been directly negatively affected as a result of stopping works on the east–west link?

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank the member for her question. I would like to congratulate you, President, once again on your elevation to the high office of President of this chamber. The great work you did in the last Parliament has been well acknowledged. You are a true believer in the institution of Parliament, and I am sure you will continue that good work going forward.

The member's question was about small business. Small business and medium-size business make an enormous contribution to Victoria's prosperity. There are currently 525 000 active small businesses operating in the state of Victoria, representing 96 per cent of all businesses. These 525 000 active small businesses constitute 30 per cent of Victoria's gross state product and 47 per cent — that is, almost half — of Victoria's private sector employment, therefore small business plays a pivotal role in underpinning Victoria's economy.

Not only are successful small businesses productive, efficient and innovative but they also generate high-wage jobs, which is exactly what our economy needs.

Mr Rich-Phillips — On a point of order that goes to relevance, President, Mr Somyurek has been speaking for nearly 2 minutes — nearly half his time for answering this question — and has not addressed the subject matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition. The question from the Leader of the Opposition was very narrowly framed with respect to the impact on small business of the government's decision to tear up the east–west link contracts — a very narrow subject matter — and Mr Somyurek is not being relevant to that question.

The PRESIDENT — Order! In respect of the answer the minister is giving, in my view the minister is entitled to provide some context. It is the very first question of a new Parliament, and given the minister's new responsibilities I think it is in order for him to provide some context on the small business sector,

which is the subject of the question. The minister has 2 minutes and 21 seconds left to respond, and no doubt he will move to a substantive answer to the question in due course.

Mr SOMYUREK — I guess the opposition wants to talk about infrastructure investment. Infrastructure investment is a key driver of the economy and of productivity. It can also be a key driver of manufacturing, but only if it is done right. With the exception of a few minor works, in its term of office the coalition government did not commence or complete one piece of infrastructure of its own. Only after three and a half years of sitting idly by and watching our manufacturing sector go to the wall did it belatedly, when the polls were going bad — —

14:20:00 **The PRESIDENT** — Order! The minister is in the unfortunate circumstance of having seen me in the last Parliament, therefore he will know that I do not entertain debate in answers to questions. He will also know that I do not appreciate reflections on previous governments. I think he is debating, and while he can perhaps provide some context for a little while longer if he wants to fill some space, I ask him to address the substantive matter rather than reflecting on previous matters.

Supplementary question

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I was going to thank the minister for his answer, but there was no answer to the question that I asked. Can the minister advise what the economic loss to Victorian small business has been as a result of the Labor government's east-west link decision?

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — What I can tell the shadow minister is this: a total of 67 000 jobs have been lost in Victoria under the stewardship of the Baillieu and Napthine governments, and 24 800 of those jobs have been manufacturing jobs. The impact of the Baillieu and Napthine governments on small and medium-size businesses is something that we really ought to investigate.

Questions interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT — Order! Before I proceed to the next question I welcome in the gallery today the former President of the Victorian upper house, Mr Bob Smith, and also Mr Tarlamis, Ms Lewis and Mr Scheffer, members of the 57th Parliament. I also welcome the Honourable Rob Hulls, a former minister

of the Crown. No doubt later this day he will be interested in one of the maiden speeches to be made in this house.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Questions resumed.

Government achievements

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — My congratulations to you, President, on your re-election as President. I am pleased to be the first one to put this question from this side, the government side, to Gavin Jennings in his role as Special Minister of State. Will the minister inform the house what the Andrews Labor government has achieved in just over two weeks in office?

Mr Rich-Phillips — On a point of order, President, I go to the issue of the government's commitment with respect to Dorothy Dix questions. I am surprised that Mr Elasmarr has raised this question today, given the Premier's strong commitment that the government would not ask Dorothy Dix questions. I seek some clarification, given that commitment by the Premier, on why the government now appears to have broken that commitment.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I will call the Leader of the Government to comment on this, but I would make the observation that the Leader of the Government might not have heard this question before, therefore it might not be a Dorothy Dixer.

Mr Jennings — On the point of order, President, I can confirm that I had not heard the question in the form it was asked by Mr Elasmarr. The point of order raised by Mr Rich-Phillips is a reasonable point of order, given it is a clear undertaking of the incoming government to take Dorothy Dixers out of question time. It is absolutely our clear intention to do so. But as the member would understand, today we are operating under the existing standing orders. Today in the Legislative Assembly the Premier is introducing sessional orders to take effect in future sittings of the Legislative Assembly, and he is seeking undertakings from me on the Council's proposed sessional orders.

In preparation for today's sitting I discussed with all parties in the chamber our intention to move sessional orders in the next sitting week to take effect in the form that Mr Rich-Phillips is calling on me to comply with today. Given that they are not taking effect as of today, we have not introduced the sessional orders. We did not want to be disruptive on the first day of Parliament or to

14:25:00

confuse members about the standing orders that apply today, so we chose to err on the side of doing it in an orderly fashion in the next sitting week.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Based on the clarification provided by the Leader of the Government, there is no necessity under our standing orders for the government to meet the commitment it has made. It is a commitment that it has indicated it will take up, but there is no certain procedure within our house that requires the government to meet that commitment at this point. The leader has provided a clarification, and there is no need for me to adjudicate on this matter. The Leader of the Government in response to Mr Elasmar's question.

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — Now we may get to the heart of why the member does not want me to rise to my feet to answer the question. It is pretty clear that the incoming Andrews government has hit the ground running. We are back to work today, and we are introducing an important piece of legislation in the Parliament today to get Victoria back to work. Our demonstrable activity over the last four weeks indicates that this government is not going to waste one day in office. That is a very important lesson for any government — do not waste one day, let alone a year or a term. Do not waste a day.

This government has got to work from day one. On day one a letter was sent from the Premier to resolve the ambulance dispute, to resolve a matter that the outgoing Minister for Health had as an albatross around his neck and around that of the outgoing government for the last two years of its term. On day one a referral was made to Fair Work Australia. That referral could have been made at any time during the last term by the former Minister for Health and the previous government, but that opportunity was not taken. There have been four years of declining ambulance performance and poor results in relation to emergency departments, four years when the government chose to be at war with the paramedics, an issue that the Victorian community was particularly concerned about. From day one the Andrews government chose to remedy that situation.

It was not the only issue we wanted to resolve in our first week in office the board of Ambulance Victoria refused to release response time data to the Victorian community. As ambulance response times continued to deteriorate under the legacy of the outgoing Minister for Health — response times that were the longest in recorded Victorian history — the Ambulance Victoria board refused to release information about those response times. That board is no longer in place; it has been replaced by an administrator. That will be a

hallmark of the reforms that our government will bring to the ambulance service to ensure that we improve ambulance services at all costs and we respond to the needs of the Victorian community.

That is not the only thing we have done. Within the past 24 hours we have embarked upon the ice action task force. We made a commitment that within the first 100 days in government we would take steps to try to get on top of a major community concern about ice. We have already sent a referral to the Law Reform Commission in relation to our commitment to enable medical cannabis to be made lawful in Victoria and not the contrivance that was brought before this house during the year that would have had no net effect on the availability of medical cannabis. We have made a difference.

In other policy areas, we have already got cows out of alpine parks; that has been achieved. It is a major undertaking that we have embarked upon. We have started to restore money to TAFE — \$20 million has been put back into investing in TAFE. Mr Drum knows the significance of TAFE, because under the first budget of the former government his good friend and minister almost walked on the basis of the cuts to TAFE and the impact that was going to have on the fortunes of the then government.

For three years the former government languished because of that. If only the Minister for Health had walked, Mr Drum, then in fact — —

14:30:00

The PRESIDENT — Order! Thank you, Minister.

Ordered that answer be considered next day on motion of Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan).

Public holidays

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — President, I congratulate you on your re-election to the high office of President. My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. What will be the cost to the Victorian economy and Victorian small businesses of the promised AFL Grand Final public holiday and the Easter Sunday public holiday?

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — Our policy to make Easter Sunday and the Friday before the AFL Grand Final public holidays is about strengthening families and our community. Public holidays provide time for families and the community to spend time together. That is a good thing. If workers are required to work on these days, they should receive fair compensation.

Supplementary question

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Is it the case that the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade has no idea how much these public holidays are going to cost Victorian small businesses, and in fact that his first action as Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade will impose a huge cost on Victoria’s 500 000 small businesses?

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — That is not true.

Kindergartens

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Congratulations on your re-election, President. I am looking forward to continuing our healthy working relationship in this chamber. I am absolutely honoured and overjoyed to ask a question of the new Minister for Families and Children, Ms Jenny Mikakos. I ask her to inform the house of the Andrews Labor government commitment to Victorian kindergartens.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — President, I too congratulate you on your reappointment as President. I have every confidence you will continue your role in the very capable manner in which we have become accustomed. I thank the member for his question. I am greatly honoured to have been appointed the Minister for Families and Children. The Labor government has brought these portfolios together under one minister because it is committed to putting families and children at the centre of things. The Andrews Labor government wants Victoria to be the education state — that is, from preschool to postgraduate. My parents are working-class migrants and they taught me the value of education from a very early age. They explained to me how education is the key to unlocking the door to opportunity. As the Minister for Families and Children it is a lesson that I am proud to put into practice to make sure that every Victorian child get the best start in life. As the Productivity Commission has recently found, an investment in early childhood education has long-term benefits in terms of both national productivity and Australia’s global competitiveness.

14:35:00 We have brought these two portfolio areas together to ensure that children do not fall through the cracks and that we deliver effective universal early childhood services.

One of my immediate priorities will be to deliver the Andrews Labor government commitment of

\$50 million towards new and upgraded kindergartens as well as integrated childhood services.

Ms Lovell interjected.

Ms MIKAKOS — The failed minister is on the backbench trying to make her contribution. One of my priorities is to ensure that we implement our election commitment of \$50 million, and local government will be a key partner in planning and delivering this infrastructure. Labor’s investment follows the patchy record of the previous government, which sought to inflate its record by claiming credit for federal money. In its last budget the previous government allocated no funding for 2014–15 towards kindergarten infrastructure. Labor will provide certainty for the sector and for local government. It will understand that the government has a clear four-year commitment to addressing the need for new investment in response to Victoria’s baby boom.

In recognition of the vital importance of kindergarten education for all children, former state and federal Labor governments put in place the 2009 national partnership on early childhood education. Together with the 2013 national partnership agreement, Victoria has been provided with \$368.7 million. It is very concerning that the Abbott government has sought to wind back its commitment to early childhood education and has provided only 12 months of funding for the 2015 year.

On the eve of the previous government going into caretaker mode, the previous government rushed to sign up a limited funding agreement under more onerous conditions and with no time line for a new agreement. This deal is contrary to the interests of Victorian children. I have written to the former federal minister seeking an urgent meeting to discuss my concerns, and I will be pursuing this with the new federal minister.

As Minister for Families and Children, I am committed to ensuring that every Victorian child, whatever their circumstance, gets every opportunity to reach their full potential.

China free trade agreement

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — President, congratulations on your appointment as Presiding Officer of this house. My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, and I will say this very slowly for him. Can the minister outline how he will ensure that Victorian companies will maximise trade opportunities arising from the free trade agreement with China?

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — That was patronising, President. How is your tilt at the top job going there, Mr Ondarchie?

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Is that the completion of the minister's answer?

Mr SOMYUREK — No, it is not.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Then I invite him to provide an answer.

Mr SOMYUREK — In order to grow local industries, Labor understands the importance of a need to work with the world. That is why Labor recognises the value of government-led international trade missions in building enduring links between major economies and communities, sharing our skills and ideas. Accordingly, Labor will establish three new Victorian government business offices in strategic and rapidly growing markets overseas, including South America, Singapore and Turkey. Labor also recognises that it can be more — —

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, President, my question was very specific. It was about the free trade agreement with China. The minister has no sense of geography. He has not yet talked about what he is doing in China; he has talked about other places around the globe. Free trade agreement with China — it is very simple.

Mr SOMYUREK — On the point of order, President, I have not finished my answer. I have been going for about 20 seconds, and I am obviously developing an argument.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Remind me not to appoint you as timekeeper! I thought Mr Ondarchie's initial question was patronising. It provoked a response from the minister that I also did not think was appropriate in the circumstances of the first day of meeting of this house.

14:40:00 Nonetheless, the minister has been providing a context in terms of our international trade, which is appropriate, and I am sure that when I invite him to his feet again the minister will come to a substantive answer on the China free trade agreement.

Mr SOMYUREK — Labor recognises that it can be more effective to showcase Victoria's jobs, goods, services, technology, capabilities and clean and green food products to international business leaders by

facilitating their visits to Victoria. That is why we will establish super trade missions to Victoria, so we can demonstrate firsthand our strengths to international business leaders. China is a prime location for those international reverse super trade missions because our clean and green food products sell really well in China. We are competing on value, especially in the Chinese market. Our clean and green food and fibre products are valued in China, so those super trade missions will be particularly valuable to the Chinese.

Our manufacturers might have some complaints about the free trade agreement (FTA) with China, but our agricultural sector is not complaining. In terms of milk products I expect the Victorian food industry to gain a lot from the China FTA, as New Zealand has done in the past.

Supplementary question

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — In the context of the free trade agreement with China, can the minister advise the house if in his capacity as minister he has met with the Consul General of China and outlined the opportunities in Victoria?

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I have not yet had the opportunity to meet with the ambassador.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am now going to call on the Greens for a question, but I wish to advise the house of the basis for the apportionment of questions today. Members will no doubt be aware that in the new standing orders that were adopted at the end of the last Parliament, standing order 12.06 in respect of the allocation of speaking rights says:

When allocating speaking rights the President should have regard to the proportionality of the political representation of the whole number of members of the Council.

That standing order will be applied to the allocation of questions, adjournment matters and other speaking rights in the course of this Parliament.

It is my judgement today that the Greens ought to have a question based on proportionality, given their numbers in this chamber. On this occasion the question will be allocated against the government side. I expect that the Parliament will sit for 51 days next year, based on the dates that have been provided to us, and I have asked for a chart to be drawn up to provide that proportionality in terms of the allocation of questions, adjournments and so forth going forward. On other occasions the coalition will lose a question to minor parties.

I note that the members of the minor parties have not interjected today, given that they have not yet made maiden speeches. On that basis I have not determined an allocation for them in today's questions.

Freedom of information

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I am delighted to receive the call from you, President. My question is for the Special Minister of State, Mr Jennings. The minister is probably aware that section 10 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 reads as follows:

- 10 Cabinet register
 - (1) The Premier shall cause to be published on a continuing basis a register containing —
 - (a) details of the terms of all decisions made by the cabinet after the date of commencement of this act;
 - (b) the reference number assigned to each such decision; and
 - (c) the date on which the decision was made.

Without going any further into it, is it the intention of the government to break from the past practice of all its predecessors and in fact to start publishing this register?

14:45:00 **Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) — I thank Mr Barber for the opportunity to confirm that this government wants not only to satisfy all the commitments that Labor made during the course of the election campaign and over the last four years but also to comply with the laws of Victoria. That is our intention. The consequences of it may be fairly revolutionary, given past practice. I will have a talk with the Premier at the earliest opportunity about the way the incoming government can satisfy its obligations under Victorian law.

Supplementary question

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — That first question was not a Dorothy Dixier and neither is this, because the minister has not heard it before. As the minister would be aware, it is possible to attach any document to a cabinet submission and then wheel it through a cabinet meeting, the result of which is that it then becomes not available under the act. Will it be the minister's responsibility as minister to ensure and report regularly that not only this section but also other sections of the act are being fully complied with according to the legacy of the Cain government, which brought in this act in the first place?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — President, I am sure you heard a slightly more complicated question than the first one. That is something that will require a degree of work. I am a minister in an incoming government that has made undertakings to reform the Parliament to make it more accountable and transparent, to reform the public sector to enable better performance of government agencies and to revive cabinet processes that are very important in the nature of good governance in the state of Victoria. That is something we have committed to doing. My designated responsibility as Special Minister of State will call upon me to use what accountability mechanisms there are under Victorian law and the agencies that apply under them through the cabinet process to acquit the community's expectation of having far more open access to information about government decisions and actions in the future.

