

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 24 June 2015

(Extract from book 9)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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| Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections | The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP |
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| 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 |

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Mr Drum, Ms Hartland, Mr Herbert, Ms Mikakos, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, and Ms Wooldridge.

Procedure Committee — The President, Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Davis, Mr Jennings, Ms Pennicuik, Ms Pulford, Ms Tierney and Ms Wooldridge.

Legislative Council standing committees

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure — Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Dalidakis, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning — Ms Bath, #Mr Bourman, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, #Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, Ms Shing, Ms Tierney and Mr Young.

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — Ms Fitzherbert, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O'Donohue, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

participating members

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Ms Bath, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson.

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Dalidakis, Ms Dunn, Mr Jennings and Ms Wooldridge. (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O'Brien, Mr Pakula, Ms Richardson and Mr Walsh

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee — (*Council*): Mr Elasmarr, Mr Melhem and Mr Purcell. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe and Ms Ryall.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Council*): Mr Dalidakis and Ms Patten. (*Assembly*): Ms Asher, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dixon, Mr Northe and Ms Spence.

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson, Mr Tilley and Ms Ward.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr Finn. (*Assembly*): Ms Couzens, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Edwards, Ms Kealy, Ms McLeish, and Ms Sheed.

House Committee — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, Ms Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Mulino and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr J. Bull, Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Staikos, Ms Suleyman and Mr Thompson.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Hibbins, Mr D. O'Brien, Mr Richardson, Ms Thomson and Mr Wells.

Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee — (*Council*): Mr Eideh and Ms Patten. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): Dr Carling-Jenkins, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing. (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O'Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith 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

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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 |
| Bath, Ms Melina ² | Eastern Victoria | Nats | Mulino, Mr Daniel | Eastern Victoria | ALP |
| Bourman, Mr Jeffrey | Eastern Victoria | SFP | O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ¹ | Eastern Victoria | Nats |
| Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel | Western Metropolitan | DLP | O'Donohue, Mr Edward John | Eastern Victoria | LP |
| Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary | Southern Metropolitan | LP | Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip | Northern Metropolitan | LP |
| Dalidakis, Mr Philip | Southern Metropolitan | ALP | Patten, Ms Fiona | Northern Metropolitan | ASP |
| Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon | Eastern Metropolitan | LP | Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret | Southern Metropolitan | Greens |
| Davis, Mr David McLean | Southern Metropolitan | LP | Peulich, Mrs Inga | South Eastern Metropolitan | LP |
| Drum, Mr Damian Kevin | Northern Victoria | Nats | Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee | Western Victoria | ALP |
| Dunn, Ms Samantha | Eastern Metropolitan | Greens | Purcell, Mr James | Western Victoria | V1LJ |
| Eideh, Mr Khalil M. | Western Metropolitan | ALP | Ramsay, Mr Simon | Western Victoria | LP |
| Elasmar, Mr Nazih | Northern Metropolitan | ALP | Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth | South Eastern Metropolitan | LP |
| Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C. | Western Metropolitan | LP | Shing, Ms Harriet | Eastern Victoria | ALP |
| Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret | Southern Metropolitan | LP | Somyurek, Mr Adem | South Eastern Metropolitan | ALP |
| Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred | Western Metropolitan | Greens | Springle, Ms Nina | South Eastern Metropolitan | Greens |
| Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph | Northern Victoria | ALP | Symes, Ms Jaelyn | Northern Victoria | ALP |
| Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne | South Eastern Metropolitan | ALP | Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne | Western Victoria | ALP |
| Leane, Mr Shaun Leo | Eastern Metropolitan | ALP | Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling | Eastern Metropolitan | LP |
| Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann | Northern Victoria | LP | Young, Mr Daniel | Northern Victoria | SFP |
| Melhem, Mr Cesar | Western Metropolitan | ALP | | | |

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

² Appointed 15 April 2015

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; V1LJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

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Wednesday, 24 June 2015

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

PETITIONS

Following petition presented to house:

Police numbers

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council that Premier Daniel Andrews has failed to commit to providing additional police numbers and subsequently, as Victoria's population grows, the number of police per capita goes backwards under Labor every day.

The petitioners therefore respectfully request that the Legislative Council of Victoria calls on the Andrews Labor government to commit to providing additional frontline police numbers as a matter of priority.

**By Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria)
(47 signatures).**

Laid on table.

**ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

**Country Fire Authority Fiskville training
college**

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) presented interim report.

Laid on table.

Ordered to be published.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

In doing so I would like to make some comments in relation to the interim report. Up until this stage this has been a very difficult report for the committee, and I congratulate the work the committee and its staff has done. It has been dedicated to looking at the evidence and the submissions provided to the committee. Up to this stage there have been over 433 submissions to this inquiry, and they are still coming in. We have also held a number of public hearings in Parliament House.

From the outset I would like to say that I am a former Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteer. I also did my

skills training at Fiskville so I have a personal interest in this inquiry. Although it is an interim report, the evidence we have heard so far has been mainly from those who have been directly affected by the training facility at Fiskville. By that I mean the adjoining landholders and also those firefighters who have trained at Fiskville over many years going back the 1970s and 1980s and right up to this point in time.

I also note that there have been a lot of submissions by the United Firefighters Union which have been provided to the committee on a standard template. The United Firefighters Union has also presented to the committee, as has the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria. At this stage there has been no representation from the CFA or the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The committee will receive evidence over the next six months until it is due to report in December, and the evidence from these organisations will be critical.

I can say, however, that our interim report indicates that poor practice has been demonstrated in relation to the use of certain chemicals at Fiskville going back to the 1970s and 1980s. There is no doubt that many firefighters who have trained at Fiskville, both professional and volunteer, have been affected by the use of certain chemicals. We have to put this into context. At those times we did not have the occupational health and safety regulations we have now, and we did not have the EPA as we now know it. I am sure that many industries and workplaces would appreciate that going back 30 or 40 years there was practice that was acceptable at that stage that is certainly not acceptable in this era.

We need to be mindful of that context in relation to inquiring into activities at Fiskville. These activities are not totally different to activities at other training facilities across the state of Victoria. We have already visited Bangholme, in the east of Melbourne, and Craigieburn, where a first-class training facility — I think built at a cost of more than \$101 million — is being managed by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. There is a lot of state-of-the-art infrastructure there, particularly in relation to water reticulation, which has been an issue at Fiskville over many years. In the past water reticulation at Fiskville was reliant on dams and tank water and at a later stage on the Central Highlands Water system supplying the Ballan community. Nevertheless, the issues around contamination and the use of chemicals go back to the 70s and 80s, and more recently the use of perfluorooctanesulfonic acid, also known as PFOS foam, at Fiskville and other facilities has been a concern raised during this inquiry.

I stress again that this is an interim report. We have not heard evidence from the CFA, the EPA or WorkSafe in relation to this inquiry. Consequently there are only three recommendations that the committee felt were appropriate at this stage.

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) — I want to add to Mr Ramsay's sentiments on this inquiry. It is a very important and serious issue. It is the first experience I have had with this kind of inquiry, and one could say I have been thrown into the deep end. We are now at the halfway point, and I am really excited to see what will come out of the second half of the inquiry and to replace some of the suspicions with recommendations. What has been made very clear to me throughout this inquiry is the importance of the Country Fire Authority training facilities and the role they play in keeping Victoria safe. There is a lot at stake with this inquiry and I am keen to see the outcome.

Motion agreed to.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Acting Clerk:

Auditor-General's Office — Annual Plan, 2015–16.

Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978 — Summary of Variations notified between 27 May 2015 and 22 June 2015 (*Ordered to be published*).

Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 — Government Response to the Education and Training Committee's Report on approaches to homework in Victorian schools.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Infrastructure Victoria

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I rise to inform the house of work I have been associated with that has led to the introduction of legislation and the announcement of the structure of Infrastructure Victoria. I am pleased to say that the Premier and I launched the creation of Infrastructure Victoria yesterday with the introduction of a piece of legislation that we hope will receive the support of the chamber. It is an election commitment. It was a clear undertaking of the incoming Andrews government to try to establish the infrastructure pipeline for Victorians' needs, which straddle transport, health, education and civic opportunities for community and cultural development. We think that the infrastructure needs of Victoria should be assessed in a rigorous, transparent way and that these assessments will create a degree of stability for investments to be made by this government and future governments over the next 30 years.

This initiative has been responded to well by many key stakeholders in the Victorian economy. For instance, the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry yesterday issued a statement which said:

We therefore welcome this legislation to establish Infrastructure Victoria and look forward to ongoing engagement to define, prioritise and progress the long-term infrastructure needs of all Victorians.

Kate Roffey from the Committee for Melbourne has said:

It is a really good move, and it's quite a brave move the way they've gone about it.

Jennifer Cunich from the Property Council of Australia has said:

Infrastructure Victoria is an essential tool for Australia's most urbanised state and will be critical in helping the government oversee the growth management challenge during the decades ahead ...

Brian Negus from the RACV has said:

The proposal is consistent with RACV's position that a longer term approach is required to plan Victoria's transport needs, rather than the short-term approaches that we have seen in recent years.

The Urban Development Institute of Australia has said:

We welcome the emphasis on objective and transparent analysis and evidence that will inform Infrastructure Victoria's activities and will work to provide Infrastructure Victoria with insight and research undertaken by the institute.

We appreciate that this has been well received, and we look forward to the introduction of Infrastructure Victoria.

Aboriginal children's forum

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Youth Affairs) — I rise to inform the house of my announcement that I will establish an Aboriginal children's forum, which has been touted by the commissioner for Aboriginal children and young people, Andrew Jackomos, as the first major Aboriginal policy initiative in Victoria in many years.

I am concerned about the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in our child protection and out-of-home care systems as well as the under-representation of Aboriginal children participating in early years services, from maternal and child health through to kindergarten. Bringing together families and children in a single portfolio across two departments but working in an integrated way, making

these connections, is designed to take an integrated approach to these issues earlier.

Last week whilst I was meeting with the Mallee District Aboriginal Services when I visited Mildura, I announced that I would be co-chairing a regular Aboriginal children's forum. I had an opportunity to see some of the excellent programs in that region that are successfully working to change lives in the Mallee, in particular with respect to supporting Aboriginal children and families.

Working in partnership with Aboriginal community leaders, I want to find answers on how best to shape policies and practices that will benefit Aboriginal children and families. Members of the forum will include Aboriginal community leaders and the CEOs of the community service organisations that provide services for Aboriginal children as well as government representatives. The forum will meet quarterly at four different locations across Victoria, with each forum to be co-chaired by the CEO of a local Aboriginal community-controlled organisation. The focus will be on the participation of Aboriginal people and the development of policy and service delivery, while building the capacity of Aboriginal communities to manage and drive change.

The terms of reference for the forum and key reform options will be finalised at a summit to be held in August. The community works best when it works in partnership, and the forum is based on the concept that Aboriginal leaders and communities know the most about the challenges they face in this area and how to provide effective prevention and early intervention that will make a real difference. I have been very pleased by the support the establishment of the forum has received, and I look forward to its first meeting.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise today to speak on Bowel Cancer Awareness Month, because 77 Australians die every week from bowel cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world, and bowel cancer is the second most common type of newly diagnosed cancer. About 20 000 cases are predicted by 2020, with that number on the rise. There is an approximately 66 per cent, five-year survival rate, which is well behind a number of the other very common cancers.

Bowel Cancer Australia has been doing exceptional work in terms of raising awareness of this cancer and its impact. We have all been touched in many ways by cancer, and some of us by bowel cancer. My husband had bowel cancer in his early 20s, and I am pleased to say that he has now entered his 50s and is defying some of the statistics. We are pleased to support Donna Bauer, the former member for Carrum in the Assembly, who is now a Bowel Cancer Australia ambassador. She has addressed the treatment of bowel cancer and is promoting the cause and raising awareness. She is doing an exceptional job. I want to acknowledge that this is important work, and I encourage everyone to join the bowel movement during June, which is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month, along with the ambassadors, the coalition and, I am sure, the support of the Parliament.

Labour hire industry

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) — I rise today to make a statement in relation to allegations of worker exploitation by some labour hire firms. Recently a *Four Corners* program aired allegations of abusive practices in a number of sectors. As the Minister for Industrial Relations recently stated, these allegations are about more than the underpayment of wages. They are potentially about creating an underclass.

The government has committed to holding an inquiry into the labour hire industry. Last week I met with Gary Maas, state secretary of the National Union of Workers (NUW), and Winnie, one of the NUW's members, to discuss practices currently occurring throughout the state and in my electorate in particular. Winnie told me about her own difficult experiences undertaking farm work for a labour hire firm. We need to get to the bottom of these allegations.