Government election commitments

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — President, let me join other members in congratulating you on being re-elected as the President of this house. My question is for the Leader of the Government in his capacity as Special Minister of State. I refer to the comments of the Premier, who said:

If you break the law you will feel the full force of the law. I don't care who you are, where you come from, what you do for a living.

Noting that integrity now falls within the responsibility of Mr Jennings, how will he uphold those comments from the Premier?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I am a bit puzzled by the nature of Mr O'Donohue's question. Given that I am charged with ministerial responsibility, given that I am the minister for a number of acts which clearly outline the accountability framework in Victoria and given that I work very closely and collaboratively with the Premier, who would expect all his ministers to comply with their statutory obligations and their roles within the cabinet, it is my duty to acquit those obligations. I am not sure what the member is seeking from me, apart from asking me to comply with my ministerial responsibilities.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I thank the minister for his answer and his confirmation that he will comply with the legislative requirements that are now his responsibility as the Special Minister of State. In that context, I ask: what actions will government taken against a member for Western Metropolitan Region,

Mr Melhem, following the recent public revelations from the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am concerned that this question introduces new material which is substantively different from the set-up question. Does the member wish to make a point in respect of my concern?

14:50:00 **Mr O'Donohue** — On a point of order, President, in my substantive question I asked Mr Jennings about a statement made by the Premier. The context of that statement made by the Premier was the allegations flowing from the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption. Mr Jennings's answer was unequivocal in that he indicated he will uphold those acts for which he has responsibility and that integrity will be at the forefront of that. Serious allegations have been made against Mr Melhem in the public domain and specifically by the royal commission into trade unions. Those matters give rise to questions for Mr Jennings to answer as the minister responsible for those acts. As the Special Minister of State, he is responsible for integrity in government.

Mr Jennings — On the point of order, President, I know you are grappling with the problem of how you might allow the member's supplementary question to be included, and I will assist the house by suggesting that if there is any act I am responsible for under the general orders, let the member indicate which act that may be.

Mr Rich-Phillips — On the point of order, President, the question does not go specifically to an act that Mr Jennings is responsible for. The matter is about integrity in government, which the Premier has indicated that Mr Jennings, as Special Minister of State, will be responsible for. Mr Jennings's responsibilities are not merely limited to pieces of legislation that may be assigned to him, and I add that we had a past practice where ministers in a previous Labor government had no legislation assigned to them. Ministers cannot make the argument that their responsibilities are simply limited to legislation for which they are responsible. There is a clear connection between the statement made by the Premier in which he indicated that Mr Jennings's responsibilities as Special Minister of State make him the minister responsible for integrity and any questions relating to Mr Melhem, who is a senior member of the government as the Government Whip.

Mr Elasmr — On the point of order, President, this is not the question, it is the supplementary question.

You have already indicated to the minister that the supplementary question relates to the answer of the minister. It has no relation to the answer of the minister.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I ask Mr O'Donohue if he has both of those questions in writing.

Mr O'Donohue — I do, yes.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I will look at them and consider whether or not to allow the supplementary question.

Vocational education and training

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — President, I congratulate you on your appointment. My question is to the Minister for Training and Skills. Can the minister advise the house of what action the Andrews government is taking to turn around Victoria's vocational education and training systems?

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Training and Skills) — I thank the member for his question and for his great interest in TAFE and vocational education and training in Victoria. I also congratulate you, President, on your appointment. I have come to this chamber from the other place, and having heard the praise you have received I have high expectations about the way you will ensure the smooth running of this chamber. I also indicate that I am delighted to be in the chamber, and I am looking forward to four years of vigorous debate and good progress in Victoria.

The question related to the government's plans for vocational education and training in this state, and I will put that in context. It is a very important question and a very important issue. The new government has inherited an economy that is stagnant. We have inherited circumstances in which we have the lowest level of employment on the mainland, in which youth unemployment is at disgraceful levels, in which business and consumer confidence is low and in which industries are in transition. If we are going to grow our economy and our state, we have to have a strong training and skills sector, because if we do not have a strong training and skills sector, we will not have growth, we will not have productivity and we will not have profit in our companies and industries.

The government has a \$100 000 jobs program — a Back to Work program — that is significant and that will be a great boon for Victorian industries and our economy, but we have to have the skills in place. Unfortunately the training sector is not up to the task right now. We have inherited a training sector where TAFEs in particular are on their knees. The forecast for

the end of 2014 indicates that eight of the stand-alone TAFEs are likely to make a \$71 million net loss this year — that is a \$71 million loss across the state for TAFEs.

We have inherited circumstances in which the TAFE share of delivery is down to about 26 per cent; it has dropped 10 per cent in a couple of years. We have inherited circumstances in which student numbers in TAFEs have dropped 21 per cent from 2011. We have seen cut after cut in our TAFE sector. We have seen 3000 job losses, we have seen courses close and we have seen TAFEs go backwards.

It is not just TAFEs that are in trouble. Our entire training system is in trouble. If you look at the latest National Centre for Vocational Education Research data for Victoria, you can see that apprenticeship and traineeship commencements dropped 30 per cent year on year last year. That is a dreadful circumstance, and I want to put that in the context that we are constantly hearing complaints about the quality of delivery, about dodgy tick-and-flick provisions and about a drop in apprenticeship numbers.

The challenge for this new government to grow Victoria's training sector is significant. We are determined to do it. We already have a \$320 million TAFE rescue fund. In our first week, through a Treasurer's advance, we have applied for and received \$20 million in funding that will flow into the sector.

14:57:30 We are determined to open closed TAFE campuses. Anyone who has been looking at all at what has happened to TAFE knows of the disgraceful circumstances of the closure of Lilydale TAFE and Greensborough TAFE. We will reopen those TAFEs.

We have seen TAFEs where their capital infrastructure simply cannot meet industry's needs. We are going to spend \$100 million fixing those TAFEs, opening those campuses and transforming them into modern educational facilities.

But that is not enough. We need to change the funding system in this state. We are going to have a review and get a logical state funding system that meets the needs of industry and people for the next decade.

Ordered that answer be considered next day on motion of Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan).

Departmental merger

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Along with other members, I congratulate you, President, on

your appointment. My question is to the Special Minister of State, Mr Jennings, and I ask: what is the logic the government has undertaken in merging the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services just five years after they were split by former Premier John Brumby, who said, 'I firmly believe these changes will help deliver better services to Victorian families and communities'?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I thank Ms Crozier for her question. The simple answer is that, as a result of the implementation of policies by the Baillieu and Napthine governments, it did not. The promise of splitting those departments and quarantining an emphasis on health and hospital funding in particular and human services on the other side as a complete administrative stream ultimately was a programmatic failure. It was a failure because the agenda and the collaborative arrangements between the outgoing Minister for Health and the outgoing Minister for Community Services, in terms of the reforms — mental health reforms, alcohol and drug reforms, the decimation of the community health sector, the inability of agencies to work in an integrated way — have proved extremely stressful for families and individuals across Victoria who have relied upon an integrated network of service configuration to support their needs.

It was a monumental abrogation of responsibility and a lack of integration and coordination that has led to the incoming government making the decision from day one to reintegrate those services and actually try to find a service configuration that does not allow community health to wither on the vine, does not allow there to be blind spots in the availability of alcohol and drug services, does not lead to a situation where the recommissioning of mental health services means that many individuals in our community find themselves unable to access services. We are very committed to trying to make sure that no Victorian is left on the wayside. Victorians were left on the wayside because of the programmatic decisions of a departmental structure that no longer met the needs of Victorian communities.

Supplementary question

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I note Mr Jennings's answer and thank him for that. Given that the minister stands by the merger and the decision that is being undertaken, I ask: how much will this merger cost the Victorian taxpayer?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — The merger actually can be effected with virtually no budgetary impact. Indeed, the incoming government made an undertaking to the Victorian public sector

workforce that the government's drive for reform and better alignment of government departments and programs within government departments was not being driven on the basis of either efficiencies or cost imposition but on the basis of the appropriate alignment of programs. It is not our intention to have a costly realignment of departmental responsibilities. Indeed we are confident that this will be acquitted without an impost on the Victorian budget.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I return to the supplementary question posed by Mr O'Donohue. I had some concern in terms of the initial substantive question and the specific nature of the supplementary question, which to me to some extent raised new material that might not be considered apposite to the substantive question. I thank Mr O'Donohue for the courtesy of allowing me to view his notes in respect of the questions asked. I take it that his question was fairly close to the notes that he has provided me with.

The concern that I have about this matter is that I have not had the opportunity to read the royal commission's initial report by Mr Heydon that referred to Mr Melhem in a previous role that he had within the union movement and with regard to the responsibilities he may have had within the Labor Party. However, I note that in the substantive question and the supplementary question there is an implication that the minister is being invited to comment on Mr Melhem with respect to a quote from the Premier on a previous occasion, 'If you break the law you will feel the full force of the law'. As I said, I have not had the opportunity to read the commission's interim report. I am relying on a report from the *Age* of 22 December. I note that there is a paragraph that begins by saying:

Mr Heydon said he does not recommend Mr Melhem be pursued for breaches of the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act for gaining an advantage for himself to the detriment of the AWU ...

15:05:00 Therefore the commission has clearly found that there has been no breaking of the law, so I do not think I can accept in this chamber the imputation made in the substantive question.

I have referred to the matter of members' activities — particularly in political parties — in previous rulings, as indeed have previous presidents. For the most part it is a difficult thing for us to hold members to account for fundraising activities and so forth within their parties — or indeed for positions of policy that they may have held within those parties — or to suggest that those matters ought to be subject to some sort of censure at a later date.

Is the minister familiar with the substance of the supplementary question? Does he feel comfortable with my not asking Mr O'Donohue to repeat the question?

Mr JENNINGS — Yes.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I will allow the minister to make any remarks he wishes to, but I indicate that I am not comfortable with the question.

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — President, with your comments just now and my initial contribution I indicate that I am happy for the member's question to be roped in, if possible, but any real reading of this supplementary question is that it does not satisfy the test of fact, as it was asserted. Therefore it fails as a fact in terms of not being able to be substantiated or to rely on any specific breach of any law — and not only the laws for which I am responsible. There has been no finding made that indicates there is substance to Mr O'Donohue's supplementary question.

Innovation

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your re-election as President of the chamber, and I wish you very well. My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, the Honourable Adem Somyurek. Can the minister explain the importance of innovation policy to Victorian small and medium enterprises?

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank the member for his question and for his ongoing interest in innovation, particularly during his former life as a part-owner of an innovative transport company.

Innovation and research and development have traditionally given an important competitive advantage for SMEs competing in the international marketplace due to Victoria's internationally renowned and world-class innovation and research architecture. With the rapid structural decline of Victoria's traditional industries, particularly over the last four years, it is clear that innovation and research and development form the pathway to Victoria's future prosperity as we seek to compete with the rest of the world on value rather than price.

The Andrews government recognises that the key to competing on value is dependent on our ability to innovate. Innovation transforms good ideas into thriving industries and rewarding jobs, in turn driving economic growth, lifting productivity and improving

competitiveness and capability. Labor has traditionally been the party of innovation in this state. The Bracks and Brumby Labor governments were no exception. The Bracks and Brumby governments invested heavily in Victoria's science and research infrastructure, establishing centres such as the Bio21 institute and the Australian Synchrotron.

In contrast the inertia of the Baillieu and Napthine governments in this portfolio area resulted in many lost opportunities at a time when Victoria should have been emphatically embracing innovation in response to the rapid structural decline of Victoria's traditional industries. An example of this inertia is the federal government's intervention to rescue the Australian Synchrotron from closure after the Baillieu government, in its very first budget — six months in — failed to re-fund it.

Unlike the Baillieu and Napthine governments, the Andrews government understands the importance of innovation and research to Victoria's future prosperity. The Andrews government will ensure that Victoria once again leads the nation in generating innovation and research activity by fully implementing Labor's innovation plan.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL 2014

Introduction and first reading

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) introduced a bill for an act to revise the statute law of Victoria.

Read first time.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT (DOMESTIC FOWL AND PIGS) AND FOOD AMENDMENT (FREE-RANGE EGGS) BILL 2014

Introduction and first reading

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan Region) introduced a bill for an act to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 to insert offences relating to domestic fowl and pigs and to amend the Food Act 1984 to require that eggs for sale can only be labelled as free range if produced by domestic fowl that are kept in accordance with certain requirements and for other purposes.

Read first time.

VICTORIAN FUNDS MANAGEMENT CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL 2014

15:12:30

Introduction and first reading

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) introduced a bill for an act to amend the Victorian Funds Management Corporation Act 1994 to prohibit the Victorian Funds Management Corporation from investing in tobacco entities and for other purposes.

Read first time.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Acting Clerk:

Architects Registration Board of Victoria — Minister's report of receipt of 2013–14 report.

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority — Report, 2013–14.

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 — Minister's Order of 24 September 2014 giving approval to the granting of leases at Park Lake Reserve, Creswick.

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 — Notice of 20 November 2014 of Amendments to the Poisons Code.

Education and Care Services Ombudsman, National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioners — Report, 2013–14.

Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 —

Notices pursuant to section 32(3) in relation to Statutory Rule Nos. 144 and 173.

Notices pursuant to section 32(4) in relation to Statutory Rule Nos. 166/2008, 37/2011, 132/2012 and Waste Management Policy (Siting, Design and Management of Landfills) 2004.

Major Sporting Events Act 2009 — Major Sporting Event Orders of 14 October 2014.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 — Notices of Approval of the following amendments to planning schemes —

Ararat Planning Scheme — Amendments C25 and C30.

Ballarat Planning Scheme — Amendments C160, C167, C168, C176, C180, C181 and C190.

Banyule Planning Scheme — Amendment C94 (Part 2).

Bass Coast Planning Scheme — Amendments C135 and C145.

Baw Baw Planning Scheme — Amendments C104 (Part 1) and C108.

Bayside Planning Scheme — Amendment C133.

Boroondara Planning Scheme — Amendments C153 and C240.

Brimbank Planning Scheme — Amendments C142, C158 and C165.

Campaspe Planning Scheme — Amendment C98.

Cardinia Planning Scheme — Amendments C178, C197, C200, C202 and C203.

Cardinia Planning Scheme, Casey Planning Scheme, Glen Eira Planning Scheme, Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme, Kingston Planning Scheme, Melbourne Planning Scheme, Monash Planning Scheme, Stonnington Planning Scheme and Yarra Planning Scheme — Amendment GC15.

Casey Planning Scheme — Amendments C185, C186, C187, C188, C193 (Part 1) and C201.

Colac Otway Planning Scheme — Amendments C77 and C80.

Darebin Planning Scheme — Amendments C144 and C146.

East Gippsland Planning Scheme — Amendments C93, C108 and C120.

Glen Eira Planning Scheme — Amendment C128.

Glenelg Planning Scheme — Amendments C52 (Part 1) and C74.

Golden Plains Planning Scheme — Amendments C61 and C65.

Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme — Amendments C160, C209 and C211.

Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme — Amendments C149 and C184.

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme — Amendments C199, C259, C266 (Part 1), C267, C270, C282, C283, C288, C296, C299, C300, C303, C311, C314, C319 and C322.

Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme — Amendment C174.

Hume Planning Scheme — Amendments C143, C154 (Part 2), C164, C179 and C181.

Hume Planning Scheme, Melton Planning Scheme, Mitchell Planning Scheme, Whittlesea Planning Scheme and Wyndham Planning Scheme — Amendment GC22.

Hume Planning Scheme, Mitchell Planning Scheme and Whittlesea Planning Scheme — Amendment GC21.