The NUW is currently undertaking surveys of members in various workplaces. The work currently being undertaken by the NUW reflects the difficulty in ascertaining what is occurring in disparate workplaces with workers who might change jobs regularly and who are difficult to reach. At a time when unions are under a great deal of scrutiny I think it is important to acknowledge good work where it is being done.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr MULINO — *Four Corners* should be applauded for raising the profile of the issue of labour hire firm practices, but I also want to recognise that it will be unions like the NUW that reach out to individual workers to help them when they are in difficult situations.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I did not quite get the bit after, ‘When the unions were in some difficulty’. Could you read from that part again?

Mr MULINO — At a time when unions are coming under a great deal of scrutiny I think it is important to acknowledge good work where it is being done.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! There is a reason I ask members to re-read. I do not think I need to explain.

Mr MULINO — *Four Corners* should be applauded for raising the profile of the issue of labour hire firm practices, but I also want to recognise that it will be unions like the NUW that reach out to individual workers to help them when they are in difficult situations.

Craig Wilson

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — It gives me great pleasure today to recognise the work of Craig Wilson from Beaufort. Craig is the editor of the *Pyrenees Advocate* and this week has sold his paper after 10 years. He has moved into another line of work. Previously Craig worked as a political editor for 3AW, and he has been recognised by the community and also by the Pyrenees Shire Council for the effort and the excellent reporting that he provided for that area.

Warrnambool Standard

Mr PURCELL — In the area of media I also recognise the work of Steve Kelly and 16 others from the *Warrnambool Standard* who unfortunately have lost their positions or are taking early retirement due to the reduction in numbers at Fairfax. Both of these stories are from the Western Victoria media, but one is good and one is, unfortunately, not good.

Nikita Chawla

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Today I rise to pay my respects and offer my deepest condolences to members of the Chawla family who lost their beloved daughter and sister Nikita on 9 January this year to the brutal hands of domestic violence. Nikita was a talented performing artist with a bright future ahead of her as the founder of her own professional dance troupe. Nikita would have turned 24 years old last Sunday.

To commemorate Nikita’s life, raise awareness of the epidemic of men’s violence against women and honour and support all victims, Nikita’s brother Tarang, along

with her parents and friends, organised the Light in Our Lives candlelight vigil on the banks of the Yarra River in Southbank. It was an absolute privilege to share the stage with the Chawla family and the many distinguished speakers, including representatives from Safe Steps, White Ribbon, Our Watch, Emerge, Intouch and the Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health, in a homage to Nikita’s life and the urgency around an issue that pervades our entire society.

I did not know Nikita, but I do know that she should be alive today. Now, with 44 women dead to violence across the nation just this year, we cannot wait any longer for decisive action on violence against women.

Wastech Engineering

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Last week I had the opportunity, together with the shadow minister for innovation and member for Caulfield in the lower house, David Southwick, to visit Wastech Engineering at Hallam, in my electorate. Wastech Engineering designs, manufactures and supplies engineering solutions for the waste and recycling industry throughout Australia and internationally, including for Veolia, Visy, SITA, Coles, Westfield, Bunnings, Officeworks and Woolworths.

Since its establishment in 1993 Wastech has grown to a staff of almost 100 employees, who are continuing to deliver innovation for Victoria’s waste and recycling industry. Over this time it has manufactured over 2000 balers, 13 000 compactors, 17 transfer stations, 41 transfer trailers, 30 front-lift trucks and over 32 000 front-lift bins. Wastech Engineering was also an ambassador for the Casey Cardinia region at the recent National Manufacturing Week exhibition in Melbourne.

Wastech is a leader in innovation in manufacturing. I take this opportunity to congratulate it on its achievements in innovation in manufacturing and on the significant contribution it makes to manufacturing employment in the south-east.

Prahran railway station

Mr DALIDAKIS (Southern Metropolitan) — This morning I had the pleasure of opening the new second entrance at Prahran railway station. Labor committed to this project during the election campaign last year. The then opposition public transport spokeswoman and now Minister for Health, Jill Hennessey, and the then ALP candidate for Prahran, Neil Pharaoh, made this announcement in September. Mr Pharaoh and I had

been campaigning for a second pedestrian entrance at the station since April, some six months earlier.

The project is now complete. The station serves nearly 25 000 commuters — students and workers — weekly. The new gate will allow customers to enter the station quickly and safely during peak hours. There is a safety gate in front of the entrance to ensure a level of safety for people with mobility issues and with prams, so they do not fear suffering or falling.

Luis Calleja

Mr DALIDAKIS — I was also joined at the launch this morning by Mr Luis Calleja, a year 10 student from Sandringham College, who has joined me this week as a work experience student. He has asked me many fine questions, he has represented his school with aplomb and he has done his family proud. It has been a wonder and an honour to have him with me this week.

Attendance for prayer

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — This Parliament has members who have faith-based beliefs, who have humanitarian beliefs and who are atheists — I myself was raised as a Catholic and define myself as a Christian — and I believe this reflects the community, so I believe it is no longer appropriate to use the Lord's Prayer to open Parliament each morning. I have decided to no longer attend the prayer, because I believe we need to start a discussion on whether we should move to a prayer that takes in all faiths, a reflection or a welcome to country. I have to say this has not been an easy decision for me, but I can still pray quietly on my own.

Love Makes a Way

Ms HARTLAND — I also want to highlight the work of the multifaith group Love Makes a Way, especially in relation to the peaceful protest it staged last week at the federal Parliament in support of children in detention. Its members have shown true humanitarian and passionate values, and they are prepared to stand up for what they believe in, especially in light of the government's brutal treatment of refugees.

St Monica's College

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — Last week in Epping I had the absolute pleasure of attending St Monica's College's production of *Beauty and the Beast*, the college's 11th production. I congratulate principal Brian Hanley, the staff and the student cohort on living their motto of 'Pray and persevere'.

What a wonderful cast, including year 11 student Joshua Failla, who played the part of the Beast; Olivia Chamoun, who played the lead role of Belle, and she is only a year 10 student — it was amazing; Isabelle Mazzarella; Ryan Bolger, very funny as Lumiere; Makayla Rao; Olivia Greco; Matthew Jones, playing the role of Gaston; Philip Ly; Stephen Sciberras; Siena Bambino; and the wonderful ensemble cast, staff and student orchestra and production team headed by Mark Eckersley and Jenny Cavallo.

Melbourne's north is blessed to have this wonderful school, St Monica's College in Epping, which year on year continues to delight our local community.

City of Whittlesea reconciliation awards

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — On Friday, 12 June, it was my pleasure, along with my parliamentary colleague Bronwyn Halfpenny, the member for Thomastown in the Assembly, and representatives of community groups to be in attendance at the City of Whittlesea reconciliation award ceremony, which was hosted by the shire's mayor, Cr Ricky Kirkham. It was great to see all the worthy recipients receive their well-earned awards. I thank council officers and staff.

William Angliss Institute

Mr ELASMAR — On another matter, on 16 June I attended the William Angliss Institute in Melbourne. The purpose of my visit was to hear a special announcement by my parliamentary colleague Mr Herbert, the Minister for Training and Skills, regarding a TAFE initiative, the \$50 million Back to Work Fund. The fund is targeted at a regional tourism employability program and an international hotel school. The William Angliss Institute is a well-known icon in Victoria. It has served the hospitality industry well and deserves to be supported with projects that will provide vital jobs in Victoria.

Ramadan

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — On behalf of the Victorian coalition I offer my very best wishes to our Islamic community for the holy month of Ramadan, which is marked from 17 June to 18 July. Ramadan is a special time of year for our Muslim community and is an opportunity to renew commitments to lead lives of honesty, integrity and compassion, things that we can all aspire to.

Two days ago I had the privilege of attending and co-hosting the annual state Parliament iftar dinner,

which provided rich opportunities for engagement with various MPs and was attended by over 30 MPs, only one of whom was a Muslim. This clearly shows that we can respect each other's religions and religious practices without necessarily belonging to that particular religious group. Dignitaries were in abundance, as well as community leaders. I congratulate Ahmet Keskin, as well as the Australian Intercultural Society, on this initiative.

Kay Morland

Mrs PEULICH — Congratulations are also in order for City of Casey mayoress Kay Morland, who I recently witnessed being inducted as the president of Inner Wheel Australia.

Irina Kolesnikova

Mrs PEULICH — Congratulations also to prima ballerina Irina Kolesnikova from the St Petersburg Ballet Theatre, who performed in *Swan Lake*. I had the pleasure of meeting her at a reception with the Russian Consul General, Irina Bruk, on 18 June.

International Yoga Day

Mrs PEULICH — On Sunday I was happy to join yoga fans around the world for the International Yoga Day celebration in Keysborough with the Consul General of India and others. It was a huge endorsement of yoga. Some 175 out of 193 members of the United Nations countries supported this event. The prime minister of India, Narendra Modi, gave us the International Yoga Day. All Daniel Andrews has given us is a grand final holiday.

Shipbuilding industry

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to voice my concern at a recent development regarding BAE Systems shipyard in Williamstown. Recent media reports of an internal BAE memo indicate that the company will not go ahead with patrol boat construction in Williamstown for at least another year and a half as the federal government is not intending to award any contract until at least 2017. BAE Systems will not be tendering to build 21 new patrol boats, a \$600 million contract, leaving the shipyard high and dry. Hundreds of families in my electorate depend on those jobs. It is intolerable that there will be no work at the Williamstown shipyard for another 18 months. What are the families of those 800 workers meant to live on while they wait for the Abbott government to get its act together?

The shipyard provides work to 1100 people. The federal Liberal government's lack of support and lack of faith in Australian shipbuilding and manufacturing is a disgrace. After the shambolic submarine tendering debacle, I would have thought the Abbott government would have realised the importance of certainty in the Australian shipbuilding industry. As BAE maritime director Bill Saltzer has pointed out, with existing and upcoming projects running out in Williamstown before the patrol boat construction begins, it is not economically viable to reconstitute a workforce in 2017–18.

The industry needs the government to accelerate projects with a plan that supports continuous shipbuilding. The Abbott government's lack of action is going to cost hundreds of jobs, and the worst thing is that it does not seem to care.

Tim Cartwright

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — Early next month the Acting Chief Commissioner of Police, Tim Cartwright, will retire from Victoria Police. I wish to acknowledge his remarkable four decades of service to the Victorian community. He entered the force in 1974 — the year I was born — and has undertaken a number of roles. He worked his way up through the police force, becoming the deputy commissioner of regional operations in 2012 before becoming the Acting Chief Commissioner of Police in January. He has contributed 41 years of service in a variety of roles in keeping the community safe.

I would like to put on the record my acknowledgement of his service to the community, the opposition's acknowledgement of his service of community and indeed that of all members of this place. I will finish by quoting from the winter 2015 edition of *Police Life*, where Mr Cartwright was asked what advice he would give to anyone considering joining Victoria Police. He said:

You have a real chance to make a difference in people's lives and do good in the community ... There are not a lot of jobs where you can go to work and say, 'I made the community a better place today'.

That sums up Mr Cartwright. We wish him all the best.

Robert Clegg

Mr O'DONOHUE — I would also like to acknowledge Mr Cartwright's chief of staff, Mr Robert 'Bob' Clegg. He was the chief of staff to the Acting Chief Commissioner of Police and previously to the former Chief Commissioner of Police, Ken Lay. He is

also retiring, and we wish him every success for his future.

Nunawading Primary School site

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I congratulate Mr Merlino, the Minister for Education, his department and the Whitehorse City Council on finally settling the issue of the empty Nunawading Primary School site. The council has agreed to take over this land and keep it for community use and services. I think this is a great outcome for an issue that has been a concern in that part of the electorate for a number of years. I congratulate everyone involved in reaching that outcome.

Matildas

Mr LEANE — On another matter, I would like to congratulate the Matildas on waltzing into the quarterfinals.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LEANE — I was up all night thinking of that one — waltzing into the quarterfinals! They beat the powerhouse world football team Brazil. I am sure we will all be following the Matildas on SBS during their next game. I wish the team members well, and I thank them for their efforts in doing us all proud. It is a wonderful achievement.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Membership

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

That —

- (1) Ms Hartland, Mr Bourman, Mr Ramsay and Mr Purcell be participating members of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning; and
- (2) Mr Rich-Phillips be a participating member of the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues.

I believe it is a little bit unusual to have an opposition member move a motion in relation to participating members. The issue of participating members is very clearly laid out in chapter 23.05 of our standing orders. Paragraph (1) talks about substitute members, and paragraphs (2), (3) and (4) refer to the capacity to nominate participating members to committees. In particular, subsection (3) says:

Participating members may participate in hearings of evidence and deliberations of the committees, and have all the

rights of members of committees, but may not vote on any questions before the committees.

Subsection (4) notes:

A participating member shall be taken to be a member of a committee for the purpose of forming a quorum of the committee if a majority of members of the committee is not present.

The use of participating members was common in the previous Parliament. In fact many members from both sides were participating members, and I will mention some of them. On the Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure Ms Crozier, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, Mr Ondarchie and Mr Scheffer were all participating members; on the Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, Mrs Peulich and Mr Tarlamis were all participating members; and on the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues Mr Leane, Mrs Peulich and Mr Ramsay were participating members. Even the now Leader of the Government, Mr Jennings, was a participating member on the Procedure Committee.

Despite the standing orders allowing this to happen and the fact that it was clear practice in the last Parliament, we have been unable to have the government move this motion and deal with this in the normal way committees are dealt with, which would have had the support of all the members of the house. Instead the opposition has been required to move this motion on a Wednesday during opposition business. I suspect government members will make some comments about why this has been the case. I contend that this is a straightforward motion and should have been moved in the normal course of business, as has been the previous practice and as is clearly allowed.

Having participating members obviously allows for there to be quorums and participation. Currently there is a broad diversity of interesting and detailed references to the upper house committees. The issues range from unconventional gas through to the performance of the new departmental structures and a whole range of other issues.

It is fair to say that, while there are core committee members, having participating members allows other members who have a great interest in the affairs of a committee as a whole or of a particular inquiry to be engaged in those issues. In fact there was a recommendation made during the previous Parliament that every member should be a participating member of every upper house committee. Clearly we are not at that point yet, and that can be discussed by the Procedure Committee with the work that is happening, but there

has been a significant commitment to participating members being part of committee activities.

Given that the government was not prepared to progress this on a simple and straightforward basis, on behalf of the opposition — in fact of all non-government members, including members from the Greens, the Shooters and Fishers Party, Vote 1 Local Jobs and the coalition — I have moved this motion so that hopefully, with the support of the house, those five members can be participating members of the committees I have outlined. That is for a variety of reasons — not that we need those reasons — such as their having a particular interest in the references that are underway and their engagement in the work of the committees as a whole.

Clearly the make-up of this house is different to what it has been in the past. However, we have a reasonably simple structure of three upper house committees that deal with the references and legislation inquiries. We have changed the nature of and make-up of the committees. Previously the government had four members on the committees; now it has only three. There are three members from the coalition, one member from the Greens and one member from the crossbench, reflecting the new make-up of the Parliament.

While there are arguments made, particularly by the government, that participating or even substitute members put significant pressure on membership, I argue that essentially that committee membership requirement has diminished in comparison with the previous Parliament, not only for the upper house committees but also with the reduction in the number of committees overall.

This is a straightforward motion that reflects clear directions in the standing orders and clear processes that have occurred in previous Parliaments. I commend the motion to the house.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — The Greens will be supporting the motion moved by Ms Wooldridge to nominate five participating members: four to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning and one to the Standing Committee Legal and Social Issues. This is all in accordance with the standing orders. Standing order 23.05 allows participating members to be appointed for committees so they can participate in particular inquiries of those committees, in particular to then allow, if necessary, a participating member to be also appointed as a substitute member for a particular matter. Standing order 23.05(5) says:

If a member of a committee is unable to attend a meeting of the committee, that member may in writing to the chair of the committee appoint a participating member to act as a substitute member of the committee at that meeting. If the member is incapacitated or unavailable, a letter to the chair of a committee appointing a participating member to act as a substitute member of the committee may be signed on behalf of the member by the leader of the party or group on whose nomination the member was appointed to the committee.

The standing orders require that members are in fact appointed as participating members before they can be then appointed, or the leader of their party can ask for them to be appointed as substitute members for a particular time of an inquiry or for the whole of an inquiry if an existing member is unable to attend. In the last Parliament that happened in the case of the container deposit legislation put forward by my colleague Ms Hartland. She was a member of the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues that was looking at that bill. I was appointed as a participating member and then as a substitute member for Ms Hartland on that committee because clearly she could not be a member of a committee looking into her own legislation. That is a very practical example of how this works.

Of course in this Parliament, as Ms Wooldridge has said, we have a different make-up of the upper house, with the five crossbench members and the five Greens. Therefore the make-up of the committees has changed to reflect that. We have a situation now where the committees have several inquiries each. It may be that other members of the crossbench, other members of the Greens, other members of the opposition or other members of the government have particular interests in those particular inquiries, so there needs to be the capacity to appoint substitute members such as there is in other parliaments, particularly in the Senate, which we look to for guidance on how to run committees because it has a well-established committee structure that can inform how we should proceed.

I am supporting this motion on behalf of the Greens in good faith that we are putting forward our participating member for a particular purpose with regard to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning in that it is undertaking an inquiry into unconventional gas, which was a motion put forward by the government. It may be the case that one of our members who is a standing member on that committee is not able to be present during some of the hearings, so this would enable us to substitute a member. As I have mentioned, that is something that happened in the previous Parliament.

Of course now that there are several inquiries for each committee it is going to be a little bit more lively than it

was in the previous Parliament, where the then government limited the committee inquiries to one at a time. It seemed much more doable having different inquiries and different committees, but this happens routinely in other parliaments. In fact any member of the Senate can be a participating member of any committee, and if you look at committee membership in the Senate you will see the appointed members and a whole string of participating members on most committees. That is how it works in the Senate. We should be aspiring to that model as well so that people can be participating members on any inquiry they have an interest in. Then if there is a need to appoint a substitute member for a particular inquiry or a particular period of time — if a member is ill, for example — you have the participating member already there and you can do that. This is the practical way to proceed, and the Greens will support the motion.

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I would suggest that as a general rule if somebody says that something is simple and straightforward in an argument within Parliament, then that is very unlikely to be the case. I have heard a couple of contributors to this debate today who said this is simple. I do not think this is simple, so I would like to foreshadow that even though the government will not be dividing on this issue, and it accepts the desire of the majority of the chamber at this point in time that members should be allowed to be appointed to various committees over what otherwise might be a winter break, the government has concerns about the way in which this opportunity is provided for in the standing orders, although it has been subject to a reference to the Procedure Committee and it may appropriately be codified and moderated in the future to make sure that all members of the chamber are supported. I will outline what those concerns are.

For a couple of months in this term of Parliament there was an unresolved issue about the number of committees that were going to apply across the Parliament, in terms of both the number and make-up of joint investigatory committees and the number and make-up of committees in the upper house. That issue was resolved ultimately by a proposition that was supported by the other parties, but was in fact an initiative that was led by the government. That was to apply proportional representation (PR) across all committees. The government had agreed to PR being applied to the make-up of committees in the upper house, and it took that as a precedent to say that PR should apply to all committees across the Parliament. This is the first time that as a matter of principle PR has been applied across the whole Parliament. We did this to allow for a reasonable landing on the number of

committees, the scope of the committees and the ability of various parties across the Parliament to fill those positions.

Within that framework it surely has to be acknowledged by everyone, if they are honest with themselves, that the government's executive role means that it has a limitation with regard to the number of its members who are available to serve on those committees. The mere fact that the executive comprises somewhere in the order of one-third of our workforce across the Parliament means that the number of people it can allocate to committees is reduced. I am not denying the privileged position of being in government, which is an honour and privilege that we recognise, but it means that we start with a depleted number of members of our ranks who are available to fill committees.

We also recognise that with the proliferation of committees, parties with only one or two members are sorely stretched by having positions available to them on these committees and the onerous expectation of the crossbench, because of PR, regarding these members' participation in and membership of committees.

We start with the structural issue that the government has difficulty acquitting its proportional representation because of its executive role. Members of the crossbench are overstretched and potentially worked into the ground as a result of their representation in the committee structure as it is. This is potentially compounded by the number of references that may be run simultaneously by committees.

A committee of this chamber may have two streams of work, one to do with legislation and one to do with references. Some of those references are given by the Council itself, but some of them are determined by the committee. Simultaneous references can be given to a committee that mean that it has half a dozen references running concurrently. Potentially one committee can be turned into six with, on that example, half a dozen subcommittees or half a dozen different terms of references and hearings being run simultaneously. The originally simple construct of three committees in the upper house could turn into multiple — far more than three — in terms of the overlay of references and subcommittee structures.

If there is a problem for the government in maintaining its representation across that breadth of responsibilities, I would suggest that it would be almost impossible for the crossbench if that were to occur. The government suggests that this is a major difficulty that confronts us. Unless we address this question in a systematic and

holistic way that codifies the restrictions of ruling in and out what the level of participation may be, this has the potential to be contaminated by the number of voting members of committees that you might have simultaneously if we then move from participatory members to substantive members of committees. Even though there are only meant to be at any one time eight members of an upper house committee, through the application of participatory members becoming substantive members for different purposes, on any one occasion you might have more than eight members of this chamber having voting rights on a committee.

Whilst Ms Pennicuik is shaking her head in relation to the potential for that to occur, in reality there is nothing that can stop that from occurring — nothing. It is what I am putting to the house. This needs to be clearly understood from our practice that that cannot occur. At this moment we do not have that clarity and we do not have that undertaking by the opposition that that would be the way in which these conditions would be applied.

We also spent some time establishing the committees through the prism of scepticism by the opposition about whether there was going to be any budget and resource allocation provided to upper house committees — —

Ms Wooldridge interjected.

Mr JENNINGS — I am not quite sure about that. It has been delivered, has it not? Yes, of course it has been delivered.

Ms Wooldridge — Thank you for letting us know.

Mr JENNINGS — Right. Great. Terrific. A fantastic intervention by the Leader of the Opposition — —

Ms Wooldridge interjected.

Mr JENNINGS — It certainly has not stopped your members of committees, who complain bitterly about the number of references and the amount of resources available to support the research activities, being very adventurous in using that precious resource to underpin overseas trips. Whilst at the same time you are pushing for a multiplicity of references simultaneously and worrying about the amount of resources, you want to spend it on trips. I reckon as a matter of principle you might suggest that overseas trips in this climate are perhaps not a good idea. If you want to undertake pieces of research — —

Ms Wooldridge — Explain that.

Mr JENNINGS — I will explain that because it is pretty evident — —

Mr Dalla-Riva — Do you know about committee deliberations?

Mr JENNINGS — No, I do not know — —

Mr Dalla-Riva — Then how can you make that statement?

Mr JENNINGS — I made that statement because one of your members has indicated their interest in such an outcome.

Mr Dalla-Riva — Which committee is it that you know about? Which committee have you breached?

Mr JENNINGS — I have not breached any committee.

Mr Dalla-Riva — You have.

Mr JENNINGS — That is what you assert.

Mr Dalla-Riva — You are raising an issue — —

Mr JENNINGS — I have raised an issue because one of your members has made it very clear.

Mr Dalla-Riva — Who was that? You had better be careful because you will be held in contempt of the committee. You know that.

Mr JENNINGS — Thank you for your timely advice. I was actually being careful about the way in which I expressed that point on the basis of what you have sought from me and my knowledge of it, but my knowledge of it occurred in this chamber — —

Mr Dalla-Riva — How did you have that knowledge?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I do not want to intervene in the debate as such, but I indicate that the funding of committees is my responsibility, not the government's. I have reached an agreement with the government in terms of the resourcing of those committees. For the purposes of an effective debate going forward, we need to understand that.

I also indicate that I do not regard the discussion of administrative matters as a breach of the committees. Discussion of submissions and the discussions of the committee in respect of submissions and matters before the committee ought to be done within the confines of those committees, but some administrative matters, particularly those that involve resourcing issues, are

not, in my view, a breach. I do not think that the interjections are helpful in that respect.

Mr JENNINGS — Thank you, President, for your guidance. I also thank Mr Dalla-Riva for his guidance on this matter as well. Notwithstanding the level of interjections and how contentious that issue may be, I volunteer to the Parliament that if we are concerned about the precious resources that are available to us, which are human resources that underpin the committees, if we are concerned about the amount of resources that are available to us to undertake research activities and if we believe across the chamber that we live in a constrained environment in relation to the number of people we have and the amount of money we can spend, I urge the chamber to actively consider using those resources domestically on the basis of the research capability and the ability to acquit our responsibilities in Victoria and in a different climate. That is my argument to the chamber.

My argument to the chamber is that, for the reasons I have outlined, this is not simple. Nobody should insult our intelligence to say that these matters are not complicated. They have no bearing on the ability of upper house committees to acquit their responsibilities or the ability of members to participate. At face value, participatory members may assist members in managing their workload. Today it may suit some members of the chamber for this to occur, and the government is not opposing it today.

However, the government is foreshadowing the difficulty about how these matters should be dealt with in the long term so that the crossbenchers are not exhausted, there is an opportunity for government members to participate appropriately and there is not an abuse of the committee structure that would allow for the slide from participatory membership to substantive membership of a committee. This would change debating patterns and opportunities for the chamber or would create an elaborate subcommittee structure within any committee that effectively would turn one committee into two, three, four, five or six committees.