Indigo Planning Scheme — Amendments C56 and C67.

Kingston Planning Scheme — Amendment C160.

Knox Planning Scheme — Amendments C114, C129 and C130.

Latrobe Planning Scheme — Amendment C88.

Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme — Amendments C74 and C97.

Manningham Planning Scheme — Amendments C95 and C101.

Mansfield Planning Scheme — Amendment C34.

Maribyrnong Planning Scheme — Amendment C138.

Maroondah Planning Scheme — Amendment C85.

Melbourne Planning Scheme — Amendments C179 and C248.

Melton Planning Scheme — Amendment C122.

Mitchell Planning Scheme — Amendment C90.

Moira Planning Scheme — Amendment C80.

Moonee Valley Planning Scheme — Amendment C141.

Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme — Amendments C176 (Part 1) and C180.

Moyne Planning Scheme — Amendments C54 and C58.

Murrindindi Planning Scheme — Amendment C43 (Part 1).

Northern Grampians Planning Scheme — Amendment C45.

South Gippsland Planning Scheme — Amendments C92, C93 and C101.

Stonnington Planning Scheme — Amendments C153 and C220.

Strathbogie Planning Scheme — Amendment C69.

Surf Coast Planning Scheme — Amendment C91.

Victoria Planning Provisions — Amendment VC123.

Wangaratta Planning Scheme — Amendments C44 and C58.

Warrnambool Planning Scheme — Amendments C88 and C91.

Wellington Planning Scheme — Amendments C72, C82 and C89.

Whitehorse Planning Scheme — Amendments C160 and C200.

Whittlesea Planning Scheme — Amendments C154, C184, C185 and C193.

Wodonga Planning Scheme — Amendments C97, C110, C112, C114, C115, C116 and C117.

Wyndham Planning Scheme — Amendments C174, C175, C176, C177, C188 and C196.

Yarra Planning Scheme — Amendment C177.

Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme — Amendment C139.

Professional Standards Council — Report, 2013–14.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament —

Accident Towing Services Act 2007 — No. 175.

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992 — No. 183.

Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008 — No. 192.

Building Act 1993 — Nos. 162, 173, 196 and 197.

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 — No. 160.

Confiscation Act 1997 — No. 187.

Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987 — Nos. 185 and 191.

Coroners Act 2008 — Nos. 159 and 202.

County Court Act 1958 — Nos. 157, 176 and 178.

County Court Act 1958 — Vexatious Proceedings Act 2014 — No. 177.

Country Fire Authority Act 1958 — No. 165.

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 — Nos. 193, 194 and 195.

EastLink Project Act 2004 — No. 167.

Estate Agents Act 1980 — No. 189.

Financial Management Act 1994 — No. 161.

Gambling Regulation Act 2003 — No. 172.

Heritage Act 1995 — No. 174.

Magistrates' Court Act 1989 — Nos. 158, 179, 180 and 203.

Melbourne City Link Act 1995 — No. 168.

Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 — No. 169.

Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968 — No. 166.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 — No. 163.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 — No. 184.

Road Safety Act 1986 — Nos. 199, 200 and 201.

Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991 — No. 170.

Status of Children Act 1974 — No. 186.

Subdivision Act 1988 — No. 164.

Supreme Court Act 1986 — Nos. 156, 204, 207 and 209.

Supreme Court Act 1986 — Administration and Probate Act 1958 — No. 208.

Supreme Court Act 1986 — Commercial Arbitration Act 2011 — No. 205.

Supreme Court Act 1986 — Vexatious Proceedings Act 2014 — No. 206.

Tourist and Heritage Railways Act 2010 — No. 198.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 — No. 181.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 — Vexatious Proceedings Act 2014 — No. 182.

Water Industry Act 1994 — No. 171.

Wildlife Act 1975 — No. 190.

Wrongs Act 1958 — No. 188.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 —

Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rule Nos. 135, 147, 155 to 160, 163, 164, 166 to 182, 184, 185, 188 and 190 to 209.

Legislative Instruments and related documents under section 16B in respect of —

Alcohol Interlock Guidelines under section 50AAG of the Road Safety Act 1986.

By-law No. 1/2014 Waterways Protection — East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority under the Water Act 1989.

Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014 under the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987.

Driver Accreditation (Metropolitan Hire Car) Amending Instrument under the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983.

Greyhound Racing Victoria — Rule Amendments made under the Racing Act 1958.

Minister's Declaration of discount factor of 12 October 2014 under section 19 of the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007.

Minister's Notice of 13 October 2014 — Amendment to the Determination that Specified Areas are Designated Bushfire Prone Areas under the Building Act 1993.

Minister's Notice of 15 October 2014 — Amendments to Australian Rules of Harness Racing under the Racing Act 1958.

Minister's Notice of 31 October 2014 — Senior Officer Remuneration Threshold Increase under the Local Government Act 1989.

Minister's Notice of 23 October 2014 — Greater Geelong City Council — Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Allowances — Alteration under the City of Greater Geelong Act 1993.

Minister's Notice of 23 October 2014 — Melbourne City Council — Lord Mayoral, Deputy Lord Mayoral and Councillor Allowances Alteration under the City of Melbourne Act 2001.

Minister's Notice of 23 October 2014 — Mayoral and Councillor Allowances Adjustment under the Local Government Act 1989.

Minister's Notice of 30 October 2014 — Making of the Code of Practice for the Operation Breeding and Rearing Businesses 2014 under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Minister's Notice — Amendments to Australian Rules of Harness Racing (ARHR), Australian Trotting Stud Book Regulations (ATSBR) and Australian Handicapping Rules (AHR) made under the Racing Act 1958.

Ministerial Order of 21 October 2014 Amending the Flora and Fauna Guarantee (Taking, Trading In, or Keeping of Listed Fish) Order No. 1/2009 under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.

Ministerial Order of 22 October 2014 under section 3.4A.20K of the Gambling Regulation Act 2003.

Ministerial Order of 22 October 2014 under section 3.4A.5(3) of the Gambling Regulation Act 2003.

Victorian Budget Update — 2014–15 (incorporating Quarterly Financial Report No. 1).

Water Act 1989 — Abolition of the Nullawarre Groundwater Supply Protection Area Order 2014 and Yangery Groundwater Supply Protection Area Order 2014.

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

Assisted Reproductive Treatment Further Amendment Act 2014 — Part 1, Part 2 (except sections 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22) and Part 3 — 30 October 2014 (*Gazette No. S400, 29 October 2014*).

Courts Legislation Miscellaneous Amendments Act 2014 — Division 2 of Part 3 — 15 October 2014 — Parts 2, 4 (except sections 68, 69 (2), 70, 71 and 73) and 6 — 10 November 2014 — Part 5 — 1 April 2015 (*Gazette No. 364, 14 October 2014*) Sections 68, 69(2), 70 and 71 — 1 January 2015 (*Gazette No. S376, 21 October 2014*).

Crime Statistics Act 2014 — Whole Act except Division 3 of Part 4 — 1 January 2015 (*Gazette No. S364, 14 October 2014*).

Crimes Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Act 2014 — Sections 8 and 9, Part 6 of Divisions 1 and 8 of Part 7 — 3 November 2014 (*Gazette No. S400, 29 October 2014*).

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Further Amendment Acts 2014 — 30 October 2014 (*Gazette No. S400, 29 October 2014*).

Family Violence Protection Amendment Act 2014 — Whole Act except sections 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and

21 — 2 November 2014 (*Gazette No. S400, 29 October 2014*).

Gambling and Liquor Legislation Further Amendment Act 2014 — Sections 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 22, 23, 24, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45 and 46 and Part 4 — 15 October 2014 (*Gazette no. S364, 14 October 2014*).

Gambling and Liquor Legislation Amendment (Modernisation) Act 2014 — Part 1, sections 53, 54 and Part 3 — 15 October 2014 (*Gazette No. S364, 14 October 2014*).

Inquiries Act 2014 — Whole Act except section 148 — 15 October 2014 (*Gazette No. S364, 14 October 2014*).

Justice Legislation Amendment (Confiscation and Other Matters) Act 2014 — Divisions 1 and 3 of Part 2 and Parts 6, 8 and 9 (other than section 60) — 2 November 2014 (*Gazette No. S400, 29 October 2014*).

Justice Legislation Amendment (Succession and Surrogacy) Act 2014 — Parts 1 and 6 — 30 October 2014 — Remaining Provisions — 1 January 2015 (*Gazette No. S400, 29 October 2014*).

Road Legislation Amendment Act 2013 — Sections 10, 12, 18 (1) and (2) and 19 — 1 November 2014 — Section 13 — 1 March 2015 (*Gazette No. S400, 29 October 2014*).

Wills Amendment (International Wills) Act 2012 — 10 March 2015 (*Gazette No. S376, 21 October 2014*).

INDEPENDENT BROAD-BASED ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

Operation Fitzroy

The Acting Clerk, pursuant to section 162(12) of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011, presented report into the conduct of former employees of the Department of Transport/Public Transport Victoria, Barry John Wells and Hoe Ghee (Albert) Ooi, and others.

Laid on table.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT — Order! I inform the house that the Honourable Theo Theophanous, a former minister and member of the house, is in the gallery today. I also indicate that Senator Stephen Conroy, one of our Victorian senators, is in the gallery. It is a day of many visitors. Welcome.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of motion given.

Mrs PEULICH having given notice of motion:

The PRESIDENT — Order! When that proposed motion comes to us I will seek a slight rewording of it so that it refers to the government's priorities as expressed in the Governor's address and does not reflect on the Governor's comments.

Further notices of motion given.

15:27:30

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I move:

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 10 February 2015.

Motion agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Membership

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — By leave, I move:

That —

- (1) Mr Richard Dalla-Riva be a member of the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee; and
- (2) Mr Simon Ramsay and Ms Jaclyn Symes be members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on what the Andrews Labor government means for my electorate. Melbourne's west has a friend in the Andrews Labor government. This government has a vision for and commitment to the people of my electorate.

For the last four years in my region infrastructure has been left in a state of neglect. The only project was the regional rail link, which was commissioned by the Labor government federally and at the state level. For too long our schools have not received the funding they desperately need. For too long our health system has been sidelined by the carelessness of the former government.

Labor has pledged to get rid of nine level crossings in Melbourne's west, including the deadly Main Road crossing in St Albans. We have pledged an ambitious and much-needed infrastructure program to create jobs, including the West Gate distributor and a new port in Bay West. We have pledged to put first the future of children and young adults in Melbourne's west by rebuilding many of our schools, by building the exciting Footscray learning precinct and by building the women's and children's centre at Sunshine Hospital.

It is a hard task we have before us. It will require talent and leadership, and I believe that Premier Andrews and our government are more than capable of delivering for Victoria.

Stella Young

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Last week I was honoured to attend the memorial service for Stella Young. Stella was an Australian comedian, journalist and disability advocate. It was a very fitting and respectful but humorous service to honour her life and her contribution.

I first met Stella back in February 2006 at the Australian Future Directions forum. We had many interactions and dealings over subsequent years. At each stage my respect and admiration for her grew, largely because of her capacity to cut through, with a very succinct statement, to what we were all thinking or believed. Her capacity to get that message through was part of her strength as a disability advocate.

Stella's advocacy started as a 14-year-old when she audited her town of Stawell for wheelchair access in terms of the local shops, and it has continued every year since. She was a talented journalist with the ABC website Ramp Up, the ABC online news space and also for ABC television programs. Importantly she used her comedy to get a message across as an activist. It was acknowledged at the memorial service that there has been significant change because of her work.

Stella was a proud woman and had a tattoo that said 'pride takes practice'. We must all continue to honour her messages and her legacy in terms of accessibility in the community for people with disabilities.

White Ribbon Foundation

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — On Thursday, 23 October, I was delighted to again officiate at a very special fundraising event held at the White Lady chapel in Burgundy Street, Heidelberg. This fundraiser was for an extremely worthy cause and

raised money for the ongoing campaign to highlight violence against women in the community.

15:35:00 The White Ribbon Foundation continues to grow in strength and numbers. It is my pleasure to continue to support in any way I can the ongoing work of these committed men and women.

Michael Leighton

Mr ELASMAR — On Thursday, 20 November, together with many friends, it was my sad duty to attend a celebration of the life of Michael Leighton, the former member for Preston in the Legislative Assembly. Michael died at home on 8 November in the presence of his loving and grieving family. My sincere condolences go to Judi, Samuel and Sarah.

Lebanon independence day

Mr ELASMAR — On Thursday, 27 November, I had the honour of representing the Premier, Daniel Andrews, at the 71st anniversary of the independence day of Lebanon. The event was hosted by the Consul General of Lebanon, His Excellency Ghassan El Khatib. As always, this event is close to my heart, and together with several of my parliamentary colleagues, including you, President, and fellow Australian Lebanese friends, we enjoyed celebrating this special occasion.

Felicitations

Mr ELASMAR — I congratulate all my colleagues on their election and wish all of them, clerks, staff and their families a wonderful holiday season.

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I am very proud of the achievements in Melbourne's west over the past four years. As I travel around the western suburbs I note with pride the many developments that have made life better for the residents. I can say without hesitation that the Napthine government was the best government for the west in Victoria's history.

My great fear now is that Labor will take us back to a time when Melbourne's west was ignored and neglected. My fear is that the west will again become a place where Labor dumps its hacks and occasional problem children, and I present the seat of St Albans in the Assembly as evidence of the latter. I am hoping Labor might turn over a new leaf and start delivering on its promises for the west. I am hoping the Andrews government will add to the coalition's removal of the Main Road level crossing at St Albans with the grade

separation at Furlong Road. I am hoping the Labor government will very soon start work on its promise of a women's and children's hospital in Sunshine. I am hoping there will be no more planning stuff-ups like at Point Cook. I am hoping Labor will stop taking Melbourne's west for granted. I am hoping Labor will stop using and abusing the west as its own chattel. The western suburbs deserve much more than what Labor has dumped on it for generations.

Felicitations

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I take this opportunity to congratulate you, President, on continuing in the role as President and to echo all the statements that have been made by other MPs who I think have expressed it very well. Congratulations also to Ms Tierney who was elected unanimously, in fact by acclamation, to the position of Deputy President. She has many important roles as well, with which the Greens will always offer to assist her.

I welcome all our new members. I have not got around to meeting all of those from the Labor and Liberal parties, some of whom I have met before, but I particularly welcome our new crossbenchers who do not get the opportunity to speak today. They have all been elected as the result of an electoral system they did not invent. Some people are already rushing to judgement and wanting to suggest that the upper house will become a quagmire or fall into chaos. Some of us, like you and me, President, who have been around a bit longer, know it is unlikely to be the case, and certainly not with you in the chair.

Since we are only sitting for one day — and, as usual, I am not too sure what the Legislative Assembly is up to; maybe it will be around for a bit longer — I would like to wish all members a merry Christmas on behalf of the Greens.

Department of Health

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I want to take the opportunity today to record my thanks to a number of departmental officers with whom I served in the previous government. I congratulate the new government on its victory at the recent election. I also congratulate you, President, on your re-election and Ms Tierney on her election to the position of Deputy President.

Today I want to record my thanks to Dr Pradeep Philip, the Secretary of the Department of Health, and a number of executive directors in the department. It is true to say that it is one of the strongest departments in

the Victorian government and in governments across the land. Frances Diver, Peter Fitzgerald, Pier de Carlo, Paul Smith, Elise Davis and others in the executive team made a remarkable contribution, and I want to record my personal thanks to them for the support they provided to me and to the previous government. They are professional, competent, and, as I said, part of arguably the best department in the state. Whether their support was in fights with the commonwealth, whether it was in fights that we needed to have with other Victorian departments in terms of resources or whether it was good advice that needed to be provided to ministers to warn and advise them in the old-fashioned way, I record those thanks.

I believe the new government may have made a mistake in seeking to re-merge the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services. John Brumby made the decision to split the departments when he became Premier, and I think it was a wise decision. Both departments are very large and complex, and it will not necessarily be simple to put them back together. It will also not necessarily be simple to get a better outcome for the community — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! Thank you, Mr Davis.

Ms Pulford

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — In line with Mr Barber I congratulate all members who were sworn in today, in particular the new MPs. I also congratulate the new ministers in this house, some of whom have not served as ministers before.

I particularly want to touch on our absent minister, Jaala Pulford, and congratulate her on achieving a leadership position in the government. I want to touch on what the President said previously. There are no words we can use to show our concern for what the Pulfords are facing, but I am sure everyone in this chamber joins me in at least expressing our care and concern for the whole family. We look forward to Ms Pulford returning to the chamber and doing the great job we are all sure she will do.

Shepparton region employment

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — I rise to draw to the attention of the house the failure of the Andrews Labor government to make a single election commitment to the electorate of Shepparton. This is most disappointing for the people of Shepparton, who under the Bracks and Brumby Labor governments were ignored for over 11 years. In contrast the coalition has invested heavily in the Shepparton district, including

providing \$73 million for the new courthouse complex; significant investment in local businesses, including \$22 million to save SPC Ardmona and investment in a range of other businesses to grow employment in the area; the \$5 million Goulburn Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund; more than \$10 million for the Shepparton Education First Youth Foyer; funding for the Shepparton work and learning centre; and significant investment in roads to improve safety and transport corridors.

This year the coalition's election commitments for Shepparton included \$75 million for the stage 1 redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health for a new emergency department, a theatre complex and infrastructure works necessary to the full hospital redevelopment; an extra weekday evening train from Southern Cross station to Shepparton, and an additional return train on Saturdays and Sundays; \$2.5 million for the redevelopment of the Shepparton central business district; \$1 million to complete a feasibility study and design for the revamped Shepparton bypass; and a further \$5 million for the continuation of the Goulburn Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund. The people of Shepparton cannot afford to wait — nor should they be expected to wait — another four years for these projects. I call on the Andrews Labor government to ensure that funding is provided to allow these projects to proceed immediately.

Project 10 000

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — When we were in opposition I spoke several times on the undergrounding of the rail line at Furlong and Main roads, St Albans. The Furlong Road crossing has tragically claimed 16 lives over the years, and one can understand our anger when the rail crossing at New Street, Brighton, in the electorate of the then Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party — ranked 233 in terms of danger — was given priority. It was an outrageous decision. It was a decision that even shocked two of the government's own members in this chamber.

I am very pleased to speak on the government's announcement to remove three dangerous crossings in my electorate under Project 10 000. They are at Furlong Road, Main Road and Melton Highway. Some of the newer members in the chamber may not know much about Project 10 000. It is about the removal of the worst 50 level crossing in the state, building more metropolitan rail capacity, getting 5000 trucks a day off the West Gate Bridge and investing \$2 billion in better roads, creating 10 000 construction jobs. Project 10 000 will be one of the largest job creation projects in Victoria's history. That is why I am proud to support

this project and to repeat that the Andrews Labor government knows the value of building for the future and creating jobs for our coming generation.

Regional Victoria

Mr O'BRIEN (Eastern Victoria) — The Labor Party may have won government, but it has again paid no more than lip service to country Victoria. Labor could not be bothered finding local candidates for many of the true country seats outside the regional centres and resorted to putting in the personal assistant to the ALP's state secretary as its candidate for the lower house seat of Gippsland South. Local media were not allowed to know anything about her, could not get a contact number for her and as a result started a hashtag, *whereislynnpsaila*.

Labor made no election commitments in the lower house seats of Gippsland South and Gippsland East. None. Zero. Zilch. As Ms Lovell pointed out earlier, it also neglected five electorates in northern Victoria and I expect a similar number in western Victoria. Incredibly, Labor could not — or would not — man the polling booths in Sale, one of Gippsland biggest towns. Even most of Labor's allegedly regional upper house MPs have been imported from the city, including the former member for Eltham, who apparently now knows all about northern Victoria. After losing its last country seat in Ripon, Labor has lost all vestiges of the party that was formed in the country. It has become the party of the city, full of union apparatchiks without a care for anything beyond the tram tracks and more focused on appeasing inner city Greens.

So it is not surprising, but it is nonetheless disappointing, that Labor's first few weeks have seen attacks on country issues, such as getting mountain cattlemen out of the high country again, scrapping the Department of Environment and Primary Industries and foreshadowing an end to the successful wild dog bounty by next year. It did not take long for Labor to revert to type, and it is already clear that it is going to be a very long four years in country Victoria.

Sinead Pulford and Don Metcalf

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — Last week I joined a number of my colleagues and a number of members of the community in Ballarat in the celebration of Sinead Pulford's life, which was lost in very tragic circumstances when a young girl full of enthusiasm, full of talent and full of aspirations for the future lost her life. It was one of the most moving experiences of my life to hear her family, her loved ones and her friends give testimony to the strength of

this young girl and the quality of life she enjoyed and to hear how she sought her little brother and her mum and dad to commit to enact those aspirations that she had laid out for herself and for them.

It was a tragic circumstance, which I want to contrast with the full life of a champion of Victoria, Don Metcalf, who died last week at the age of 85. He was a hero in terms of haematology and cancer research, working at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and the Cancer Council of Victoria. Not only the Victorian community but the Australian community and the international community have reason to give great thanks to Don Metcalf for a life well served. We thank him, and we commiserate with his wife Jo and their family. Both of those sad events inspire me to live each and every day to its fullest.

Phillip Hughes

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — A fantastic batting talent and an exceptional run scorer with a bright future ahead of them, Phillip Joel Hughes tragically lost his life on 27 November, two days after he was struck by a short ball while batting for South Australia in a Sheffield Shield match against New South Wales at the Sydney Cricket Ground. We saw an outpouring of emotion rarely seen in cricket, as Phillip, a 25-year-old, was a very popular figure both internationally and here in Australia. In just his second test in Durban, South Africa, Phillip became the youngest batsman in history to score centuries in each innings of a match, at the tender age of 20 years and 96 days. His third century — in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in August 2011 — was a great innings.

Phillip switched to South Australian cricket in 2012, and that seemed to reinvigorate him as a cricketer. He showed his ability in the 50-over game of cricket, in which he became the first Australian to score a century on their one-day international debut. In 2014 he added to his unique list of records by becoming the first Australian male to score a double century in a list A match, hitting a six off the final ball against South Africa A in Darwin to reach that milestone.

Weeks later, again for Australia A, he posted his highest first-class score of 243 runs. I caught up with Phillip and had a beer with him about 12 months ago. He was a great cricketer, a great young man and a tenacious and determined Australian. In his final innings Phillip finished with 63 not out as he pushed his claim for test honours once again. My thoughts go to his family and his many friends in and out of cricket. To cap no. 408, rest in peace, Hughesy.

Felicitations

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — President, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to the position of President, which I am sure that you will fulfil with fairness and consideration given the range of matters that are bound to come your way during the course of this term.

I also wish all members, Parliament House and electorate office staff, their families and our communities a very merry and peaceful Christmas and a happy 2015.

Sydney shootings

Mrs PEULICH — Unfortunately the season's greetings will probably be less felt by those affected by the tragic circumstances of the Lindt cafe siege in Sydney. I extend our condolences on the loss of two innocent Australians who were going about their normal everyday business. I pay tribute to all the emergency services personnel and others who were involved in the siege, as well as the 15 survivors and their families, who will be traumatised by this event for years to come.

I commend the many in our multicultural community who have expressed their grief, strongly reaffirming our values, including that of multicultural harmony, and condemning those actions which show a lack of respect for human life and the freedoms of our democratic society. Let us unite in these shared values and in our sorrow at the tragic loss of life at Martin Place.

Pakistan school massacre

Mrs PEULICH — I also extend condolences on the loss of 130 young lives in Peshawar in Pakistan. I was delighted to see that members of our community have also coalesced around that particular tragic event last week.

Eastern Victoria Region

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I will echo some comments you made earlier today, President. We are indeed lucky to live in a democracy in which government can change hands without bloodshed and fighting and with respect for the rule of law and the decision of the community. This was rammed home to me approximately a week before the election when I was out with the then Premier and members of the Salvation Army as part of a pre-election commitment. We walked the streets of Melbourne for over an hour late at night, during which time we ran into literally hundreds of people. We were accompanied by the

limited security detail to which the Premier was accustomed and were able to move about without incident or concern. That is a great reflection on our community.

In Eastern Victoria Region nine coalition members in the Legislative Assembly sought re-election, and I am very pleased all nine were returned. In particular I congratulate Brad Battin, the member for Gembrook, who achieved a swing to him although the swing was generally against the then government. That was a great effort against Labor's candidate, Colin Ross.

I congratulate Brian Paynter, who was elected as the member for Bass after the retirement of Mr Ken Smith. He will be a great advocate for the people of Bass.

I congratulate Mark Verschuur, the Liberal candidate for Monbulk, who did a great job and worked very hard but regrettably was unsuccessful.

I also acknowledge Andrew Ronalds, a former member of this place, who was not re-elected at the election. He served our mutual constituents with distinction, and I wish him all the best.

Western Victoria Region

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I also add my congratulations to you, President, on your ongoing role as President. I also congratulate my parliamentary colleague in Western Victoria Region, Joshua Morris, who has just been elected.

In the same vein I note that David O'Brien unfortunately lost his seat due to the proportional voting system we have. However, I congratulate James Purcell on his election to represent Western Victoria Region.

I add my commiserations and extend my sympathies to Ms Pulford and her family, the members of which I got to know well when I relocated my office to Ballarat.

Public holidays

Mr RAMSAY — I want to talk about an election commitment made by the Andrews government — that is, the announcement of a public holiday on the Friday before the grand final. It smacks of a populist thought bubble not unlike the election campaign commitment to breath test MPs and the judiciary. In the cold, hard light of day, without the razzamatazz of an election campaign, both these announcements need some scrutiny.

While the breath testing suggestion has raised a number of legal issues, the declaration of a new public holiday

has significant financial and economic implications that will come at a huge cost to small business. Small business and employer groups are already raising concerns about the increased costs of penalty rates, shorter trading hours and loss of jobs. I note that Commerce Ballarat, together with business groups, began circulating a petition in early December in a number of small regional cities and towns where people are actively supporting the cause for Premier Andrews to change his position on the declaration of that public holiday.

Business interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT — Order! I take this opportunity to welcome to the gallery today another distinguished visitor, the Israeli Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr Meir Itzhaki.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-reply

The PRESIDENT — Order! I report that the Governor attended the house on this day and was pleased to make a speech, of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. As the speech is printed, I take it that members do not desire that I read it to them. Therefore I take pleasure in inviting Ms Jaclyn Symes to acknowledge the speech and to commence the address-in-reply debate.

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) — I move:

That the Council agree to the following address to the Governor in reply to the Governor's opening speech:

May it please the Governor:

We, the Legislative Council of Victoria assembled in Parliament, express our loyalty to Australia and the people of Victoria, and thank you for the speech which you have made to the Parliament.

We declare that we will faithfully carry out the important duties entrusted to us by the people of Victoria to advance the best interests of all sections of the community.

President, I congratulate you on your elevation to the chair in this Parliament. I also thank you very much for your warm welcome and look forward to working with you over the next four years.

I proudly begin my first speech by acknowledging the traditional owners and custodians of this land, both past and present.

I am honoured to be a representative for the people of northern Victoria. I am grateful to my family and the Labor candidates for the Assembly seats of Benambra, Bendigo East, Bendigo West, Euroa, Eildon, Macedon, Murray Plains, Mildura, Ovens Valley, Shepparton and Yan Yean. They all worked really hard. I also acknowledge the Labor Party members, volunteers and supporters, and most importantly the voters who have brought me here to this house today as their member of Parliament.

15:57:30

British politician Nancy Astor once said, 'The main dangers in this life are the people who want to change everything — or nothing'. My representation of the northern region of this great state will flourish from a passionate, heartfelt commitment to build on the strength of the region and its many towns while making positive changes for the residents.

One of my biggest political supporters was a man who unfortunately passed away before I started working for the Labor government in 2005. My paternal grandfather, Roy Symes, was old-fashioned in the sense that he thought it strange that in my teens I declared I would be keeping my surname if I ever married. On the other hand, he had no doubt that his granddaughter should be a political leader. His words were 'Prime Minister'; but I am sure he would be so proud that I have been elected to the Parliament of Victoria as a representative of a region that is part of my family's past, present and future.

Roy was born in Violet Town in 1926 and moved to Benalla 12 years later, the family walking their milking cows the 25 kilometres to their new home. He left school when he was aged 14, and he got a job delivering ice at the butter factory. He then went on to become a carpenter and is remembered by many for his involvement in the greyhound industry. He was the owner-trainer of the 1990 Melbourne Cup winner.

At the age of 3 my paternal grandmother, Hazel, was adopted by Boho couple Jack and Violet Mason, who also later relocated to Benalla to run a garage. My grandparents raised three children in Benalla, including my father, Ian, and these siblings raised their own families in Benalla and are still there today. My mother's parents, Kenneth McLeod and Mary Yendel, were married in Footscray in 1951 and bought the Farmers Arms Hotel in Benalla in 1961. At the same time my grandmother's brother, Vincent, ran the Tatura Hotel.

My mother, Pam, attended boarding school in Rutherglen, where she was a gifted and promising student. When she was aged 16 tragedy struck her

family when her father died. It is what happened after this that I am sure has significantly influenced the woman I am and the woman I strive to be. Pam left school and returned to Benalla to help her mother run the pub and care for her 2-year-old sister, Karen. It was 1970, and two of the strongest women I know, despite their grief, were able to roll up their sleeves and get on with things. They operated the hotel for another five years before my parents married and bought a business of their own. Astute to the challenges faced by women, my mum instilled in me strength, independence and exploration, for which I am and will always be thankful.

Through my parents I am aware of the value of hard work. My father has been mostly self-employed all his working life, running small businesses and working as a carpenter. My mother balanced full-time work with all our after-school sport commitments, housework, cooking, cleaning, shopping — the list goes on. My parents' encouragement, work ethic and commitment inspired me to try hard and have dreams about what I could possibly be when I grew up. I attended Benalla High School, which later became Benalla College and is now known as Benalla P-12. I am very proud of my public education. I was the first person in my family to complete high school, and I truly value that.

I am pleased to say that the former Labor government funded the Benalla P-12 stage 1 upgrade. In the past four years the school did not secure any further funding, but I look forward to working with the school community and advocating towards securing the much-needed stage 2 funding. I am keenly aware that there are many school buildings in northern Victoria that are in desperate need of attention, and I will make it a priority to visit school communities in the region over the next year to better understand their needs.

I have to say that what mattered most to me during my schooling was having teachers who nurtured my love of learning and welcomed my strong opinions. It is so important for governments to work on ways to attract, train and retain the best and brightest teachers to ensure that our kids are inspired within the classroom environment to be the best they can be and to fulfil their potential.

It was not until I left Benalla bound for university in Melbourne that I came face-to-face with the challenges that many country students face. I wanted to study law, and at that time my only option was to move far away from my home and family. This is a decision I have never regretted, but it was not easy and I could never have done it without the support and significant

financial assistance from my parents who made their own sacrifices to provide such help.

It was difficult to find affordable accommodation close to university for students who did not all own cars. In the end we surrendered a lounge room to squeeze four Benalla born-and-bred students into a three-bedroom unit in Burwood. After rent, bills, food and books we were all well and truly poverty stricken, but we made do and it was awesome — a swift and challenging passage into adulthood.

Unfortunately, 18 years later rent and cost-of-living increases have entirely removed the capacity of many country kids to enjoy the same experiences and receive the same opportunities that I did of a tertiary education. This is an issue I am keen to talk to young people across northern Victoria about and to work with them on ways that we as a Labor government can facilitate and support them in meeting higher learning pathways.