That is something that hopefully the Procedure Committee members will have an opportunity to work on when we next convene. It is my hope that in the first sitting week in August members of the Procedure Committee will meet and focus on these issues and we will find an agreed landing. Just as we found an agreed landing on a whole variety of other issues up until now, I look forward to that occurring. With those concerns being clearly identified by the government, I indicate we will not oppose this motion.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — I would like to speak to this motion. I do not have a concern about participatory members, and I tend to agree with Ms Pennicuik that in some ways we should all be participatory members on these committees so that we can have input and if we have an interest in a certain issue we can learn more about it. My concern starts with the issue of substitution.

At the moment the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues is running three coinciding inquiries and three consecutive references. They are all of great interest, but I could imagine that on a substitution basis the committee could have as many as 18 members. That is taking into account that the government would not substitute members, as it has indicated, but that the Greens would substitute members onto one of those references and the coalition would do the same.

As an Independent member, I will probably not have that ability. I would hope that possibly some crossbenchers might want to participate from time to time, but I am thinking of a meeting where we have three references. When we have just one set of committee members, those three references can be discussed. Once we have participatory members, and in turn substituted members, I am going to have to attend three different meetings because I am on all three references — one of which is to discuss end-of-life choices, one to discuss child protection and one to discuss the structure of government.

Mr Leane — You will not have time to do anything else.

Ms PATTEN — Yes. To me this seems very complicated, and I am concerned about that. I am not concerned about participatory membership, but I am concerned about how the structure is going to work when we have consecutive inquiries — and I imagine there are going to be more simultaneous inquiries, because as has been mentioned, we have both legislation and reference committees and we are also self-referencing. There may be times when the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues could have up to six ongoing references and it could have different people substituted onto each of those committees. My head is whirling on the practicality of how we work that on a Wednesday night. I will possibly be attending up to six subcommittees on a Wednesday night for the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues.

Mr Dalidakis — It is an out-of-body experience.

Ms PATTEN — An out-of-body experience is something I was not expecting to have in Parliament,

but if that is going to be one of the things that I have to learn about being in Parliament, well bring it on.

Mr Dalidakis — We need more of you. We want to clone you.

Ms PATTEN — I would be happy if anyone would like to bring some more Sex Party members into the house. I suspect that somebody may have to voluntarily resign for that to happen, but I would welcome that tremendously and enormously. It would be very generous of Mr Dalidakis.

While I am supporting the motion, I have some concerns. Maybe I should become a participatory member of the Procedure Committee so I could be involved in voicing those concerns as a single member who is not going to be able to substitute because I do not have the privilege of having colleagues in here and it would mean that my workload would be quite enormous under the circumstances. I look forward to the Procedure Committee coming up with a really good solution to this.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I congratulate the coalition on its new zeal for democracy and for its enthusiasm for these upper house committees. I cannot put my finger on what has happened, but I put it down to the change of opposition leader in this house. I congratulate her on her zeal for democratic process and her desire for these committees to operate and function in the way that they were set up to do. I am not too sure that they were set up to accelerate examinations into a number of references at the same time. If they are going to assist the democratic process, the true operation of these committees should be such that at the end of the inquiry process there be time given to personnel, so they can put their expertise into the reports that they will be asked to produce for this Parliament. In line with the comments Mr Jennings made, there are issues around time, effort and staff for a number of people in this chamber who are participating in these committees.

In saying that, I acknowledge that the committee process is important, but I think we really need to take into account other things that are also important to us as members of this chamber, as MLCs, such as actually getting into the communities we represent and having the time to listen to what they want us to represent them on. I think that is the bottom line regarding why we are here. When you take into account the way the upper house regions have been set up, you see there is no monopoly for one party in any region. That affords constituents in those regions the opportunity to speak to MLCs who represent different political parties.

That is a good and important change that was brought in when the new system of the regions was introduced. If a constituent wants to have a conversation with an opposition MLC, that will be afforded in every region that we have covering the state. If a constituent wants to have a conversation with a government MLC, that is afforded in every region of the state. If a constituent particularly wants to speak to a Greens MLC because of the nature of their issue, I think that is afforded in most regions — but Ms Pennicuik can correct me. Is it fair to say that half the regions have Greens MLCs?

Ms Pennicuik — Five out of eight regions.

Mr LEANE — Five! Sorry to undersell you.

Mr Jennings — Five-eighths!

Mr LEANE — Five-eighths. I will not be able to work that out as a percentage, so I will not try. Obviously in this parliamentary term, with the new parties represented in the Parliament, there is a good opportunity for constituents to speak to people who represent different parties. I think we have agreed that is a good thing.

Ms Patten — We're very good, yes.

Mr LEANE — Taking up Ms Patten's interjection, even though I am now talking specifically about representation within a region, I think she would find that people from every region are finding her door. Mr Purcell is probably in a similar position, and I am sure the two representatives of the Shooters and Fishers Party and the representative of the DLP are finding exactly the same thing.

The committee system is important, and we need to assess that against the importance of doing our core work, which is making appointments with people who want us to come in here and represent their views on issues. Tying up so much time in committee work would be a real problem. That is why we are keen for the Procedure Committee to look into every detail of this motion once we come back after the winter break.

The role of participating membership for a government MLC is pretty much impossible. There are nine of us who are not ministers, and there are three committees with three members in each committee. We need to think about how we go about it.

Ms Wooldridge interjected.

Mr LEANE — In complimenting Ms Wooldridge before, I never intended to break her heart. Given the challenges that the government MLCs have, we have to

think about the way this Parliament works. History tells us that the major parties go through cycles of sitting on different sides of the chamber. The opposition should think about whether it wants to set a precedent where the new role of MLCs would be not what we see as our core responsibility and core work but instead spent all our time working on upper house committee references.

While I am being generous, I congratulate Ms Pennicuik. She has been a consistent voice on the way these committees work. We will look to her for advice on making committees work on a practical level, and we look forward to those discussions. I congratulate the opposition on its new-found zeal. I am sure it is the change of leadership; I cannot put my finger on anything else. I hope we can find a sensible way forward so that we can all participate in these committees but in a practical way that affords us the opportunity to fulfil our other duties which are core to what we have been elected to do.

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) — I rise to make a relatively brief contribution to the debate on this motion, perhaps mercifully brief for those who are listening across the chamber. I indicate my concern for not only the crossbenchers but also newly elected members of the Parliament in discharging the very important obligations that come with any reference to a committee, whether that is a self-reference or something that comes to the committee as a consequence of a motion that passes through this house.

I note that the agenda for the purposes of committee deliberations is a very full one. It covers and canvasses a wide variety of issues across a number of policy, legal and social priorities. To that end the opposition has not suffered from any modesty in putting forth any number of different matters to be considered and reported on by different committees, and nor have the crossbenchers. There is nothing wrong with that.

However, we are dealing with subject matter that is complex and technical, and it has been referred to a committee in order to provide Victorians with a level of transparency and certainty as to the way that inquiries and reports are generated and that decisions or recommendations are arrived at. It strikes me as a matter of some concern that the interests of the broader public in understanding who has made decisions about which parts of inquiries, and how, may be somewhat clouded by the operation of the substitute-in, substitute-out process that is being proposed by the motion.

The subject matters are well evidenced in terms of what is on the record as far as what committees are going to

be required to deal with. The time frames are very tight. Those on the crossbenches, with their comparatively less resourced means, have an invidious challenge ahead of them in being able to meet the obligations of the committees to get across very technical subject matters and in terms of their availability across the winter break and beyond. In addition to that, as was indicated by Mr Jennings in his contribution, there are knock-on effects by virtue of the government's composition in terms of the executive and what that means for representation on committees and the capacity of individual members whose resources will already be very stretched to adequately acquit the obligations that come with each reference.

Committees take their work very seriously. It is a steep learning curve for everybody, but particularly for new members. I count myself amongst the group that is learning as hard and as fast as we possibly can, but it strikes me as somewhat counterintuitive, in terms of getting the very best results we can to discharge the obligations that have been given to committees as part of their terms of reference, that the motion in the form it is being proposed will allow the results that the committees are trying their very best to achieve.

I would like to make sure that these concerns are noted insofar as the potential to erode transparency about who has made which decisions and when and, potentially, the notion of absolute confidence in the way that decisions of committees have been arrived at and recommendations have been made. I also note that an interchange of various members may not necessarily allow members to best get across the very technical nature of the terms of reference for various committees in the fulsome way that it properly deserves.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to sum up briefly on the motion we have been discussing today in relation to participating members on two of the upper house committees. It is fair to say that there is a very well established process. There were participating members in the committees of the last Parliament, and they were not misused in any way at that time. The problems the government is foreshadowing were not problems in the last Parliament, when there were a number of participating members, which I outlined previously.

It is very clear that these have been well-established mechanisms in the standing orders for some time. In fact the recommendation from the committee that looked at this in the last Parliament was that every member should be a participating member, so the government is obviously walking away from that recommendation and raising a whole series of concerns.

In relation to having so many people voting at a meeting, it is very clear that there will be no more than eight votes on any one question. The issue is not that we might have 23 people attending a committee meeting and all voting on every motion; there will be eight votes on any particular issue in any particular inquiry, as has always been the case and as will continue to be the case.

Concerns have been raised about the workload of the committees. A committee has the capacity to prioritise its work, including self-references, and if the committee determines that it is at capacity in terms of its workload, then things like self-references will not be supported. We have the same capacity in this place. References to committees come either through a motion of the house or through a motion of the committee itself. Both the house and the committees have the capacity to regulate a committee's workload if it is too significant. I think it is very manageable.

It is a very fair and appropriate mechanism for members who have a specific interest in an inquiry to be able to engage with that committee, or if a member will be absent for another member to fill in for them. Ms Patten mentioned her concern about being a single member of a party and therefore not able to substitute. One of the members mentioned in today's motion is a crossbench member. They may seek to substitute with another crossbench member on a particular inquiry. While single member representatives obviously do not have another member of their own party, I have found a high level of collaboration across the crossbenches in terms of interest on any particular inquiry and deciding who should be on which inquiry. In the first instance the discussion of who would go on various committees included a discussion of the capacity to be flexible with each other.

I am pleased to have the support of the Greens in relation to the motion, and I am pleased that the government will not be opposing it, despite its concerns. There is obviously an opportunity to look further into this, but we have very well established and reasonable mechanisms. We are not trying to nominate everyone. There are five members across a range of different parties being nominated for a range of different reasons, and this will be a very positive and constructive contribution to the work of the committees into the future.

Motion agreed to.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Debate resumed from 10 June; motion of Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan):

That this house —

- (1) notes the failure of the government to comply with the following resolutions of the Council requiring the Leader of the Government to table in the Council certain documents, specifically the resolutions of —
 - (a) 11 February 2015 in respect of port of Melbourne documents;
 - (b) 25 February 2015 in respect of West Gate distributor documents;
 - (c) 25 February 2015 in respect of Australian Formula One Grand Prix documents; and
 - (d) 25 February 2015 in respect of Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project documents;
- (2) notes that the government's failure to comply with the resolutions of the Council is inconsistent with the Andrews government's election commitment to proper accountability to Parliament by the executive;
- (3) affirms the privileges, immunities and powers conferred on the Council pursuant to section 19 of the Constitution Act 1975, and the power to make standing orders under section 43 of that act;
- (4) affirms the right of the Council to require the production of documents;
- (5) is of the firm opinion that the Council is fully entitled to scrutinise the activities of the government and demand accountability by the government; and
- (6) notes that if the resolutions of the Council are not complied with, the Council reserves its right to find the Leader of the Government guilty of a contempt of the Council and to impose an appropriate sanction until the resolutions are complied with; and requires the Leader of the Government to table by 12 noon on the next day of sitting following the adoption of this resolution, all documents required to be tabled by the resolutions of the Council outlined in items (1)(a) to (d) that have not already been tabled.

Mr DALIDAKIS (Southern Metropolitan) — It is a pleasure to resume discussion on the motion of the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips that is before the house. I was just getting started in the last sitting week. I believe that even though the clock says 17 seconds at this point, I was approximately 47 minutes into a contribution on Mr Rich-Phillips's motion. For the benefit of the people in the gallery, those opposite, those on the crossbenches and the Greens I think I am going to have to start again. It is important for us to continue to talk to the motion because it is the dawn of

a new day and the dawn of a new debate and discussion. It is important that we start from the beginning. In Greek it is the alpha and the omega — the beginning and the end.

I began my contribution last sitting week with a definition of hypocrisy. I went through that definition on the basis that the motion before the house in relation to the non-production of documents deals with a range of documents that the then government, now opposition, had the opportunity to release some six and a half or seven months ago. But guess what? It did not release those documents. I wish I could tell the house the reason it chose not to release those documents, but I do not know. In all of the contributions on this motion not one member of the opposition has provided a reason why those opposite refused to release those documents when they were in government. The issue of hypocrisy still stands.

Those opposite decided not to release documents, and they may have had very good reasons not to release them when in government. Now that they are in opposition, however, they wish to play politics with some very fundamental and core issues in this state, including the Australian Formula One Grand Prix. I spoke about the grand prix at length in my last contribution, but let me touch upon it again. Forgive my voice today; I have not been well of late. I apologise to those listening.

The Australian Formula One Grand Prix, which takes place here in Melbourne, is a fantastic asset to our tourism calendar, and as such it does a range of things for the whole state, not just for Melbourne. People come to Melbourne for the grand prix, but they often stay for up to a week if they are from interstate and longer if they are from overseas. As a result all parts of Victoria — north, south, east and west — get the benefit of tourism dollars spent by those people visiting the state.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DALIDAKIS — The problem is that for a long period of time there has been bipartisan support for the grand prix throughout the very successful Bracks and Brumby governments — —

Ms Shing — On a point of order, Acting President, I am finding it difficult to hear Mr Dalidakis, as serendipitous as that may sound. If we could perhaps confine the noise from across the chamber to a dull roar, it might be in the interests of everyone in terms of getting through this particular issue.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Eideh) — Order! I would like to hear the member's contribution in silence.

Mr DALIDAKIS — It is a brave ruling, indeed, Acting President, wanting to listen to me. I appreciate the generosity of spirit. As I was saying, the grand prix had a long, strong and proud history of bipartisan support, but as soon as the swill sitting across from me came to opposition that bipartisanship was thrown out the window. All of a sudden they wish to play politics with an event that is crucial to our major events calendar and that brings in significant tourism dollars. The grand prix is not without its problems. As a member of Southern Metropolitan Region I acknowledge that residents of the Albert Park region, St Kilda East, St Kilda West and the suburbs around them suffer from noise and population issues as tourists flock to their local area. It is not without its problems, but by and large the grand prix is a very important part of our tourism strategy and major events program.

This is a wanton abuse of process. For those opposite, who refused to release documents in government, to now be so churlish and childish as to request the documents they could have released but did not is hypocrisy at its worst and could potentially endanger the grand prix. Those opposite wish to endanger a very important tourism and major event on our calendar for no reason other than to play politics in this chamber. They might like their history and their record to show that, but I am not sure that I would be so proud. If I were in opposition, I am not sure that I would be interjecting, nor am I sure that I would be yelling out and commenting upon this motion. Those opposite have put forward this motion despite refusing to release the documents when they were in government.

As I begin my contribution today I will deal with subparagraph 1(c) of the motion. As I said in my last contribution, the date referred to in this subparagraph is 25 February. Mr Ramsay was in the chair during my last contribution, and I want to remind him that that was a wonderful day because 25 February is my birthday. It is not just a date referred to in this motion. It is also a date that those opposite can regret forever, given it is my birthday. It is a date that my family and I happily celebrate. It is nice that that date is in *Hansard* and that I can draw that personal link to the motion that is before the house.

We have dealt with the grand prix documents. When those opposite were in government, time and again they refused to release documents in relation to the grand prix on the basis that they were commercial in confidence and that it would endanger the event. If they

got the opportunity to poach the Australian Formula One Grand Prix from Melbourne, many cities around the world and in Australia would do so. If we released those documents and another Australian city poached the race, the first thing you would hear from the opposition is, 'The world is falling apart, the sky is falling in, the world is collapsing before our very eyes!', and our tourism and major events strategy would be in tatters. That is what those opposite would say if releasing these documents led to another city in Australia being able to poach the grand prix.

That is why at the beginning of my contribution on this motion during the last sitting week I referred to the Oxford dictionary definition of 'hypocrisy'. I want to refer to the Oxford dictionary again in relation to another word. Unfortunately it is not a word of Greek extraction but of old Latin extraction — 'transparency'. The dictionary describes the origin of the word as:

Late 16th century (as a general term denoting a transparent object): from medieval Latin *transparentia*, from transparent — 'shining through' ...

It is fortuitous that my contributions on this documents motion have stretched over two parliamentary sitting weeks, because over that time the government has released a number of documents in relation to this motion. We have decided that the issue of transparency is something we need to honour and that we need to show respect to the processes in this place and to members of this chamber, whether they are the Greens, others on the crossbench or opposition members. We should provide documents when we can.

That is what we were saying last sitting week when we began the debate on this production of documents motion. We began the debate on this documents motion by saying that where possible, the government will provide these documents. We will provide these documents in a period of time that allows us to review and consider the documents appropriately. We will then release the documents when we believe that there is no potential commercial damage to the state of Victoria.

In my last contribution on this issue, one of the things I said was that we need to be very careful with the documents. Freedom of speech — and I use that as an example — is not unfettered in society. You do not have the ability to say what you like without any fear of repercussion, depending on the content of your conversation. That is why we have a range of laws that the institution of Parliament has put through as legislation and why this Parliament continues to enshrine within it the conduct of people outside this place — because we appreciate that while it is a fundamental right, it is not without responsibilities. So

it is with production of documents. We acknowledge that where possible we should release documents.

Again I refer to the definition of 'hypocrisy'. In the four years they were in government those opposite made it far more difficult to obtain government documents by changing the rules regarding freedom of information. The Bracks and Brumby legacy made the system more open and more transparent, but when the coalition government was elected, the Liberal and Nationals hypocrites, who are now on the other side of the chamber, made it more difficult to get information out of a government, not easier.

This government has said it will make changes and introduce reforms. It will provide documents and be more transparent wherever possible. It is not simply a matter of saying, 'Trust us, we will do it'; it is about saying, 'Trust us on our record'. Yesterday the Leader of the Government in this place stood up and released to the chamber documents relating to the port of Melbourne, the West Gate distributor and the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project. That one act from the Leader of the Government did more in one night than that swill did in four years of government. They did not release documents at all.

Mr Ramsay — On a point of order, Acting President, I have listened to the contribution from Mr Dalidakis, and three times now he has referred to those on this side in derogatory terms. 'Swill' is not a parliamentary term. I ask you to ask him to withdraw that comment and give him some guidance in relation to further references to the character of the opposition.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmár) — Order! I take Mr Ramsay's point, but I am not going to ask —

Ms Shing — On a point of order, Acting President, while you are entertaining the point of order that Mr Ramsay is making, I ask that where any guidance is given, that guidance also be given in relation to the flavour and tenor of interjections from across the chamber, which have included, as I heard this morning, someone opposite telling Mr Dalidakis that he was so far up himself it was unbelievable, or words to that effect.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmár) — Order! I understand Ms Shing's point of order and her explanation, but I am not going to ask for its withdrawal. I ask Mr Dalidakis to come back to the motion.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I appreciate my colleague putting on —

Mr Morris — On a point of order, Acting President, I believe Mr Dalidakis may have misled the house. He may not understand that he has misled the house, but I certainly believe he has. He referred earlier to the Leader of the Government producing documents yesterday in regard to the request. I believe it was the Attorney-General who provided those documents, so I just wanted to clarify —

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

Mr DALIDAKIS — Once again we see the opposition trying to stymie debate. Here I am talking about a production of documents motion moved by the opposition, yet those opposite refused to release documents during the last Parliament. Now here we are, six or seven months in, releasing documents in this Parliament, and those opposite are trying to stop me talking about it. They are so embarrassed by their own behaviour that they cannot even bear to be caught out on their own hypocrisy.

Last night, by leave, the Leader of the Government released three lots of documents, and the fourth lot of documents, in relation to the grand prix, about which I have already spoken, has not been forthcoming. It will be a sad day when we leave this chamber and those opposite have put in jeopardy Melbourne's status as Australia's tourism and major events capital. Those opposite have put our events schedule in jeopardy because they wish to play politics with a bunch of documents that they understandably refused to release during the last Parliament. They acknowledged why they did not release them, yet still they continue to babble on about trying to have those documents released in this Parliament. Why? Because they are now in opposition.

I put it to you, Acting President, that if those opposite were on this side of the chamber, they would still not release these documents, because they did not release them for four years in the last government. During their four years in government they did not release these documents, yet six months into opposition they are trying to have them released. They had those documents at their disposal but chose not to release them, and they chose not to do so for a very good reason — that is, because some of those documents are commercial in confidence and could endanger, for example, the grand prix, and in particular the grand prix's ability to renegotiate a grand prix contract going forward.

I give credit to the previous Premier, the Honourable Denis Napthine, who forged forward and extended the

contract of the grand prix. Even though I acknowledge that obviously there are issues for residents and some other people in relation to having the grand prix at the track in Albert Park, the greater good and the benefits outweigh the negatives. From that perspective, generally speaking there is agreement across both sides of this chamber in relation to supporting our major events and sporting events as part of our tourism strategy.

I again refer to the motion moved by the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips — and I am very glad he is in the chamber to hear me directly — which asks that this house:

- (1) notes the failure of the government to comply with the following resolutions of the Council requiring the Leader of the Government to table in the Council certain documents, specifically the resolutions of —
 - (a) 11 February 2015 in respect of port of Melbourne documents;
 - (b) 25 February 2015 in respect of West Gate distributor documents —

both of which, by the way, are now done, so I do not know whether Mr Rich-Phillips wants to amend the motion —

- (c) 25 February 2015 in respect of Australian Formula One Grand Prix documents —

which are outstanding, but we have discussed why, and —

- (d) 25 February 2015 in respect of Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project documents —

which of course have been provided as well.

That was the first paragraph. The motion then asks that this house:

- (2) notes that the government's failure to comply with the resolutions of the Council is inconsistent with the Andrews government's election commitment to proper accountability to Parliament by the executive;

Last sitting week I spoke at length about this, and I used the example of what members of this government wanted to do with sessional orders in relation to question time. I referenced that with what transpired — funnily enough, there is that word hypocrisy again — in the last Parliament. This is the 58th Parliament. In the lead-up to the election to determine the 57th Parliament, when the Brumby government was effectively dismissed by the people and the Baillieu-Shaw-Napthine governments came to power, all those people on the opposite side of the chamber

came into this Parliament with a policy — believe it or not — of reforming question time.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — A policy of reforming question time, Mr Ramsay. That was the policy of those opposite at the election before last, and guess what? They did not. They had control of the Council. They had the numbers in this place to pass their legislation, but do you know what they did? They did nothing — not one thing.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Mr Ramsay did not sit in the seat in which he is now sitting, because he was over on the government benches. He did not do one thing about changing question time, even though it was the policy they wanted to implement. They had the numbers in this place, and they did not. Not one thing did they do about changing the standing orders for question time.

When it comes to accountability by the executive in an Andrews Labor government, we went to the election on 29 November last year to reform question time, and guess what happened when tried to do so? Those opposite stopped us from implementing the policies we went to the election with. All of a sudden they are in opposition, and they have had a Hail Mary experience, a Damascus experience. They have decided all of a sudden that they are going to change the standing orders for change question time now that they are in opposition.

When those opposite ask, as does the second paragraph of their motion 2, that the house:

- (2) notes that the government's failure to comply with the resolutions of the Council is inconsistent with the Andrews government's election commitment to proper accountability to Parliament by the executive —

they should hang their heads in shame. They are a bunch of hypocrites, because when we tried to change the standing orders they stopped us. When they had the ability to change the standing orders themselves, they did not do it. Now they have the gall to try this and show their contempt for this Parliament. If only people outside this Parliament could see the hypocrisy on that side of the chamber, they would understand that those opposite come in here to lecture us about accountability although they did nothing for four years — not one thing.

Members opposite did nothing to change the question time rules. We tried to make changes, but they stopped us from doing so. They had 21 votes in this place in the

previous Parliament, which is a majority, and they chose to do nothing. Now they are lecturing us about changing standing orders and implying that the executive is failing to be accountable to Parliament. Gosh, talk about student politics!

I will move on to paragraph (3), which asks that the house:

... affirms the privileges, immunities and powers conferred on the Council pursuant to section 19 of the Constitution Act 1975, and the power to make standing orders under section 43 of that act.

Great. I think we all agree on that one. That is black and white, even though it is printed on pink paper. We are happy to accept that. Paragraph (4):

... affirms the right of the Council to require the production of documents;

Of course the Council can request documents. It is absolutely within the purview of the Council to do so. It is quite appropriate that we acknowledge the Council's right to request documents, because it is an important right. However, as I said earlier, we cannot release some documents for a range of reasons, and one of them is when they contain commercial-in-confidence material. I acknowledge that Ms Pennicuik does not always agree with commercial-in-confidence reasons, and I acknowledge that members of the opposition are similarly unhappy with those reasons at times, but the government has a responsibility to the people of Victoria to govern in a way that does not put any commercial deals entered into by the executive at risk. Our no. 1 responsibility, though Ms Pennicuik may not like it, is to the people of Victoria, not to her. When we make decisions, we are making decisions on behalf of all Victorians, not on behalf of a sectional interest from the Greens political party.