In the current economic climate it is vitally important that young people are given the chance to gain the skills they need for the job they want without being forced to move far away and live below the poverty line in the pursuit of their dreams. When it comes to jobs, Labor understands that employment provides more than just the dollars to pay bills. Employment provides fulfilment, achievement and self-worth. Strong, resilient communities, particularly in our regional areas, thrive, grow and strengthen through secure employment opportunities.

I am extremely concerned about the unacceptably high youth unemployment rates in northern Victoria.

In Shepparton, 18 per cent of people aged under 24 are unemployed. In the Hume region it is 16 per cent, and in Victoria's north-west over 20 per cent — that is one in five young people in those communities who cannot get a job. It is shameful that there are so many people in regional areas who cannot access work or get the training that would lead to work. This puts kids at risk of entrenched generational disadvantage. Young people in rural and regional Victoria deserve real options to fulfil their ambitions, and I am proud that Labor will rebuild a strong TAFE sector, provide meaningful support to apprentices, and work to attract the next generation of farmers and growers and keep them on the land. Labor understands deeply the link between independence, employment, opportunity and success. 16:05:00

Labor's \$320 million TAFE rescue fund has already started flowing, and my new parliamentary colleague and fellow member for Northern Victoria Region, the Minister for Training and Skills, Mr Herbert, is a

passionate advocate for TAFE. He and the Labor team are committed to restoring funding and saving campuses across the state so that all students, but especially those in regional Victoria, have a real choice about their future and the best chance of getting a job.

I am so proud that the new Labor government, under the stewardship of Premier Andrews, has not wasted a day getting back on track and back to work. Today we have heard the government has introduced the Back to Work bill in the other place. This forms part of our comprehensive jobs plan for the state, a \$100 million fund that will provide payroll tax relief for companies hiring unemployed youth, the long-term unemployed and recently retrenched workers in full-time work. This plan will support the creation of 100 000 much-needed full-time jobs.

I am looking forward to working with communities in the Northern Victoria Region and being able to support major projects, create the jobs of the future and build stronger regional communities. This will be helped by Labor's \$500 million regional jobs and infrastructure fund. I am particularly motivated to explore opportunities to enable farmers in the same region and industry to collectively market to exporters. We hear of producers not even trying to get into export markets because they think it will be too hard. I want them to know: Labor has their back, and we will provide the assistance and expertise of Victorian government business officers to see that agricultural industries thrive.

My husband, Gerard, and I are looking forward to raising our children in regional Victoria. It is a fantastic place to live and work, but there are things that absolutely must change. My grandmothers, Hazel Symes and Mary McLeod, still reside in Benalla, and they would dearly love to be here today to witness my inaugural speech and tour the great halls. But they are women of fragile health, and a return trip of over 4 hours is just not practical or wise for them. Of course that is unfortunate for me and it is unfortunate for my nannas, but think about the fact that the same barriers exist for the many elderly and ill residents of northern Victoria who are required to travel to receive expert medical treatment, mostly in Melbourne. They do not have the option to sit it out. They are too often forced to endure such long journeys under the stressful and trying burden of ill health.

Victorians now have a Labor government that will repair our fracturing health system, ensuring it is rebuilt, valued and funded. We will be a government that is compassionate and understands the importance of providing universal health services, including

ambulances and emergency care at a local level. Our health system requires financial and human capital investment. Our hospitals, our aged-care services, and our specialist and ancillary health services are filled with extraordinary people. They work hard every single day to heal and care for the sick and injured. The Andrews government gets that. This is no clearer than when no more than three weeks after the election there was finally a resolution to the paramedics' lengthy industrial dispute and a lifting of morale within Ambulance Victoria. This was a proud moment for a very new government. New we may be, but ready we are. I can attest to this, because I know firsthand the foundation that has been laid. I have been a part of the opposition team for the last four years, and I have seen the hard work and commitment from the staff, the MPs and the shadow ministers. There is also intellect, drive and readiness in our new Premier.

I wish to touch on two areas of policy that are very dear to me. The first concerns family violence. There was never a prouder day for me as a Labor person than in May when the then Leader of the Opposition, Daniel Andrews, announced that a future Labor government would establish Australia's first royal commission into family violence. Daniel Andrews's speech was not about winning votes. It was about doing what was right and just and doing no less than what the thousands of women and children who are subjected to male violence each year deserve. This was truly an occasion when Labor was able to demonstrate to Victorians that politics is not a values-free competition with the prize being the offices at 1 Treasury Place. Labor's immediate plans to increase safety and support services for victims, increase perpetrator accountability and adequately resource our courts, in conjunction with the royal commission, will be life-changing for many women in northern Victoria.

Without a doubt I could have written this entire inaugural speech on family violence. I intend to have more to say on this issue in the months and years to come, and there will be plenty of opportunities for me to do so, because not only is it one of my priorities, it is also a priority for the Labor government. On entering this Parliament today I think of Rosie Batty — how privileged I am to know her, how impressed I am by her tireless advocacy, and how very proud her son Luke would be of her.

Another priority from me is tackling the significant problems caused by the drug ice. There is no doubt that ice is devastating Victorian families and communities, but the impact on regional and rural Victoria has been particularly destructive. Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner Graham Ashton has highlighted that the

ice plague is affecting country communities, saying it is clear that an entire generation of rural youth is at risk, which threatens the future prosperity of those communities. I know country communities are worried, I know they are looking to help and I know they are looking for direction to repair the harm and protect the future.

Yesterday the government announced the members of a task force dedicated to tackling the growing problems associated with the drug ice. The task force will produce an action plan early next year and it will make sure that we have the best response to this crisis, both in our regions and our suburbs. The task force will listen to families and local communities. After all, they see this challenge every day.

16:12:30 The Victorian ice action plan will guide all communities on the indicators and on the actions that will combat the problem. The government will also support communities across regional and rural Victoria to develop their own local strategies by funding pilot community-led initiatives to tackle the ever-growing epidemic. The solutions to dealing with family violence and the problems associated with ice are not simple nor are they short term. They will need sustained, long-term strategies, and the political will to drive change is fundamental to achieving positive outcomes in this fight. I will be encouraging towns in northern Victoria to mobilise in ways that I have seen them do before.

On numerous occasions I have witnessed the phenomenal resilience of country communities in their capacity to respond to emergencies. In October 1993 my family and I were evacuated by army officers as our Benalla home filled with muddy floodwater. Ours was just one of the thousands of houses and businesses in the area that were flooded. There was anger and despair, but what I really recall is that the town got down on its collective hands and knees and scrubbed. There was an abundance of hoses, buckets, mops, lasagne and cups of tea. Through this experience I learnt that I lived in a noble and caring community that was defined in the face of disaster.

All Victorians will remember Saturday, 7 February 2009, as brutal, devastating and life altering. During the aftermath I was humbled to meet with many locals working without hesitation to keep communities safe, informed and bound together. Along with former Deputy Premier Rob Hulls, I toured the torched areas of Strathewen, Flowerdale and Marysville, where the haunting images of flattened and blackened homes in locations where bodies had been located will remain with me forever, as will the faces of the Country Fire Authority members, incident control teams, Department

of Sustainability and Environment staff, police and Department of Human Services staff, relief centre staff, cooks, doctors, vets, lawyers and community members who had lost so much but were still wanting to help others.

We see this type of community spirit and collective strength in the midst of crisis again and again in rural and regional Victoria, most recently during last week's fires in central, north-central and north-eastern Victoria. Sadly five houses were lost, thousands of livestock are gone and kilometres of fencing were destroyed. I would like to thank our emergency services personnel, our volunteers and all those who gave their time and put themselves at risk to protect lives and property, and I know they would do it again. We are only in the early stages of the fire season. We must remain vigilant, but I wish for everyone a safe and happy festive period.

I wish to tell the story of how I started on the path that led me here. My first real job as a carer for people with intellectual disabilities not only helped me pay my own way through the latter part of my years at university, but it was a role I truly enjoyed. I loved the people and their attitudes to life. It also brought with it the frustrations of seeing firsthand the barriers to inclusion and restrictions of opportunity that many people in our communities face. I spent every working day of my five years in this field ensuring that I went out of my way to provide the people I cared for with choices, self-determination, confidence, social inclusion and encouragement so they might realise they could have a go at anything. I hope I made a difference to their lives, because Brenda, Bruce, Rupert, Maree, Enid and David certainly had an impact on mine.

In 2003, armed with a law degree and a passion to help people and with an aversion to a corporate law environment and 6-minute billing units, I fled to Perth for a working holiday to distract myself from the pressures of the unanswered questions about what I should be doing with my life. I answered a job advertisement for a junior lawyer at the *West Australian* newspaper. For the next three years I worked for the Australian Services Union in both Perth and Melbourne. I also worked as a nightclub security guard when I lived in Perth, but I think there will be further opportune times to use that material.

Union work is rewarding. It is about delivering better working conditions, dignity and fairness in the workplace, and it is about overcoming injustice. You also meet some really great people. I still hold a strong passion for standing up for workers and for people with disabilities, and I will pursue those passions in my role as a member for northern Victoria.

WorkChoices was one of the main driving forces behind my transition from the union arm to the political arm of the labour movement as it was an opportunity to further protect workers from unfairness. It was through this transition that I discovered where I belonged. To be surrounded by so many like-minded people was enlightening. Talking about values such as fairness, equality of opportunity and the responsibility to stand up for the vulnerable is one thing, but being in power and part of a government that can turn these values into tangible outcomes and improve people's lives is beyond a privilege.

The person who gave me my start in politics was former Deputy Premier and Attorney-General Rob Hulls. Rob served the people of Victoria as a parliamentarian for more than 15 years. He was, and is, passionate about justice, fairness and opportunity. As a politician he was a reformer, a doer, a champion and a team player who brought the smarts and the heart to every task. I am proud to be associated with his enormous contribution to Victoria and the Labor cause. If I can in any way emulate his time in this place, then Victoria will be better for it.

Rob has encouraged me and mentored me for many years now. He has supported me in my roles as industrial relations adviser, legal adviser, parliamentary adviser, caucus liaison adviser, shadow education adviser, electorate officer and now member for Northern Victoria Region. I thank Rob and Carolyn for their enduring support and continuous guidance.

I would like to acknowledge the many people who have contributed to my being here today. I met my husband, Gerard Collins, in 2005, shortly after I had commenced working for the Bracks government. By this time I was already hooked — Gerard knew that with me came politics. To his credit and to my joy, from that time on he has been by my side, supporting my ambitions and riding the good, the not-so-good and the testing times. Most recently he taught himself the Victorian Upper House proportional counting system!

I am the beneficiary of his wise counsel and advice and of his humour, which brings happiness to our home every day. Gerard is an amazing teacher. He is a strong advocate for equal opportunity, which is an asset to the all-girls school he works at in the western suburbs of Melbourne. His philosophy to teaching is to connect with students on a real and personal level and have some fun. I was in awe and proud beyond words when I read the Christmas cards he received from his students. They described the impact he has had on their lives and their futures. I am grateful that he is an even better

father than he is a teacher. Philippa, Archie and I adore you. I thank you for your love, support and sacrifice.

I thank my father, Ian, mother, Pam, and brother, Anthony, for my wonderful country upbringing, full of family, friends, education, recreation, holidays and opportunity. With the addition of my sister-in-law, Sarah, I am truly blessed to have such a brilliant family whom I will never take for granted.

My grandmothers, Mary and Hazel, uncles and aunties, Karen, Sam, Joanne, Gail and Geoff, and all my cousins are people who helped raise me, helped me find my political values and supported me in chasing my dreams. I thank them.

I thank my in-laws Paul and Jan Collins, Angela and Vito, Michelle and Marcus, Roma, Laurence, Marie and family for welcoming me into their family, and for everything they do for me and especially for supporting Gerard, Philippa, Archie and me in my pursuit of a political life and for substituting for me in my absences during the campaign. I know I earned some points with my involvement in the development of Labor's puppy farm policy, but I know I would not have got here without you.

My Labor family is large, and I have been lucky to work with some brilliant minds and passionate, kind people who are driven by their desire to make this state fairer, equal and more prosperous. I have been generously afforded the friendship of many. I would like to mention some of them now: Luke Donnellan, Natalie Hutchins, Cesar Melhem, Martin Pakula, Wade Noonan, James Merlino, Danielle Green, Telmo Languiller, Daniel Andrews, John Brumby, Mark Madden, John Cain, Brett Curran, Ben Davis, Earl Setches, Raff Ciconne, Shannon Threlfall-Clarke, Rod Gurry, Julie Ligeti and all my former opposition room colleagues. I make special mention of Vicky Setches and also Richard Wynne, whom I wish a speedy return to good health.

There are also some amazing country Labor women I would particularly like to acknowledge, including Jacinta Allan, Jaala Pulford, Clare Malcolm and Rowena Allen. The residents of northern Victoria have benefited greatly from the hard work of Labor MPs Candy Broad, Kaye Darveniza and Marg Lewis, and I look forward to building on their contributions.

I would like to thank northern Victoria's wonderful ALP branches, led by inspiring true believers. I particularly acknowledge Labor's tireless and committed Euroa campaign director, John Dennis.

I believe that politics serves the people whose votes give us the privilege of being here. It is not an elite sport played only by members of Parliament. I believe representation is about advocacy and action, activism and accountability.

16:22:30 I am inexpressibly proud to be here as part of this new, fresh and hopeful Andrews government — a government that has already shown itself to demonstrate the truth in its campaign catchcry, 'Putting people first'.

I have written many speeches for others over the years, not many for myself. I have found that I am really terrible at ending them, never quite confident I have the right words or can land the killer blow, so I regularly leave it for the deliverer. I leave gaps for them to fill in, often under the guise of advice such as, 'It will sound much more personal if you finish it off with your own words'. More often than not I got away with it. I kind of regret that practice now.

I thought about finding an inspirational quote. I even googled 'good endings for speeches'. But what occurred to me is that this speech should not have an ending — not yet. It really just marks the beginning. This is the start of my opportunity to do some really big things, to make changes for the better, to fight for fairness, to listen to people, to be guided by my values, to help where I can and to strive to make a valuable contribution to this state and to this Parliament. So it is fitting that this speech stops in my usual way and with the words 'insert here'.

Mr DALIDAKIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I second the motion for the address-in-reply to the Governor's opening speech.

Let me say it is a pleasure and an honour to rise for the first time in this house as a member for Southern Metropolitan Region and as a member of the Andrews Labor government. I begin by congratulating you, President, on your re-election. I congratulate all the newly elected members to this chamber in our class of 2014. Let me start by congratulating Daniel Andrews on his leadership, his commitment, his policies and his plans over the past four years, and most importantly on his passion and desire to make Victoria inclusive and active once again. I have no doubt he will be a very successful Premier. I also want to publicly congratulate the whole Labor team from head office, led brilliantly by my good friend and state secretary, Noah Carroll. On every level, by every test, it was a brilliant campaign.

As the only Labor representative in Southern Metropolitan Region, I recognise that I have a big responsibility. I am the fourth Labor representative in the region after Evan Thornley, Jennifer Huppert and the recently retired, much loved and universally respected John Lenders. I thank John for his service and I certainly wish him well for his future.

No-one comes to the Parliament without the support and commitment of a large number of people. I am grateful to all those who have supported me during my time in Labor politics and also those who worked for my election. In particular, first and foremost I wish to thank Ari Suss for his friendship and for our shared history — his grandmother and I date way back to Shanghai; Dr Henry Pinski, whose sense of honour shines bright; Peter Khalil, who is a truly impressive person and a great friend to boot; Sam Rae, the brother that I never had; and Ben Carroll, the member for Niddrie in the other place, who is not just a good friend of mine but a great example of a local MP who works hard for his community. I also thank Fiona Richardson, the member for Northcote in the other place, who is as much a mentor to me as she is a friend.