Paragraph (5) notes that the house:

is of the firm opinion that the Council is fully entitled to scrutinise the activities of the government and demand accountability by the government.

Again, there is no problem with this part of the motion. We have scrutiny, evidenced by the fact we are debating this motion. The opposition has attempted a number of times to shut me down and switch me off, but I tell members opposite that I am here, and I will be here for as long as my colleagues want me to be here.

The Labor Party believes that the Council is entitled to scrutinise the government. I could spend a great deal of time talking about the myriad opportunities the Legislative Council has to scrutinise the executive, including the committee work undertaken in this place,

question time and the debates this chamber has on Wednesdays, which is opposition business day. There is a broad range of opportunities to scrutinise the government. There is also the adjournment debate and the opportunity to raise constituency questions. Constituency questions are a particularly good opportunity to scrutinise the government — and guess what? They were introduced by the Andrews government specifically to enable more scrutiny. We did it to provide a greater opportunity for those opposite to examine the executive.

Ms Pennicuik — Not just those opposite, but your own members as well.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I take up Ms Pennicuik's interjection because it is a very good point. Constituency questions are indeed an opportunity for all members of Parliament to ask questions of ministers on behalf of their constituents. They provide the opposition and the crossbench with another opportunity to scrutinise the government, which is a welcome departure from the last four dark years of non-scrutiny and refusal of freedom of information requests by the last government.

Further into the motion, paragraph (6) notes:

... that if the resolutions of the Council are not complied with, the Council reserves its right to find the Leader of the Government guilty of a contempt of the Council and to impose an appropriate sanction until the resolutions are complied with;

That would be a very sad and very dangerous place for the Council to go. To use the kind of language contained within paragraph (6) of Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips's motion, specifically the Council's 'right to find the Leader of the Government guilty of a contempt', and also, 'to impose an appropriate sanction until the resolutions are complied with', is egregious. When you consider that the nature of the discussion and banter across the chamber is robust — at times it can also be friendly and very supportive, depending on the issue before the house — it becomes obvious that the Leader of the Government does a fine job of the difficult task of representing the government.

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, Acting President, I have just checked the time and ask if that clock is right? Has Mr Dalidakis been going for only 15 minutes? It seems like it has been so much longer than that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order! That is not a point of order. The clock is a correct representation of the time that Mr Dalidakis has been speaking.

Mr Ondarchie — Tell us, when is your birthday? You haven't told us more than 25 times today.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I thank Mr Ondarchie, but I have done it only a few times today.

Mr Ondarchie — Is it 25 February?

Mr DALIDAKIS — I am glad that Mr Ondarchie has remembered my birthday. I look forward to a box of chocolates from him next year. As I said, paragraph (6) notes:

... that if the resolutions of the Council are not complied with, the Council reserves its right to find the Leader of the Government guilty of a contempt of the Council and to impose an appropriate sanction until the resolutions are complied with;

We need to be very careful about the language contained in this part of the motion. As I was saying before that frivolous point of order was raised, the Leader of the Government has a difficult job. His job is made difficult because he represents the government, which is formed by a majority in the Legislative Assembly. The Labor Party has only 14 members of a possible 40 in this chamber, so there are only 14 Labor members sitting on the government benches. When the Leader of the Government stands up, he has a range of competing objectives before him, one of which is to represent this government in negotiations with those opposite. Unfortunately we often see that parties with different interests do not always negotiate in good faith.

The Leader of the Government does the best he can. Being threatened with 'appropriate sanction' when as the Leader of the Government he is not necessarily the minister responsible for the portfolios for which documents have been requested — opposition members have requested documents from a range of ministerial portfolios for which he is not directly responsible — sets a very dangerous precedent. I beg the indulgence of the chamber to say that those opposite should be very careful about what precedents they choose to set in opposition with the crossbenchers and the Greens because — guess what? — the circle turns. The Leader of the Government does a difficult job, and he does it very well. I am very happy —

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — No, I am very happy to work and serve at the pleasure of both the Premier and the Leader of the Government in this place because — guess what? — we are in government, and that is in large part because of the wonderful leadership shown by the Honourable Daniel Andrews and the Honourable Gavin Jennings.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I take up the interjection from my colleague the Honourable Steve Herbert. That is a great contrast to the four years of the Baillieu-Napthine-Shaw dysfunction this Parliament experienced in the last term of Parliament.

I started with the definition of hypocrisy and I will end on the definition of transparency, which is ‘the ability to see through things’. We have provided documents in relation to three of the four matters in the motion. We have done so in good faith. We have said that we will try to continue to work with the release of documents the Council requests. We will do it in a fashion that is timely but does not endanger the legacy going forward of the Victorian government in relation to whatever the policy issue may be — whether it is the issue of the western distributor, the issue of possibly building a second major crossing over the Maribyrnong River or the issue of the port of Melbourne. I could go back to the hypocrisy of the opposition’s view on the port of Melbourne, but I am sure we will have that debate plenty of times. I look forward to that.

We have looked at the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail project, and in the last sitting week I spent a long time talking about that. One of the things I reflected on was that the previous government had an unsolicited bid from possibly some of its mates, who said, ‘Do you know what? Beauty!’. They thought the Victorian government was an ATM, and they said, ‘Sign us up’. When this government came to office one of the things it did — which funnily enough those opposite refused to do — was run a strong and rigorous financial review of the unsolicited bid. And guess what? The review found out that there was not value for taxpayer money in that unsolicited bid, and so we cancelled it.

Guess what we are doing as a result? We are now conducting grade separations for nine stations along the Cranbourne-Pakenham line, and we have said we will buy a surplus of new trains, which is recorded in *Hansard* and which I have spoken about. I leave the house with the point of view — —

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I am getting started, but I know there are other people who would like to contribute to this debate. I hope the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips is one. I will end on this question to the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips, and I hope he listens.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order! It is not an opportunity for Mr Dalidakis to question other members.

Mr DALIDAKIS — No, I am not questioning, Acting President, I am posing a question. There is a difference. I am posing the question to the person who moved this motion. When they get the opportunity to talk to the motion they have moved, can they answer the simple question: why was it okay for them to not release documents when they were in government? Why was it okay for them not to implement changes to question time when they had the numbers to do so? Why is it okay for them to hide behind the fear of opposition instead of going to the issue of transparency, which we have provided through the executive of this government and the strong, capable and fine leadership of Daniel Andrews in the other place and Gavin Jennings in this place?

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to make some remarks on the motion about the government’s non-production of documents. I want to speak particularly about the documents referred to in paragraph (1) of Mr Rich-Phillips’s motion and respond to some of the comments made by the previous speaker, Mr Dalidakis. I go to the status of the production of the documents referred to in paragraph (1) and start with the port of Melbourne documents referred to in paragraph (1)(a).

It is true to say that late into last evening some documents were tabled in this house, and this morning we are returning to this motion. Some of those documents relate to the port of Melbourne. I have not seen them myself, but my colleague Mr Barber, who is going through them as I speak, has let me know that there are quite substantial redactions in the documents. It was foreshadowed in their tabling last night that there were some redactions, particularly of the names of persons, but I am hearing from Mr Barber that the redactions in the documents are quite substantial.

A lot of the information we are seeking with regard to this very important issue is not in the documents that were tabled last night. I cannot give more detail than that. As I have said, there are a lot of redactions in the documents, so we would not be satisfied with what has been tabled with regard to the port of Melbourne documents late yesterday evening. In paragraph (1)(b) the motion refers to the West Gate distributor documents that were called for by the opposition. I know the opposition is looking at those documents, and I will leave it to one of its speakers to refer to that particular set of documents.

Paragraph (1)(c) relates to the grand prix contract that was signed in the previous year. I will take up some of the comments made by Mr Dalidakis which suggested that my motion to call for that contract is somehow not in the public interest. The grand prix has now been with us for 21 years. In the last six years it has cost the taxpayer at the very minimum, according to the Australian Formula One Grand Prix's own annual reports, \$300 million — a loss of around \$50 million or more per year for the last six years. That does not take into account other contributions that are made by public agencies, at a cost to those agencies, for the staging of the grand prix every year.

In 2009 the Save Albert Park group did some work on this issue with regard to subsidies, including the loss made by the race in 2009. The losses came to a total of just under \$87 million. The group pointed out that the spending by the commonwealth government on all sports in that particular year was \$90 million, only \$3 million more than the cost of the grand prix in a single year. I have said before in this Parliament that if you add up the losses in the annual reports and look at the subsidies that are provided to the grand prix by various agencies, including local government but also state agencies, over the 21 years the event has been run you are not getting any change out of \$1 billion. Over that time, that is how much public money has gone into this car race.

Mr Dalidakis says it is not in the public interest for me to call for the contract for that event, including information about how much more public money is going to be spent on it in the next five years. I said it would cost about \$50 million a year, but in the last couple of years it has been closer to \$60 million. If it runs to trend, another five years at \$60 million — I am sure people can add that up — will mean another \$300 million will be spent on that race. It is in the public interest to call that to account and to make the statement I make, which is that it is not affordable or sustainable for the Victorian taxpayer to continue to have to subsidise this event to that extent — that is, the equivalent of the amount of money that has been spent across all other sports across Australia for this one event. In the public interest, the economic sustainability of this event has to be seriously questioned.

Members might recall that I moved two motions on 25 February. The other one was to require the Australian Grand Prix Corporation to actually accurately count how many people attend the race, because every single year it makes it up. It estimates it, and it includes in its attendances all the pit crew. They are counted as attendees; they are not separated from attendees. The corporation counts tickets that have been issued but

never actually used. It does not add up when it is put against the voluntary efforts of other people estimating and counting how many people attend the race. For example, I pointed out that on the first days of the trials, there is hardly anybody there. There are only a few hundred people there, yet the Australian Grand Prix Corporation comes up with figures of 300 000 people attending the event over three days. It is just not possible. In fact that many people could not fit in the grandstands and so on that are there.

We have the escalating cost of this event and the apparent inability of the cost to come down at all; every single year it increases. We have the deceit perpetrated on the Victorian community in terms of how many people attend the race. We also have now, in terms of the international status of the race, the fact that there are fewer events being held around the world for the same reasons I am raising: there are falling attendances and escalating costs. South Korea has cancelled its grand prix. Germany, which used to hold the event at two particular racecourses, has now cancelled its event. Even the Italian grand prix is under a cloud. This is not an event that is increasing in popularity or sustainability; it is decreasing.

I say to Mr Dalidakis that it is completely in the public interest for me to call for these contracts to see what the taxpayer has been signed up to, given that Victorian taxpayers have already been slugged around \$1 billion for this race. Are they being signed up without their knowledge because the contract is secret and has remained secret for 21 years? This is a disgrace. The contract should be public. The amount of money that taxpayers have been signed up to without their knowledge should be made public. Of course this contract was not included in the list of documents that were tabled last night or previously in accordance with previous motions to which this motion refers.

Mr Dalidakis mentioned that documents related to the fourth set of documents referred to by this motion relating to the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor, in paragraph (1)(d), had been tabled. Certainly some documents with relation to the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project were tabled. In fact a few documents relating to the public consultation around the project have been tabled, but the government has refused to provide the key document that we are seeking, which is the value-for-money evaluation, and has claimed executive privilege over that document.

Mr Dalidakis's contribution, without me pulling it apart too much, was not entirely based on fact, but he did make the claim that the government has discovered that there is no value for money in that project. I say that it

should release the value-for-money evaluation so we can all know what the government has found. In fact when Mr Barber moved his motion, that was the first item that we requested. In paragraph (1) of his motion he sought:

the value-for-money evaluation for the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project, required under item 2.4.1 of the Department of Treasury and Finance's unsolicited proposal guidelines, for the purpose of assessing 'whether value for money is being achieved for government, including that the benefits to government are being maximised'.

That is the terminology used by the Department of Treasury and Finance and, in the public interest, we as the Greens want to know whether or not there is any value for money. Of course there was a project under the previous government, and we understand that there is a different project under the current government.

Mr Barber made points with regard to unsolicited projects, and having sat through the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings, I can say that we are seeing more unsolicited projects appearing out of the mists. Mr Barber raised the point, which is very apposite, that the process and planning of the delivery of key infrastructure — and you cannot get much more key infrastructure than railways — seems to be emerging from the private sector rather than from an orderly and proper planning process undertaken by the government of the day, which would include consultation with local government and the community. Now we are seeing unsolicited projects, and they are covered by a veil of secrecy. Who knows what the motivation is behind this unsolicited project from the private sector? We could presume that the private sector would be more concerned with what is going to bring the greatest commercial return than with what the public benefits would be. The documents that were tabled last night with regard to the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project did not go to the key documents that are required in the public interest.

I will also talk about that project in terms of signalling. The proposal to upgrade the signalling on that rail corridor seems to have been dropped, and I heard at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings a different version of what will occur with signalling. An upgrade from the current archaic 19th century — or certainly early 20th century — signalling that we have in place across the Victorian railway system might occur on the Pakenham-Cranbourne rail corridor, but state-of-the-art signalling will be trialled on the Sandringham line, which is the line I use daily. This is very interesting because the Sandringham line does not

have V/Line trains or freight trains, so this signalling will be trialled on the one line that does not have any interaction with the other parts of the rail system that would test whether the signalling works. I accepted the government's answer at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, but this decision seems odd to me. Apparently at the same time a different signalling system will be put in place on the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor.

I go back to the main point, which is that the key document that we were seeking with regard to this project has not been provided by the government. A portion of the documents that are being sought by the motions that have been referred to by Mr Rich-Phillips's motion have appeared, but key documents or key portions of those documents have not been provided. The grand prix contract continues to be kept a secret from the people of Victoria, who have stumped up more than \$1 billion for that race and are probably going to be stumping up close to \$300 million to \$400 million over the next few years. At a time when every other part of the public sector — education, the environment, health, training — is struggling for money, that sort of money cannot be squandered any further on this event.

We continue to urge the government to produce the documents that have been called for in this motion.

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — It is with great pleasure that I rise to make my contribution to motion 1 on the notice paper, which has been given the heading 'Government's non-production of documents' and which is standing in the name of Mr Rich-Phillips. I want to make some remarks on comments made earlier by Mr Dalidakis. I note that the word 'hypocrisy' was used quite regularly throughout his lengthy contribution. I just thought it was important to note that there have certainly been some issues in terms of Labor's view of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix over time.

At this point in time I might praise the Greens because they have always been consistent on their view of the grand prix. I think they have been consistently wrong, but at the same time they have certainly been consistent in their view.

It is also the case that the coalition has been consistent in its views on the grand prix, and they are that it is good public policy and it is good for the state of Victoria to hold the Melbourne grand prix. But it is the case that those members opposite in the Labor Party have changed their view over time. I note that prior to

1995 the Labor Party did not support the grand prix in the great state of Victoria — —

Mrs Peulich — So Mr Dalidakis was not telling the truth?

Mr MORRIS — I believe Mrs Peulich may be correct there; I believe Mr Dalidakis may have been incorrect and it may be the Labor Party itself that is guilty of hypocrisy in terms of the grand prix. On 15 November 1995 I note that Neil Cole, who was the shadow Attorney-General at the time, said:

I believe the people who are promoting events such as those are doing a disservice to the state ...

‘A disservice to the state’ was the view of Labor at the time; it believed the grand prix was doing a disservice to the state. The Greens, however, were very consistent in their opposition to the grand prix, and I praise that consistency. I believe it is consistently wrong, but it is consistent.

If we continue to look at hypocrisy, we need only look at those opposite — members of the Labor Party — who did not support the grand prix. They were supporters of Save Albert Park. They said the grand prix should not go ahead, that it was not in the interests of the state. It was a populist line. What we see now is the Labor Party being dragged kicking and screaming towards good public policy. The coalition always supported the grand prix because it is good public policy. However, the Labor Party had to be dragged kicking and screaming to support the grand prix in the great state of Victoria.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr MORRIS — Indeed I believe in the 1990s the Labor Party was seeking the same documents that the house is now seeking and the government will not provide.

I am rather concerned about how these documents were provided to the house rather late last night. There was an extension of the sitting last night, and at approximately 10.25 p.m.— I do not know exactly when, but sometime between 10.20 p.m. and 10.30 p.m. — the Deputy Clerk admirably informed the house that the documents had been received from the Attorney-General. I note that they were received not from the Leader of the Government in this place but from the Attorney-General. I would just like to make that clarification because I think Mr Dalidakis may have been slightly confused.

Mrs Peulich — And just wrong.

Mr MORRIS — I think that is a very apt description; I think Mr Dalidakis is regularly wrong. This was just one instance in which he was wrong. Certainly in the past with previous document productions the government has at times attempted to comply. This is one of the great concerns I have. As Ms Pennicuik has noted before, there have been documents that have been provided — some documents have been provided — but as Ms Pennicuik has pointed out, many documents are missing, and indeed there are large redactions in the documents.

I have not yet had the good fortune to see those documents. I have been in here listening to the contributions in the house because I believe that is important to do. I also note that it is important that we understand what those opposite are saying and how incorrect and wrong they are. However, it is extremely important to understand whether or not these documents are a true reflection of and truly in keeping with the order of this house to produce them. That is an important point to make as well.

This is not a request; this is not the house asking politely of the government that it — pretty please — provide these documents. This is an order of this house; it is the will of this house that the government provide these documents. It is not a request, it is an order, and it is critically important that we understand that it is the will of this house. It is the majority of members in this house who have made this decision that these documents should be provided so that we can understand where in the world we are with some of these proposals.

The port of Melbourne documents are going to be critically important to understanding exactly where we are here — a 70-year private monopoly. I cannot begin to imagine how members opposite can believe that having a 70-year monopoly on what is a critical piece of infrastructure for regional and rural Victoria is going to be in the best interests of our state. It is of great concern that the funds that are supposedly going to come from the port of Melbourne long-term lease are to be invested in inner Melbourne. Who uses the port of Melbourne? Who is going to be most disadvantaged by the rising costs of port fees? It is going to be regional and rural Victorians.

Mr Ramsay understands this, as do all of my coalition country colleagues. Ms Lovell understands the importance of the port of Melbourne. Those opposite do not understand how important the port of Melbourne is to regional and rural Victoria. It is critically important that we do not see 800 per cent rises in the cost of using the port. It would be a disgrace to all our hardworking

primary producers if we were to see a rise of that nature for using the port of Melbourne.

It is of great concern to me that those documents that have been provided to the house may not — and I am sure do not — comply with what the government has been ordered to do in terms of providing documents relating to the port of Melbourne, the West Gate distributor, the grand prix and the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project. It is of great concern to me that these documents may not be a true representation of what this house has ordered the government to do.

I am greatly concerned — and those concerns have been partly reinforced by Ms Pennicuik in this house today — to see that the government is paying lip-service to the orders of this house. Mr Rich-Phillips proposed a motion, and that motion was accepted by the house. We now have a further motion calling upon the government to provide these documents. I have great concerns that the government is paying lip-service to the motion. There may be a couple of bits of paper with lots of black text strewn through the most important parts of those documents.

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr MORRIS — It is of great concern to me that these documents will not provide the house with what it was requesting, and that is full details of those projects that are listed in Mr Rich-Phillips's motion.

The government is in a privileged position. I actually heard the Leader of the Government, Mr Jennings, speaking earlier today with regard to appointing members to committees and saying that the government is in a privileged position. It is in a privileged position because it has the resources. It has the resources of staff and support and the like to achieve the work that it wishes to be able to achieve. The opposition, the Greens and the crossbenchers do not have that same support. I hear Ms Shing asking whether I have read those documents. I think it is important that I am in the house for these contributions, and I am glad that others such as Mr Barber are taking the time to go through those documents very deliberately.

I will also take the opportunity to go through those documents, but my great concern is that those documents are not going to provide the information that the house has ordered the government to provide. That is of great concern to me. The government has staff; it has ministerial staff and it has further staff to do this work. The Greens, the crossbenchers and the opposition do not have that same support. We have to do that work

ourselves, so it is important that we understand exactly what is in these documents to ensure that the government has complied. I have grave concerns as to whether the government has complied with what this house has ordered it to do.

In Mr Rich-Phillips's motion if the resolutions by the Council are not complied with, the Council reserves its right to find the Leader of the Government guilty of contempt of the Council and to impose an appropriate sanction until the resolutions are complied with. This is not something to be taken lightly. It is not an idle threat. It is something that would create great precedent in this place. If the government does not comply with the orders of the house, the house has the capacity to impose sanctions. Those sanctions will not be levelled at Mr Leane or Mr Melhem; they will be levelled at the Leader of the Government.

I believe it is critically important that we understand whether the government has complied with the will of the house in ensuring that all the documents have been provided in regard to this motion. It is critically important that the government respect the will of this chamber. The will of this chamber needs to be respected by this government. I remind members that sanctioning the Leader of the Government is not something to be taken lightly; it needs to be well considered. This is a very serious issue. It is something we need to address well. We need to understand whether or not all of these documents comply with what has been requested.

I read the letters that the Attorney-General wrote to the Acting Clerk, which were presented to the chamber last night, and I have great concerns that there are a lot of qualifications in those letters. One states:

Accordingly, the government, on behalf of the Crown, makes a claim of executive privilege in relation to the redacted material in the study.

It concerns me greatly that the redacted material may be of substance to the house and important for the house to understand.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Refugees and asylum seekers

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — My question is to the Special Minister of State, Mr Jennings, representing the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. I understand that a whole-of-government approach is being undertaken in

relation to the provision of services in Victoria to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. While this is a commendable effort, there have been some problems. The 2014 Victorian Auditor-General's Office report entitled *Access to Services for Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers* found that there had been a lack of strategic coordination between the relevant government departments and agencies in the planning, provision and evaluation of services, as well as a general lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities. Given that the minister has responsibility for the portfolio of multicultural affairs in this house, can he inform me what is being done to address these issues?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I thank Dr Carling-Jenkins for her question and her concern about members of our community in relation to making sure that within the rich cultural diversity of our state a number of people who may have arrived to our state through circumstances of being asylum seekers or refugees have their needs recognised and responded to appropriately by government agencies. She reminds the house that in 2014 there was an assessment undertaken by the Auditor-General of the effectiveness of those support structures across government.

The Auditor-General made recommendations about the knowledge base of departments in terms of how they respond to the needs of members of those communities. In particular there was emphasis placed on the capacity and knowledge of the then Department of Human Services and the department of education in terms of how well their staff were trained in catering for the needs of members of these communities; on the need for availability of data that underpins what their needs may be now and into the future; and the way in which training and support structures were provided and the way in which they could be better integrated so that there could be a whole-of-government response to the needs of members of these communities.

The then Department of Human Services and the department of education recognised the need to respond to those recommendations and findings of the Auditor-General. They were urged to develop integrated cultural diversity plans that would underpin their work into the future. Those cultural diversity plans have been worked on by both those agencies. It is a very timely question that the member asks this week, because the time frame for the release of those plans is in fact within the next week. Certainly by the next time Parliament sits, I hope the member and other community members who are concerned about these issues will see the breadth of the cultural diversity plans that are being adopted by those departments.

There were also broader recommendations relating to the ministerial responsibility of multicultural affairs in terms of the overall integration and coordination of the whole-of-government effort. Members would also be aware that in the last few months the Minister for Multicultural Affairs has undertaken an independent review of these matters in relation to the effectiveness of the agencies that have worked with him — the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship and the commission he works with. That independent review will also be making some recommendations about the way in which those issues may be better integrated into the future.

In the very near future, through the cultural diversity plans coming from those departments and the whole-of-government effort from my ministerial colleague the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the member will see some tangible responses to those very appropriate recommendations in the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report, which are consistent with what is embedded in her question about a concern for the wellbeing of members of our community who have needs that need to be identified and responded to. Staff need to be trained to support them, because quite often they are vulnerable and in need of additional support from the state, and that is recognised by the Andrews government.

Supplementary question

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for his answer and his empathy towards and his understanding of this complex issue. I certainly look forward to looking at the cultural diversity plans and at the review being undertaken. It is my understanding that there is currently no complete or reliable data on the number of asylum seekers in Victoria and that accessing settler data in general from the commonwealth is often a slow process. Could the minister inform the house what action the Victorian government is taking to address this?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I have not seen the full plans, but I hope and it would be my expectation that data integrity, data analysis and how it is applied to provide better services would be a feature of those plans. I will be looking out for that, as I am sure the member will be, because her point is well made. We need to know the number of people who require assistance, where they are currently housed, where they live and the profile of their wellbeing, whether it be through housing, employment, skill development or any other kinds of social service. We need to know that information, and we need to apply it

in their daily lives in an appropriate way. I am hoping that will be a feature. I will make my colleagues aware that there is an expectation that that will be a feature of those plans.

School completion rates

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Training and Skills, representing the Minister for Education. Western Victoria has the lowest year 12 attainment rate of all Victoria's regions and one of Australia's highest youth unemployment rates. This is a huge concern to our region, and we all understand how critical it is that proactive action is taken to rectify the situation. The great south coast region strategy includes critical points to address year 12 attainment, including reduced truancy, promoting the importance of education to children and parents and improving childhood literacy and numeracy. I ask the minister: what action is being taken to solve the crisis situation of year 12 attainment rates in western Victoria?