I have been fortunate to be influenced by a number of other people whom I have an immense amount of respect for. They include Theo Theophanous, Stephen Conroy, Tony Windsor and Michael Kapel. All are formidable individuals who use politics as a means to an end, and that end always has been and always must be good public policy. This is the best lesson I ever learnt from all four: never lose sight of the destination. The policy outcome must always be paramount.

It is not just professional influences that have shaped me but personal ones too. On my mother's side, as with so many in the Melbourne Jewish community, it starts with the trauma of the Holocaust. In 1935, just eight days after my grandparents' wedding, my grandfather Gottfried Strauss was taken by the Nazis and first sent to Dachau. He was imprisoned for three and a half years before my grandmother Irene Strauss, nee Meyer, managed to have him released on the condition that they left Germany, with little other than the clothes on their backs. Sadly he was never the same man again. To honour him today by taking the oath on his bar mitzvah Torah scroll was very special indeed.

As a result of that tragedy, my grandmother needed to do the heavy lifting. She was indeed a formidable woman. In mid to late 1939 she arranged passage for her two brothers, her parents and my grandfather to Italy, where they boarded a ship that took them to Shanghai, which was the only port open to Jewish refugees. There, my mother and aunt were born. In 16:30:00

1946 one of my grandmother's cousins, Berthold Meyer — who was one of the Dunera boys, and now living in Gippsland — saw the family name on a Red Cross list, and sponsored them out here.

Not content with her own safe arrival here, my grandmother took a bus to Canberra to speak with then immigration minister, Arthur Calwell — a great friend of the Jewish people, by the way. She did so on behalf of her friends who had been left in Shanghai, with nobody to look after them, no family here, and no-one to sponsor them. That intervention saw to it that the Koenig and Speiser family histories remain shared with ours to this day. Three generations on, our families remain close.

My mother Noemi also remains an inspiration. It is often joked within our family that Mum is the best Jewish saint there is. Nothing is too much for her to help someone in need. That is not a surprise, because she has spent her whole life dedicated to others as a primary school teacher. Her selflessness and desire to see everyone reach their potential helps drive me to see that same outcome for every child today.

My father George had it no easier. Due to the ill health of his mother and later his father, he had responsibility thrust upon him from the tender age of 11. Their needs became his and his income became theirs. Again, selflessness drove my father to achieve and succeed, and his work ethic and generosity have ensured that he has been and remains a great role model for me today.

My parents have been married for nearly 49 years. They remain a great team and a wonderful example to Debra, my children and me of what can be achieved through hard work, perseverance, a lot of love and just a smidgen of understanding and compromise.

My aunt Dagmar — my mother's youngest and only sister — has treated me as the son she never had, and has had a profound influence on me. Both she and her husband, my uncle Ehud, are journalists who have taught me to always seek answers and never give up until satisfied.

My sister Marina, my only sibling, unfortunately now lives in San Diego with her family. We remain close despite the tyranny of distance, largely thanks to Skype and Face Time.

My in-laws, Cheryl and Allan, along with Debra's sisters, Rachelle, Samantha and their families, have also been embracing and supportive and even share the schnitzels with me on Friday night Shabbat dinners.

Of course everyone in this place knows that we do not come into politics alone. It is very much a shared journey. My experience is no different. My wife, Debra, has been an amazing support. Debra is an extraordinarily strong woman, not afraid to tell me what she is thinking, which she does regularly. We have three children, Zoe, Asha and Benjamin, who mean the world to me. While I know this job can become all-consuming, my commitment to Debra and my children is that first and foremost I will always be there for them. In turn I believe this will make me a better legislator.

My own journey started as a 15-year-old, when I joined the ALP, inspired by the politics of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. It is appropriate to thank both the great Australian Labor Party for its confidence in me and also all its branch members, who work so hard and contribute so much to our party.

Over my professional career I have run my own small business, held positions in the commercial and finance sector and worked in government, both at a state and federal level.

I have also spent three and a half years as the chief executive officer of the Victorian Association of Forest Industries. I learnt a great deal fighting against ideological attacks on the timber industry and then, sadly, through the devastation of the Black Saturday fires. Nearly four years on, away from the industry, I remain a passionate advocate for our local wood and paper products industry and by extension rural and regional Victoria, despite being a metropolitan member of Parliament.

Victoria is on the whole a prosperous community, but we all know that the benefits of that prosperity do not reach everyone in our community. The capitalist system is very good at generating wealth, better than any other economic system devised or thought of. That is why, with due respect to my friends on the left, I am not a socialist. However, it is not so good at making sure that wealth reaches every locality, family and citizen. That is why, with due respect to my friends on the right, I am not a conservative.

The tendency of capitalism to concentrate wealth and stifle opportunity must be countered by positive action by government. That is why, if anything, I am probably a social democrat; that is why I joined the Labor Party. I do not believe in class warfare. I have no problem with wealth that is honestly acquired. Some of my best friends are wealthy, and to them I say, 'Mazel tov'. There is no contradiction between the healthy pursuit of

prosperity and a dedication to fighting for fairness, justice and a better and stronger community.

One of the biggest issues facing society is not capitalism or socialism; it is social inclusion. The role of government is to be inclusive and to support those who are least able to look out for themselves. We need to provide a voice to those who struggle to speak. It is not about smaller government, it is not about bigger government, it is about smarter government. It is about providing for those who need our help most — the long-term unemployed, our at-risk children, our homeless — often through carefully targeted government action, while not allowing welfare dependency to develop.

It means preventing the development of an underclass, with all its attendant social pathology, such as we have and continue to see in Great Britain and the United States. It means creating a society in which all celebrate difference and not being fearful of bigotry and discrimination on grounds of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender identity or even disability. This is how we do not leave anyone behind; this is how we become more inclusive.

Since our federal government cares little about social inclusion and has slashed significant funding to Victoria, the burden of carrying out these policy objectives now falls upon all of us. Underpinning every other social policy must be a focus on jobs. Nothing undermines social cohesion, nothing creates social exclusion, nothing blights the life chances of children more than entrenched unemployment. Providing an economic environment in which quality, well-paid jobs are created and sustained is the best and in fact the only way to create a society in which every person has a sense of self-worth and self-belief.

One of the most important components of any plan to sustain and expand employment is technical and vocational education. Closing TAFE colleges is, quite literally, closing the doors to a better future for all our young Victorians, particularly those from lower income families and families from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Therefore it was great to see the Premier and the Deputy Premier, on their very first day in office, reopening the doors to the Swinburne-Lilydale TAFE campus as part of Labor's commitment to revitalising the TAFE sector.

There are three policies or pillars within the broader social inclusiveness remit that I wish to highlight. I do not quote Mark Latham very often — in fact I doubt you will ever hear me quote him again. But he was quite right when he said that education was the first

rung on the 'ladder of opportunity'. Education must remain the first pillar.

I support all schools full stop, be they government, independent or religious. But state primary and secondary schools are the unique responsibility of our government. We need to ensure that children in our public schools have access to high quality teaching and a high level of resources, regardless of where they live.

I could talk about many schools in the Southern Metropolitan Region, but today I will just mention one — Caulfield Park Community School. This is a state school that provides a supportive environment for students who have found that traditional schools have not been able to meet their needs. This school does great work with students who might otherwise drop out of education altogether. It is a good example of how an inclusive school system ought to operate — by not leaving anyone behind. We need to make sure that we do not leave it or the students that attend it, either now or in the future, behind as well.

The second policy I wish to mention is social housing. It is not sexy nor does it attract the media's attention, but it is something we need to focus on, it is something we need to improve and it is something we need to get right. We have two problem areas — firstly, with short-term crisis housing for women and children in domestic violence situations, and secondly, with longer term housing for our ageing population. This remains my second pillar.

The third and final pillar I wish to raise is disability access. We have recently made enormous strides in this area, and the national disability insurance scheme will always remain a proud Labor reform. But it is just the beginning, not the end. We need to push for greater consistency of disability access in public and private spaces. I challenge members not just in this place but across both chambers of Parliament to come together to support a disability awareness day, during which they try to go about their duties either in a wheelchair or as sight-affected to better understand how limiting and isolating our society can be and how far we have to go to become more inclusive, not exclusive.

I have been fortunate. My story is what drives me and what I seek to achieve, and ultimately it will define me. Before sitting down I wish to do two more things. Firstly, I wish to thank all our parliamentary staff for putting up with us, especially the staff in the Legislative Council. I give a special mention to the memory of Russel Bowman. He and I would have got up to a lot of mischief today. Secondly, I also want to note that the coming year is the 25th anniversary of the

16:40:00

parliamentary internship program, of which I am an alumnus from 1997. David Davis from the other side was my supervising MP at the time, and do I have some stories, but I will hold them for another time. With that I think it is time to roll up the sleeves and get down to work.

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — President, I congratulate you on your re-election to high office today. I am quite sure you will serve this Parliament with distinction, as you did the previous Parliament.

I am very fortunate and humbled indeed to have been elected to represent Western Victoria Region, a large and diverse electorate that covers nearly 80 000 square kilometres, including the cities and towns of Geelong, Ballarat, Warrnambool, Horsham, Hamilton, Colac, Portland, Ararat, Stawell and Maryborough. Western Victoria has a very proud history and a very bright future.

My family has lived in the Western Victoria Region since the late 1850s, when Timothy Morris of Tipperary, Ireland, travelled to Australia aboard the *Donald McKay* with his eight children. Timothy chose to immigrate to Australia soon after the passing of his wife. I have often pondered on how challenging an existence it must have been, leaving the country of your birth and travelling halfway around the world with eight children as a single parent. Timothy Morris and his family settled in Minyip in the Wimmera, where my grandmother, Patricia Morris, still resides today. Victoria is the place it is today due to the hard work and sacrifice of the trailblazing pioneers of our great state, such as Timothy Morris, and to all our forebears we should be most grateful.

I consider myself very fortunate to have spent 31 of my 32 years living in western Victoria. Ballarat is my home city, and it was where I spent my formative years. I am privileged to have been educated at three great institutions, namely, St Francis Xavier Primary School, St Patrick's College and Australian Catholic University, Aquinas campus, where I earned my education degree. My first chosen profession is that of teacher. Education has been a great source of inspiration to me, both as a student and then as a teacher. My father, Roger Morris, has taught for over 33 years, and it was he who inspired me to become a teacher myself.

I was fortunate to have many inspirational teachers, two of whom were my English teacher, Mrs Mary Purcell, and my legal studies teacher, Mr Geoff Brodie. Mrs Purcell brought to life the works of Oscar Wilde and Albert Camus for a classroom of 17-year-old boys — no mean feat — and Mr Brodie awoke in me

the love of our political system, its practices and functions and its egalitarian nature. I mention my teachers because they exemplify the influence a teacher can have on their students, and therefore on future generations.

Teachers have the power to inspire and guide students and so have a significant impact upon how society will act and function into the future. This is a great responsibility and one that should not be taken lightly. It is a responsibility that deserves to be acknowledged and respected by the community as a whole, for our teachers are educating for our society's future.

My journey into public life began in local government in 2012 when, on my 30th birthday, I was fortunate enough to be elected to the Ballarat City Council. While serving on the Ballarat council I had the opportunity to assist many ratepayers, but one instance in particular has stayed with me. There was a freak storm with high winds, and many trees were downed across the city. A resident phoned me to ask if I could assist him in disposing of the tree that had come crashing through the roof of his home. After a couple of phone calls it was ensured that anyone across the city who had suffered downed trees as a result of the storm could dispose of them free of charge at the local transfer station. This may seem like an insignificant event in the broader scheme of things, but it has stayed with me because it is what government should be about: good decision making and ensuring that the needs of the community are recognised and in turn responded to.

Twelve months after my election as a councillor I was elected mayor; I was the youngest person to lead the great City of Ballarat. I know many members in this place have also served in local government, and we have seen in the recent past many councillors elected from a variety of backgrounds. I encourage people who are motivated and passionate about their communities to consider standing in local government elections. Councillors have a significant opportunity to shape their local communities.

I live just a few hundred metres from where the Eureka rebellion occurred. The Eureka story means many things to many different people, and this is evident now more than ever. For me the Eureka story is about fighting for the right to have a say in who governs your community and fighting against high, opportunistic taxation.

The rebellion was about self-determination and fighting for the right to free enterprise — free from undue encumbrance of the government. The lessons of the 16:47:30

Eureka rebellion are as pertinent now as they were in 1854; governments must govern for all people and respect people's right to self-determination and independence. Western Victoria, as the home of the Eureka story, is the birthplace of democracy in Australia. That is something of which all western Victorians should be proud.

Volunteers truly are the lifeblood of our community, and we as a community should always remember to acknowledge and thank our volunteers for all that they do, whether they be our Country Fire Authority volunteers keeping communities safe during the bushfire season, our State Emergency Service volunteers responding in times of emergency, our sporting and service organisations ensuring that our young people have the opportunity to play sport every weekend or support programs for those who may face more challenges than others in life. Volunteerism is a part of our way of life in Victoria and an important part of what makes this state the great place it is. I would like to acknowledge that over the Christmas period there will be people not spending time with their families because they will be volunteering to make our state a safe place.

If volunteers are the lifeblood of our community, then small business is the lifeblood of our economy. I come from a family of small business people and understand the hard work and dedication it takes to be successful. Governments should allow small business to thrive and should always ensure that red tape and bureaucratic roadblocks to the efficient running of small businesses are minimised.

I joined the Liberal Party in my early 20s because of the beliefs and values I hold dear. One such value is our right to free enterprise. I believe it is through self-determination, and not being dictated to by governments, that people individually, and then collectively as a community, will achieve great outcomes.

Governments have a responsibility to ensure that their citizens are kept safe. It is equally important to ensure that individual rights are protected, maintained and enhanced.

Victoria is a great and diverse state. Multiculturalism is an important part of what makes Victoria the great state it is. Over time we have seen immigrants arrive here from all over the world, and this has shaped our great state for the better. Having served on the Grampians Regional Advisory Council to the Victorian Multicultural Commission, I was fortunate to work alongside people who exemplify why multiculturalism

works. These are people who have chosen to move to Victoria, bringing their families, skills and expertise, and we are the richer for it. We are, on the whole, a welcoming and tolerant community. However, we still have a way to go in ensuring that, irrespective of race, religion or creed, we are all viewed and treated equally. Everyone should be judged not on where they come from, nor on what they look like, but on their acts and their character.

During my time in the Liberal Party I have been fortunate to serve as president of the Ballarat branch and more recently as a member of the administrative committee alongside other passionate and dedicated members. I wish to pay tribute to David Koch, the member I succeed in this place. David served in this Parliament for 12 years, beginning as the member for Western Province and then as a member for Western Victoria Region. I thank David for his service, his dedication to his electorate and more personally for his friendship and guidance.

I would like to acknowledge another member for Western Victoria Region from the previous Parliament, David O'Brien. David served his electorate with distinction, and I am saddened that I will not serve alongside him in this place. His absence is a loss to the Parliament.

I thank Simon Ramsay, my fellow Liberal member for Western Victoria Region, for his support. I very much look forward to serving alongside him in this Parliament for the great people of western Victoria.

I must thank those within the Liberal Party who have assisted me in my journey to this place. I am conscious that I will not mention many people that I should, and for that I apologise. I must, however, acknowledge three longstanding members for whom I have the utmost respect and to whom I am very thankful for their assistance over many years: Tony Snell, president of the Victorian division of the Liberal Party; Frank Greenstein, the vice-president of the party; and Paul Jenkins, a former member for Ballarat West.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge those to whom I am the most indebted in being able to stand in this place today: my family. To my parents, Sally and Roger; my siblings, Prue, Zoe, Brad and Abraham; my grandmothers, Patricia and Barbara; and my grandfathers, Bill and Alan, who unfortunately are no longer with us but I know are looking down upon us today: thank you for your love and your support.

To my wonderful wife, Louise, thank you for the support you have given me over the past seven years of

our married life and more particularly for your support over the past four years; it has been one election campaign after another. Without your love and guidance I would not be standing here today, and I thank you. To my four beautiful children, William, Isaac, Charlotte and Xavier, you inspire me every day to make our great state an even better place to live for future generations. You all make me proud of you every day, although I would not mind a night of unbroken sleep sometime in the not-too-distant future.

President, thank you for your indulgence once again. I am humbled and honoured to stand in this place today to represent the good people of western Victoria, and I hope my contribution to this chamber will see that Victoria is a better place for us now and for generations to come.

16:55:00 **Ms FITZHERBERT** (Southern Metropolitan) — I congratulate you, President, on your election to the role. I also congratulate the Deputy President on her elevation. I wish you both well in undertaking your important duties.

On one of the last days of the most extraordinary and challenging year of my life it gives me great pleasure to rise to give my first speech as a member for Southern Metropolitan Region. Southern Metropolitan Region is a large, diverse and vibrant electorate. I have lived within what are now its boundaries for around 20 years. It includes some of Melbourne's most established suburbs as well as areas with all the benefits and challenges of the inner city. It is ethnically diverse and home to some of Melbourne's major employers as well as thousands of small businesses. It boasts some of Melbourne's most loved places, including the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Shrine of Remembrance, the arts precinct at Southbank and the beaches of our bayside suburbs, including Sandringham, which is where I live with my family. It is an honour to represent my local community, and I pledge to be an active and diligent representative.

I come to this place not to be an observer but to be a contributor, a builder and an advocate. I owe nothing less to the people I am now privileged to represent. This aim also reflects the values and beliefs I have held through my life and which have driven me through my involvement in politics; my employment, including the years spent as an adviser to the Howard government early on in my career; my writing; and the contribution I have made to the not-for-profit sector.

I believe that individual freedoms are paramount — freedom of choice, freedom of association, freedom of worship and freedom of speech. These values are

woven into the fabric of our nation, and their great success in practice is what has drawn thousands of migrants to our shores, including my father and his parents. My grandparents lived through the blitz in London. My grandmother, who was then a young mother, spent her nights as an air-raid warden. My grandfather gave up pharmacy to become a health inspector as part of the war effort. When the war was over and Britain was cautiously starting to rebuild they left for a new life in Australia, where their sons, and eventually they granddaughters, would have the kind of opportunities to study, to work and to achieve that they judged would be beyond reach in post-war Britain. I will always be thankful they made this choice.

I also believe in small government. The sheer number of bills passed by a government is no reason to boast, although some governments do, and it is certainly no measure of success. A better measure of success is this: when a government does act, is it doing so to maximise choice and opportunity? I believe that individuals are best able to make decisions about their own lives and futures, and it is better for society as a whole when individuals, families and businesses have the freedom and opportunity to determine and build their own futures.

I have seen this principle in action in the community organisations that I know well. Let me give just one example. For nine years I volunteered as a director of the Sandybeach Centre, not far from where I live. I also chaired the board for several years. Sandybeach has survived and thrived for more than 30 years because it understands and responds to the needs of local residents. It provides much-needed respite care for the frail elderly, it runs education and training for adults with intellectual disabilities, it creates courses and volunteering opportunities that help unemployed people get jobs and it provides affordable child care for local parents. Sandybeach also works closely with residents in local public housing estates to identify the kinds of services and training they want and need. Ultimately, some of these services support people to find employment. Others are about developing better financial management or parenting skills. All of this is a great example of a non-government organisation providing choice and opportunity by responding to local needs in a personalised way that is largely beyond the capacity of government.

So what is the role of government? One of the most important roles is to support a strong economy and through it an environment where business can flourish, and to ensure that any services that are provided by government are appropriately funded. Government should provide what Robert Menzies called 'civilised

capitalism' — ensuring that individuals and enterprises can reach their full potential while providing a safety net for those who cannot easily provide for themselves.

As a Liberal, I believe in equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome. And I speak out when it is clear that lip-service is being given to notions of equality. That is one reason why I am a feminist, and as such, I am part of a liberal tradition that stretches back to John Stuart Mill. When I was an undergraduate at Monash University, Mill's feminist writings, and in particular his essay *The Subjection of Women*, left a lasting impression on me. Mill's belief in equality extended to women — a rare argument by a man in the 1860s. He held that equality for women was good for women and good for society. He made the case for marriage laws that were more favourable for women. He argued that women should be able to own property, work outside the home and have financial independence, and he argued that women should have the right to vote and run for office.

Some years later, when I was researching my first book, I was fascinated by the links Mill sought and made with the colonies of South Australia and Victoria. As the colonies grappled with suffrage, Mill urged them to ensure that women were able to vote. Mill was instrumental in swinging South Australia to his view, and through the debates of the Federation Conventions, this in turn led to Australian women getting the right to vote in commonwealth elections as one of the first acts of the new federal government — an act passed, of course, in this magnificent building.

Liberal women had many causes around the time of federation and into the 20th century. They built outstanding campaign machines and effectively operated as political parties. Many women continued to campaign for causes consistent with Mill's philosophy, such as equal divorce laws for men and women and the right for women to seek election to state parliaments.

Today there are still many issues of gender that are unfinished business. Here are just a few: the gender pay gap, discrimination in employment, domestic violence and other forms of assaults on women. It is nothing short of shameful that almost every week an Australian woman dies at the hands of a partner or former partner. Other issues are how we respond to the social and health issues that accompany female genital mutilation, and the practice of forcing under-age girls — children — into marriage. These are issues that matter, and that is why I have spent most of my adult life speaking up on gender issues, researching them and writing about them, and it is why I have been involved with a range of women's organisations.

It is perhaps unsurprising that I have done so given the family that produced and raised me. Earlier I referred to my grandfather, Tom Fitzherbert. He spent the Second World War in London, but that is not where he was born. As with previous generations of his British family, he was born and lived in India. But as a young child, around the time of the First World War, he was sent home from India with his brother and sister to be raised by his maternal aunt, Florence Cunningham, in Portsmouth. His mother remained in India while his father, a soldier and engineer, was on active service in places like Egypt and Mesopotamia. Florence was a suffragette, and she took the opportunity to raise her sister's three children in as equal a way as she could. It is clear from the letters that remain that the children's father strongly supported this unusual approach, and as adults the children were grateful for it and believed it had a lasting effect on each of them.

Both sides of my family — the Fitzherberts and the Knights — share the belief that where they are able, people should contribute to their local communities. That means helping someone when you can, volunteering and getting involved with community groups. My grandparents, parents and stepmother have all done this, and I have made an effort to follow their example.

Until last week I held what was for me a dream position as chair of the board of the Royal Women's Hospital, which drew together two of my great policy interests. I come to this chamber with a strong interest in health and the health sector. I have worked as an industrial advocate in the public health sector, representing a range of health providers, from major hospitals to community health centres. I have worked on award restructuring and disputes in public health. I have defended public health sector employers against unfair dismissal claims by employees, and in doing so I have developed a strong understanding of workplace practices in the public health sector and a working knowledge of the industrial awards that direct them. I have been part of the governance wing of several not-for-profit organisations that provide health and community services. My personal knowledge of the health system, as a mother and as a direct consumer, adds another layer to my understanding. While it is critical to have an effective private health system and private health insurance — not least because frankly those who can pay, should — we need a strong, responsive and well-funded public health system. Our rapidly growing population adds to the challenge. I give credit to the performance of the previous government in relation to public health, and in particular for its unprecedented investment in capital infrastructure here in Melbourne and in rural and regional areas.

We who serve here do so only because we stand on the shoulders of others. Especially during this last year I have been very fortunate to have remarkable support from my family as well as from many friends and colleagues, and there are a number who I wish to acknowledge today. First and foremost, my family: my mother for her limitless love, ever-practical support and the example of her powerful work ethic, and my father, whose greatest gift to his two daughters was his firm belief, from when we were very young, that we could handle any situation that life threw at us. His belief made it possible.

17:05:00 I thank my stepmother, who for more than 30 years has loved two children who were not born hers, and whose love now extends to my own children. My sister Penne, as always, somehow found many ways to help me and look after me from her home in London.

I thank my husband for his persistence, his love and great patience, and also for being totally unflappable in any situation, the latter being a special skill of his that I have tested on many occasions.

I thank the Williams family, who from the start embraced me as one of their own. They now have the misfortune to have in-laws who are members of the Tasmanian and Victorian parliaments, as well a cousin who is a member of the Western Australian Parliament. They must be wondering what they have done to deserve this.

Today of course I also think of those who are not here, and in particular my late mother-in-law, Celia. I adored Celia. She loved a celebration and would have enjoyed today immensely. My children, Zara, Tom and Victoria, are the great joy of my life. They are also a constant reminder to me of the importance of the decisions that we make in this place.

No-one is elected to Parliament without a lot of help from a lot of people. I thank Tony Snell, Damien Mantach and their team for the campaign that made my election possible. I value the very practical support I have had from two of my former employers, the Honourable David Kemp and the Honourable Judi Moylan. I thank the member for Brighton in the other place and the Honourable Judith Troeth for many years of friendship and support, and for their thoughtful and often blunt advice.

I acknowledge the new member for Hawthorn in the other place, as well as Matthew and Karina O'Meara, Helen Shardey, John Roskam, Peter McWilliam, Senator Michael Ronaldson, Dr Peter Poggioli, Michael

Kroger, Ramon Frederico, Jane Hume, Judy Snodgrass, Jeannette Rawlinson and Chantalle Abou-Haila.

I single out the member for Ripon in the other place and Jason Aldworth for particular thanks. In their own very different and inimitable ways they have helped me immeasurably. Both have given me steadfast friendship. I am very grateful to David Davis, Andrea Coote and Georgie Crozier for their unrelenting work during the lower house campaigns in Southern Metropolitan Region and for their personal support.

I want to pay tribute to Andrea Coote's contribution as a member of the Legislative Council. She held leadership roles in this place and established a well-deserved reputation as a great campaigner. Andrea has boundless energy and contagious enthusiasm. She did not back away from unpopular or controversial causes, and I can personally attest that people from community organisations throughout Southern Metropolitan Region speak of her with respect and obvious affection. Finally, I owe a very special debt to Professor Sandy Heriot and Dr Ross Jennens and their teams.

At the age of five my younger daughter does not fully understand the significance of her mother and godmother both being elected to this Parliament on 29 November. But when Victoria is old enough to do so, I hope she will be proud of what the member for Ripon and I achieve and contribute through this place. I am an optimist at heart, and I like to believe that everybody who comes here does so with at least some commitment to the idea that public service through the Parliament is a way to protect what is good, make our communities better and improve the lives of individuals. I share this sense of purpose. I am reminded of the words attributed to John Wesley; some doubt he said them, but regardless of who did, the sentiment makes sense to me:

Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.

I know that in this place we will often disagree about what is good, but I hope we will do so with respect and goodwill, mindful of our respective values and the people who elected us. That is my intention. I thank the house for its indulgence.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan).

Debate adjourned until next sitting day.

17:12:30

ADJOURNMENT

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Ballarat Health Services

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — President, in the first instance I congratulate you on your continuance in your elevated position as President. I also compliment the Deputy President on her election to her position.

My matter tonight is for the Minister for Health in the other place and concerns Ballarat Health Services. Many in this chamber will understand that Ballarat Health Services is a very strong health service which provides not only regional leadership for the Grampians region of the Department of Health but also great services for those in Ballarat and the regional areas surrounding it.

Ballarat Health Services has delivered great quality services and has also been able to reach very good outcomes in terms of waiting lists, having reached record lows in its waiting lists in recent periods. Leading up to the election, the former coalition government made an \$83 million commitment to expand Ballarat Health Services if it was re-elected. That significant commitment would have seen an expansion of three floors, an expansion of the cardiac catheter unit and a significant expansion of a considerable level of services beyond.

At that time Labor made a simple commitment of \$10 million for the expansion of cardiac catheter services alone. In its announcements Labor neglected to mention a series of outpatient areas and what its contribution would be in terms of the expansion and future growth capacity of Ballarat Health Services. As a result, there is a \$73 million black hole in Labor's commitment to Ballarat Health Services — a \$73 million shortfall that will need to be filled to provide adequate growth capacity and adequate assurance for the future of Ballarat Health Services both in the immediate term and in the longer period ahead.

I seek from the Minister for Health a review of Labor's commitment to see whether there is a way that the government can allocate the additional \$73 million that will be required to make up Labor's — Daniel Andrews's — black hole at Ballarat Health.

West Gate distributor

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is addressed to the Minister for Roads, the Honourable Luke Donnellan. This government, led by Daniel Andrews, has committed to an ambitious and much-needed infrastructure program, the aims of which are threefold: to pull away from the decline in the Victorian economy over the last four years in order to achieve substantial growth once more; to create 100 000 jobs, which Labor has pledged to achieve; and to invest in our infrastructure to meet current demand and future population growth.

One piece of that infrastructure program is the West Gate distributor. This great investment will take 5000 trucks a day off the West Gate Bridge and will serve as a second river crossing for commuters in Melbourne's west, thus decongesting roads. It is an investment for the present and the future, and it is my understanding that it is a project that will happen sooner rather than later, unlike the east-west link, for which the former government had no business case.

The action I seek is that the minister provide me and the people of my electorate with a time line for the building and completion of the West Gate distributor, this major infrastructure project.

Political harassment

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I begin by congratulating you on your re-election, President, and I look forward to working with you over the next four years for the benefit of the people of Victoria.

I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police. It relates to a matter which you raised earlier today, President — that is, that during a change of government we can respect each other and not see bloodshed in the streets and the sort of violence we see overseas. That is not the sort of thing we expect to see in Australia. However, it concerns me that during the recent election there was an increasing level of what would appear to be professional violence — that is, people being sent out to harass other people on the opposing side of politics. I am not just talking about Liberals being harassed; I am talking about the Greens or members of the Democratic Labour Party. This sort of harassment seems to have happened quite a bit.

Indeed today one of my colleagues told me that he had been physically assaulted by someone. I am loath to point the finger at anybody in particular, but it seems to me that members of the United Firefighters Union were involved to a fair degree. Obviously such harassment

caused considerable distress to quite a number of people, and what I would describe as bullying and intimidation on a grand scale seemed to be the order of the day. I well recall that one of the candidates for Western Metropolitan Region was in tears as a result. She was obviously very distressed by the treatment she had been subjected to by some of the thugs and bullies who had surrounded her at a prepolling booth.

My view is that there is no room for this sort of behaviour in Victoria and Australia. Clearly such action came about as a result of the activities of what I hope is a very small, but clearly well organised and orchestrated, group. It is clear to me that if this behaviour were to continue that we would need to have a greater police presence at polling booths, particularly prepolling booths, to prevent this harassment and violence from occurring again.

I ask the minister to consult with the Chief Commissioner of Police and to discuss with the chief commissioner whether any complaints have been made to the police and to see if any extended resources may be needed and future election and, if so, to bring them on.

I finish by wishing everybody a very merry Christmas.

Footscray hospital

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Health. I congratulate the government on its announcement about Sunshine Hospital — the building of the new paediatric and women's wings, which are absolutely necessary considering the population growth in the western suburbs. However, my adjournment matter is actually about Footscray hospital.

Not long before the election I made a visit to Footscray hospital, during which I was shown around wards that are no longer fit for purpose and can only be used for chemotherapy or dialysis because the toilets and bathrooms are so inadequate that the wards can no longer be used overnight.

When I went in to look at the emergency room, it was explained to me and shown to me that if someone came into the emergency ward and had to be resuscitated, their trolley would have to be pulled into a corridor because the cubicles are not big enough to place a resuscitation team around a bed.

It seems to me that a great many promises regarding health were made during the election campaign and it is somewhat unfortunate that health funding for a

particular area seems to be based on how marginal the seat is rather than what is needed.

The action I ask of the health minister is that she think clearly about the needs of Footscray hospital and the needs of the local community and to ensure that money is poured into that hospital as soon as possible, especially so that the emergency room can be rebuilt and adequately service the local community.

Goulburn Valley Health

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — President, congratulations on your election today.

My adjournment issue is for the Minister for Health. I request that the minister prioritise funding for the redevelopment of Goulburn Valley (GV) Health in Shepparton. Goulburn Valley Health is a major regional hospital that services around 35 000 emergency department presentations, 60 000 to 65 000 inpatient days and 80 000 outpatient episodes annually.

Last year the hospital's CEO and board outlined their strategic plan and the urgent need for investment in the redevelopment of the hospital to all local members, including the federal member for Murray, the then state members for Shepparton and Rodney and two of the upper house members for Northern Victoria Region, Kaye Darveniza and me.

Goulburn Valley Health supplied all members with a full list of its capital priorities. During the election campaign the coalition committed \$75 million of funding for stage 1 of the redevelopment, including a new emergency department, a theatre complex and the infrastructure works necessary for the full hospital redevelopment.

In contrast, the Labor Party failed to make a single election-specific commitment to the people of Shepparton.

The current theatre complex including day theatre, the theatre suite, storage and sterilisation is outdated and insufficient to cater for the needs of the community. Expanding theatre capacity to space for five theatres, along with expanding the day theatre capacity and associated recovery and sterilisation capability, will provide sufficient capacity for GV Health into the foreseeable future.

17:22:30

The capacity of the emergency department needs to be expanded to meet the growth of this service. It also seeks to relocate the current imaging department to a new space adjacent to the emergency department. The current dislocation of imaging from the emergency

department raises significant patient safety and privacy concerns. The emergency department expansion will enable GV Health to improve its treatment times by enabling more patients faster access to emergency care. The underlying infrastructure — chillers, flooring, engineering, plant, et cetera — is a key enabler to any future works. Not only is the infrastructure required to meet current demand, but future demand will need to be supported.

Some of the further components to the full redevelopment include wards, specialist consulting, intensive care unit, radiotherapy, pharmacy, dialysis and clinical support. For 11 long, dark years the former Bracks and Brumby Labor governments ignored health in country Victoria. In contrast, in just four years the coalition began rebuilding health throughout country Victoria, and this year it was to be Shepparton's turn. The people of Shepparton can neither afford nor be expected to wait a further four years before the redevelopment commences, so I call on the Minister for Health to commit funding immediately to at least stage 1 of the redevelopment of GV Health and prioritise further stages to see the full redevelopment of GV Health completed in this term of government.

Hospital beds

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Health, Jill Hennessy, whom I regard highly. The Labor Party made a commitment to do an audit of hospital beds to see whether more could be opened with more funding or effort.

I commend the minister because the audit has already started, and a highly regarded expert, Dr Travis, is already on the case. The action I seek from the minister is that she give an update early next year as to how this important audit is going ahead. In the coming months we will find out about the apathy and complete incompetence of the Napthine government and its failed former minister, David Davis, in not making beds available and in putting our health system into such jeopardy.

Rye security cameras

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections on the understanding from the Leader of the Government that Mr Noonan has assumed responsibility for the crime prevention portfolio that no longer exists under the new government.

Prior to the last election the member for Nepean announced in an election commitment that \$250 000 would be used to purchase CCTV cameras for the Rye shopping precinct. We have seen in recent times the way that CCTV cameras can be used not only to help solve crime but also to deter crime and criminal activity. The advocacy of Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, the traders of the Rye shopping precinct, the Rye Beach Community Action Group and others culminated in the member for Nepean announcing that election commitment prior to the last election. That election commitment was strongly supported by Ms Caterina Politi, the mother of David Cassai, who was tragically killed by a one-punch attack on New Year's Eve 2012 in Rye. She also advocated for tougher penalties for one-punch killers.

The action I seek from the minister is advice from the government as to whether it will match this commitment, noting that it has the support of the local council, the local traders and the local community, and also noting the proven benefits of CCTV camera systems in preventing and helping to solve crime.

Sale Specialist School

Mr O'BRIEN (Eastern Victoria) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Education, the Honourable James Merlino, and it relates to Sale Specialist School, which I mentioned earlier. Members will be aware that Sale Specialist School has been fighting for some time to develop a new site. The specialist school is currently on three different campuses, which makes life difficult for students, teachers and parents, as well as being an administrative nightmare for the principal and staff.

The Sale community has fought a long battle to have this school upgraded. I believe this has been going for some 11 years — certainly for a long time before I came into the Parliament — but the previous coalition government provided funding and purchased a site for a new school to be built just on the outskirts of Sale. There was \$4 million in the 2014–15 budget for the early works — the planning and architectural work et cetera — and also for the first stage. The coalition then committed \$15 million in the election campaign to complete the school, but sadly that will now not be delivered by the coalition. Therefore I ask the Minister for Education to commit now and commit early that \$15 million will be available in this year's budget, because this school project deserves our bipartisan support.

The then shadow parliamentary secretary for education, the member for Bundoora in the other place, Colin

Brooks, was quoted in a newspaper article in April 2013 to have said that the construction should be funded by the then government. He had some things to say about the member for Gippsland South and what he should be doing. He said he was shocked that Mr Ryan had not championed this school's cause as a good local member should and that:

Mr Ryan should be ensuring that the education department's land acquisition processes are moving sharply and that any funding required in next month's budget is allocated.

17:30:00 Mr Ryan did do that. He pushed the education portfolio, and the land acquisition process did occur. The site has been purchased. It has been cleared already, and I believe the architects have been engaged in the last couple of weeks. This school is supported not just by the Sale community but by the people of the wider Central Gippsland region, including Yarram, Maffra, Heyfield and surrounding areas, and it has been ably led by a committee of parents who have been absolutely ferocious in their determination to have this school funded.

I was pleased, as a new member, that the former coalition government funded this project in the budget last year. The community is now very concerned, having not had a commitment from the new Labor government, that it could start construction of the new school and feasibly end up —

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

VicRoads relocation

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and the minister representing the Premier. I hope that is where the matter is heading.

Mr Leane — You tell us.

Mr RAMSAY — That is where I am pointing it to, so I am hoping the Honourable Gavin Jennings will pass the matter on to the Premier.

The issue I want to raise tonight concerns an election commitment made by the former coalition government and the Premier of the day, Denis Napthine. It is pleasing that Ballarat Base Hospital is soon to have its helipad, along with a new car park. For the benefit of new members, this project was championed by my parliamentary colleague, a former member for Western Victoria Region, David Koch, who has since retired, and it was delivered by the previous Minister for Health, the Honourable David Davis. My greatest

regret is that the helicopter was not landing on the helipad before the previous government entered caretaker mode, but it was very close to being operational then, and it is pleasing to see that the community of Ballarat will now enjoy a superior air service.

The matter I want to raise with the Premier concerns the commitment the previous government made to the relocation of VicRoads administration from its Kew offices to Ballarat. Despite reports in the *Ballarat Courier* two days ago, I did not indicate that the sale of the land has already been completed but rather that the sale was being considered. It is now time for the Andrews government to strike by committing to the relocation of the VicRoads administration to Ballarat, which will contribute 600 jobs and potentially \$60 million of economic value annually. It will also provide an opportunity to activate the civic hall site, which is the proposed site of the relocation.

My new parliamentary colleague, Joshua Morris, a member for Western Victoria Region, was mayor of Ballarat when that commitment was made. He knows the importance of not only the commitment of the relocation of VicRoads to Ballarat but also the siting of the relocation, adjacent to the civic hall, which has had a chequered history of indecision about its long-term future over the last eight years.

The Andrews government has a wonderful opportunity to act on the coalition's election commitment of the relocation of the VicRoads administration, with the 600 jobs and potentially \$60 million of economic value to Ballarat, to help with the decentralisation process, as the Transport Accident Commission has done very successfully in Geelong, the Bendigo Bank in Bendigo, Rural Finance in Wodonga, and the Australian Taxation Office in Ballarat.

My very important matter, given the timing of this issue, is that I ask the Andrews government to do everything possible to ensure that VicRoads relocate to Ballarat rather than Dandenong.

Junction Oval

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Sport, John Eren, and it concerns the redevelopment of the Junction Oval. As we all know, Cricket Victoria has identified the Junction Oval as its preferred second first-class venue, after the MCG, for cricket in this state. Cricket Victoria would like the Junction Oval to be developed as a centre of excellence for Victoria's best young cricketers.

The coalition government worked on this project for many months, attempting to work out how best to implement this project and the best use for the land available. This work was done mainly by former Deputy Premier Peter Ryan and me, as Minister for Sport and Recreation. We brought together the Junction Oval stakeholders and Albert Park user groups in a way that enabled the project to be funded in its totality. The AFL has committed to funding this project, as has the federal government, Port Phillip City Council and the St Kilda Football Club. The Labor Party has committed \$25 million to this project. Cricket Victoria and Cricket Australia have committed \$10 million. At the moment an amount greater than the \$60 million needed to build this project in its totality is available.

There is no reason why the Labor Party should refuse this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring St Kilda Football Club home to St Kilda; to bring the Junction Oval up to the standard required for first-class cricket; to improve neighbouring grounds to an elite standard, which includes lighting; to improve ground facilities for amateur football club Old Melburnians; and to improve play space for the St Kilda Primary School. Everything that Cricket Victoria could want is available should the Labor Party, in conjunction with Cricket Victoria, commit to this project for St Kilda.

The action I seek is that the Labor government, whether it be the Premier, the Minister for Sport or the Special Minister of State, start a serious dialogue with the AFL and St Kilda Football Club to ensure that these elite facilities that are about to be built for Cricket Victoria can be built to a grander scale and shared with the St Kilda Football Club through the winter months, enabling it to return to its spiritual home at the Junction Oval and give this club a once-in-a-lifetime chance to secure its future.

Responses

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I will refer to and run through all the matters that members have raised with me to pass on to my ministerial colleagues, but I would like to first make a couple of introductory comments that relate to the contributions of a number of members. A number of members seemed to be confused about the election commitments of the incoming Andrews government as distinct from the election commitments that were made by the outgoing coalition government.

Earlier today the Leader of the Opposition in the Council gave notice of motion of her expectation that I comply with the budget outcomes of the election commitments of the incoming Andrews government.

An implication of that is that this evening members of her party have significantly recast the election commitments of the Andrews government by asking that their commitments be funded by the incoming Andrews government.

As a general rule I suggest that opposition members would be wasting the time allowed for the adjournment debate if they were to raise matters with an expectation that the incoming Andrews government, from day one, will make changes to the election commitments it has now been elected to furnish the Victorian community with. It would be wrong for members to have that expectation.

One member who appeared to have that expectation was Mr Davis, who sought that the Minister for Health review Labor's election commitments as they may relate to Ballarat health.

The same issue applies to Ms Hartland in her contribution. She wants the government to recast its significant commitment to Western Health for an alternative proposal.

It relates to Ms Lovell's contribution. She is seeking that the Minister for Health recast Labor's commitments in relation to health.

It also relates to Mr O'Donohue's matter for the Minister for Police, who is also the Minister for Corrections. He wants Labor to change its incoming election commitments to fund a program of crime prevention in Point Nepean.

Mr O'Brien's matter may or may not be of a similar ilk to the matters I have just referred to. He indicated that the matter he raised about Sale Specialist School may be included in the budget. I indicate to Mr O'Brien that it is the intention of the incoming Andrews government to acquit any item that has been funded within the budget, unless it has indicated as part of its election commitments that it will not do so, and if that is the case the government will reprioritise those items. If there is something that is embedded in the budget and we have not identified it as a saving, then it will be acquitted. As a general rule, that would be something that members raising matters on the adjournment might want to take notice of.

Mr Ramsay raised a matter for the attention of the Premier. I am not quite sure which category it falls into. He asked that the Premier seek an outcome for the relocation of VicRoads to Ballarat.

Mr Drum in an extensive contribution raised a matter about the fortunes of the St Kilda Football Club and the

journey that has led to the redevelopment of Junction Oval. He concluded by asking the government to undertake a serious dialogue with the players — —

Mr Drum — Not the players; the administration of the AFL.

Mr JENNINGS — By ‘players’ I mean the various parties involved — not the St Kilda football players but the players in the redevelopment. It would be very easy for the incoming government to say that it will embark upon a serious dialogue with the various parties that Mr Drum has identified.

Mr Finn raised an interesting question for the attention of the Minister for Police. This is something I am interested in myself, given that I am responsible for electoral matters. Whilst Mr Finn has asked for the police minister to review any complaints that the Chief Commissioner of Police may have identified in relation to inappropriate behaviour at polling sites, I will volunteer to Mr Finn that I will ask for a report from the Victorian Electoral Commissioner in relation to these matters, and I will pursue them in the same spirit. This matter was raised as a matter of serious concern, and I will investigate it as well as the Minister for Police.

Mr Melhem raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and like the Governor today in his speech he was very interested in the effect of the West Gate distributor. In fact when the Governor was speaking I thought it was almost a miracle that those trucks will be taken off the West Gate Bridge and they will be put into the port, directly into the port, whether they want to go to the port or not. That is where they will be put immediately! I say to Mr Melhem that that is a very important project the Labor government has committed to. We will commit to it, and I am sure that the Minister for Roads and Road Safety will actually come back to Mr Melhem about the implementation of that and the time lines associated with that important policy statement.

Mr Leane raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health. He has drawn attention to the important audit that is currently being undertaken on behalf of the Victorian community by Dr Doug Travis, a former head of the Australian Medical Association and a very prestigious person in terms of his knowledge of the health system in Victoria. As a community we will be well served by Dr Travis’s consideration of the bed capacity and theatre capacity in our hospitals. I am certain that the Minister for Health will respond to Mr Leane’s adjournment matter as a matter of urgency, and that at the earliest opportunity she will publish the outcomes of that inquiry in the name of getting better

outcomes in our public hospital system, one that has been flagging for some time.

Felicitations

The PRESIDENT — Order! I want to thank all members for their forbearance today particularly but also over recent weeks as the security works at Parliament House have continued to be undertaken. As members are aware, we are trying to balance the need to have this place open to and accessible for the people of Victoria while also ensuring the safety and security of all who use the building, whether they be MPs, staff or visitors. These works have caused some inconvenience, and I thank members for their patience in relation to them, particularly on this day, which is an important day that has been somewhat difficult to get through. Members have been terrific in terms of supporting these necessary works.

I also indicate my appreciation for the forbearance of the staff of the Parliament, who have also been put to some inconvenience whilst those works have taken place. I commend those members of staff — I will not name them — who have invested a great deal of time in planning today’s events to ensure that they went off without a hitch. The distinguished visitors who came to our Parliament, including family and friends, were able to enjoy this first day of the 58th Parliament, and everything went well. I thank staff for the considerable investment of time they made in planning for today.

I do not want to speak too long. I can remember in days gone by we used to have felicitations at Christmas that went on for at least a couple of hours, especially when the late Geoffrey Connard was here. He used to go on for quite some time and whinge about parliamentary services at the same time.

It would be remiss of me if I did not do two things. One of them is to commend those four people who made their initial contribution to the house in the address-in-reply. They made significant and inspiring speeches, and each of those members are to be congratulated on their contributions. This house will be enriched by similar contributions in the future. I thank members for that, and it is important that I acknowledge that on this occasion.

I also want to extend my best wishes to everybody for Christmas and the New Year — the festive season — including those people who are not Christians and do not celebrate Christmas as such. I trust that everybody will enjoy the festive season in terms of meeting with family and friends and enjoying the best of what this great state can offer. That wish, obviously, is not just

for members of Parliament but for all people who work either here or in our electorate offices, who do so much to support our members of Parliament, and I note their contributions over the past 12 months in particular. All the best to everybody. I look forward to seeing you all next year, and I trust that you have a wonderful break. The house stands adjourned.

**House adjourned 5.47 p.m. until Tuesday,
10 February 2015.**