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Training and Skills) — I thank Mr Purcell for his excellent question, and I note his commitment to not only education but also jobs growth in the area he represents. The Andrews Labor government is absolutely committed to supporting both disadvantaged young people and communities in terms of better further education, better training and better jobs. It is a package that needs to be put together. You cannot take one aspect out of the equation and expect the whole sum to work.

Under the previous government there was inadequate funding, lack of coordination and lack of support, and youth unemployment absolutely rocketed across this state, particularly in rural and regional communities that needed the support more than any other community. They were abandoned. That was a disgrace for the state and a disgrace for the former coalition government. We are absolutely determined to address those issues right across Victoria and particularly in the area that Mr Purcell represents.

We cannot really address this until we talk a little bit about Gonski. If we are talking about schools education, Gonski was the major reform in this country and this state. Its core thrust is to make sure that every young person — no matter where they live, where they come from or what their disadvantage is — gets the sort of education to get the job, the higher education and the opportunities that they deserve. There is a lot of funding there. When we came to government we found that Victoria was about \$850 million shy of the commitment in the budget. We have found that funding

and fully funded Gonski to 2017, and that money will make a huge difference to educational opportunities in the south-western and western regions of Victoria.

Over and above that major funding boost we have established a region-wide working group to look at this issue. It is working in partnership with school principals and focusing on a number of high-priority projects. There are six key priority projects, and one of them is to lift Victorian certificate of education and Victorian certificate of applied learning (VCAL) outcomes in the south-west. That is an area that the government centrally, with principals and with schools, is working on.

When I accompanied Mr Purcell to look at vocational and job issues in his region earlier this year, we visited the south-western and the Glenelg Southern Grampians local learning and employment networks (LLENs), whose job is to coordinate student engagement and industry jobs and to obtain a better outcome for the area. Of course we have funded that in this budget with \$32 million; we have restored the funding for these LLENs to operate. That sort of coordination is absolutely crucial — the education department, LLENs, industry and schools all working together with government support to get better outcomes.

Whilst the question was primarily about schools, one cannot ignore South West TAFE. It is a fantastic provider, particularly of VCAL, for all those schools. It has had a hard time lately. It has dropped off a bit. I worry about a lot of the students who used to get vocational offerings at South West but have not got them in recent years. We gave it \$4 million in TAFE rescue funding at the start of the year to increase its capacity to deliver these types of programs. I am sure that when it gets its community service funding, which was in this budget, it will play a much more significant role in educational opportunities, particularly vocational, for young students in the area.

In short there is a whole range of things we are doing — funding for LLENs, a task force for schools, restoring TAFE — and I am absolutely committed to working with Mr Purcell and the western Victorian community to achieve better outcomes for that district.

Supplementary question

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — I sincerely thank the minister for the answer. It was a very thorough answer and one that I much appreciate. I look forward to working with the minister in those areas. I ask the government whether it will fund the Beyond the

Bell program in western Victoria, which is designed to help overcome the year 12 attainment problem.

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Training and Skills) — I thank Mr Purcell. When we were there earlier in the year we discussed the Beyond the Bell program. Beyond the Bell is an ambitious project that is being conducted in the western region of Victoria. It is supported by the LLENs — they are in the process of doing it. I will keep a close eye on the work they are doing and the projects they want to continue or expand into.

Beyond the Bell is one of a number of opportunities in terms of working with disadvantaged people. We want to make sure that we get good value for money in terms of outcomes. We can have the loftiest ambitions, but we have to deliver. That is good, and we have those. We want to make sure that they transfer into outcomes. Beyond the Bell seems to be a pretty good project that is working well. I look forward to the recommendations that are brought forward. I am happy to have a chat with the community to make sure that we get the outcomes from that project that we want to see in the member's area.

Specialist Training and Response Team program

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children, Ms Mikakos. As the minister would know, the Australian Childhood Trauma Group has run for the last 20 years the START (Specialist Training, Assessment and Response Team) program, which supports foster carers and kinship carers and kicks in with a quick response when foster care or a kinship placement looks like it might break down. The START program costs approximately \$260 000 per annum, which is about the same as it costs to keep one child in residential care. For that amount the specialised START program keeps 50 children in foster care. But funding for the START program will end next week. Can the minister explain where, after the START program ends on 1 July, a foster carer or kinship carer in the north or west will go if they need urgent assistance to avoid a placement breaking down?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I thank the member for her question. As I have explained to the house now on a number of occasions, this government is very committed to supporting our carers. We have put a number of measures in place that I have discussed on a number of occasions. As I have indicated previously, in the first 100 days of this government I moved to establish a

ministerial advisory committee on which the Foster Care Association of Victoria is represented. I have tasked that committee with providing me with advice about how we can boost the numbers of foster carers in our system. I have expressed my concerns previously about the exodus of foster carers from the system, and we have put in place a foster care and recruitment strategy with \$1.5 million in funding to develop a comprehensive package to enable us to both recruit and retain more foster carers.

In addition, earlier in the year I announced \$43 million for targeted care packages to support our carers to help to transition children out of residential care either into foster care or other home-based placements. Those packages are now being made available to enable our carers to provide the support they need, and the packages are tailored around the specific needs of particular children.

More recently in the budget we allocated \$31.3 million over four years for carer payments. This is the first increase in a decade. It is designed to simplify the carer system. It is designed to ensure that we can support our carers both through financial support and looking at the process by which we support them in a more effective way. I am conducting round tables with carers to hear directly from them in respect of these issues.

We have a number of strategies in place to better support our carers. In relation to the program that the member has raised, I will look into that matter. I am not sure whether it is in fact the case, but I will look into the program and respond to the member as quickly as possible.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — My question is to Minister Somyurek. I refer the minister to his written response to my question yesterday regarding his absence from Parliament between 26 May and 28 May, in which he stated:

I was not instructed as such, and I refer the member to my personal statement where I outlined the reasons for my absence from Parliament on the sitting days of 26 to 28 May.

Given the Premier stated on 28 May at a press conference, 'I had a discussion with him' — meaning the minister — 'on Saturday, and I think it was agreed he should take some time and not be at Parliament this week', has the minister just misled the house or is the Premier lying?

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I have to say that I cannot remember much from the conversation I had with the Premier, but what I do know is this: I did not come to Parliament on those days due to the reasons I outlined in my members statement — and that was to be with my family at a very traumatic time and in order to deal with the review process.

Supplementary question

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — Given the minister's answer, I ask: is it the minister's intention to treat this house with contempt and to undermine his own standing in the process?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I will not accept the supplementary question. I think it is right out of court in the sense that it is not apposite to the original question, and the minister did dispose of the original question with an answer that was apposite to the question. Therefore the suggestion that the minister treated the house with contempt when he gave an answer, which again is almost verballing, is out of order.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to Minister Somyurek. On 9 June when the minister was asked the reason for the allegations against him and the reason for the investigation, he responded, 'I think people are pretty smart'. Subsequent media reports relating to the allegations against the minister indicate that members of the parliamentary Labor Party caucus believe the allegations are a factional hit from his ministerial staff and from staff in the Premier's private office. Can the minister inform the house when asked about the reason for the investigation what he exactly meant by, 'I think people are pretty smart'.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I will allow the minister to answer. I point out that under our standing orders and practices of the house the internal matters of parties are not subject to examination by the house. However, the question came back to what the minister meant by a statement, and in that sense the question is acceptable.

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — This goes to the heart of the process that is being conducted at the moment. If I can just say something about the process, the terms of reference for the inquiries being conducted by Mr Strong and Mr Allen expressly require all the parties to maintain confidentiality regarding the process

and content of those inquiries. Therefore, in order to comply with the directions contained in the terms of reference, I am not able to comment or answer any questions regarding the inquiries at this time. However, I understand that this is a matter of public interest, but when I answer these questions I need to take some of them on notice if they go to the process in order to protect the rights of both the complainant, myself and the process itself. I will take that on notice.

Supplementary question

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Further to the reason for the investigation into allegations against Minister Somyurek, what reasons was the minister given by the Premier, the Special Minister of State or the Premier's chief of staff for the investigation into the capabilities of his ministerial office?

The PRESIDENT — Order! This supplementary question really is lineball in terms of being apposite to the original question. There is a fair bit of bowstring in this one.

Mr Jennings — On a point of order, President, if this were a substantive question, I do not think we would have had a difficulty. The difficulty arises because it is not really a supplementary question. A smart person in the chamber would know that in fact it is an extremely long bow that exceeds the validity of — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Jennings — What I am suggesting, President, is that quite often you have given direction to those asking questions about the form in which a question can be asked. I, the government and I am sure Mr Somyurek would be comfortable with this if it were a substantive question, but certainly in no context could it be considered to be a supplementary question.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I do not regard Mr Jennings's point of order as a reflection on the Chair. I am quite happy to have further comment on this matter. I will set this question aside for the moment. I will give it to the clerks for their view as well, so it will not be simply my view on this occasion.

Mr Drum — On a point of order, President, I defer to the Leader of the Opposition in relation to her substantive question; however, a question was put to the minister that in a sense was a very straight, very direct and unambiguous question. The minister refused to answer that question. He did not answer the question

at all. What did the minister mean by the statements he made only a month ago that people are pretty smart?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am going to give the member some guidance. I am not interested in a debate; I want to know what the member's point of order is.

Mr Drum — The point of order, President, is that you have ruled a number of times that a minister must answer the question that has been put forward to the best of his ability. The rulings of this house over 100 years have always asked ministers to be apposite to the question in their answers and to do the best they can at answering the question. It is a very simple, very straight and very narrow question, and the minister has avoided this question. I would like to bring him back to answering the question in a manner that is consistent with the practice of this house.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I have not been here for 100 years. Some days it seems like it is damn close to that. Nonetheless, in my 23 years I have become aware of the expectation of the house in respect of ministers' answers. The substantive question was put to Mr Somyurek, and Mr Somyurek answered that question to the best of his ability today. The question before me is whether or not the supplementary question is apposite to the substantive question. As I said, in the interests of fairness to all I am seeking further advice on that.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Leader of the Government. Was the Leader of the Government, his staff or staff from the Premier's office involved in preparing or vetting the written responses provided by Minister Somyurek today?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I did have a conversation with Mr Somyurek today. Mr Somyurek invited me to have a conversation about his consideration of answers today. I shared my views with him. He made it very clear to me at all times that he was determining what the nature of his answers would be, and he takes responsibility for them.

Supplementary question

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for his response. Noting the involvement of the minister in discussions with Mr Somyurek I ask: did he, his staff or staff from the Premier's office advise Mr Somyurek to take questions on notice yesterday?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — No.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Supplementary question

The PRESIDENT — Order! I invite the Leader of the Opposition to reword her supplementary, given the circumstances of the question.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Further to the reason for the investigation into allegations against the minister, what reasons were given to the minister by the Premier, the Special Minister of State or the Premier's chief of staff for the investigation?

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — This goes to the heart of the process issue, so I am not able to answer that. However, if the member wants me to have a good look at it and perhaps consult lawyers as well, I will do the best I can and give her a written response tomorrow.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is also to Minister Somyurek. At his press conference on 23 May, the Premier said that allegations against the minister were 'of a serious nature' and 'it is alleged that his personal behaviour was of a threatening, intimidating nature'. Does the minister reject the allegations that were outlined by the Premier?

Mr Jennings — My point of order, President, relates to the guidance you gave the house yesterday and the clear responses by Mr Somyurek. He has already indicated to the chamber, consistent with your guidance, that he will not make any statements which try to prejudice the considerations of the inquiry. This question does not allow for any answer from the minister that would not contaminate those investigations or be seen to be mounting an argument, even in his own defence, which then may be used against him in relation to that process. On that basis I suggest to you, President, that the question is out of order.

Mr Rich-Phillips — On the point of order raised by the Leader of the Government, President, Mr Jennings is essentially arguing that the minister has said he will not answer these questions and therefore he should not be asked to on this occasion. This is a question that has not been put to the minister in this place. It is a question

that goes to matters as outlined by you, President, yesterday — being matters that the minister is directly connected with — and it is a matter that the minister has commented publicly on. I believe that on all of those three grounds it is appropriate that Minister Somyurek be given the opportunity to answer this question.

Mr Dalidakis — Further on the point of order, President — and this is an important point to make — as Minister Somyurek has stated, the other party to this, the complainant, is also part of the investigation process. That complainant does not have an opportunity to speak here in this chamber. Again I put it to you, President, further to the Leader of the Government's point of order, that the complainant's position within this process should also be upheld in your ruling.

The PRESIDENT — Order! This is an important point, and I understand the submissions of both Mr Jennings and Mr Dalidakis in this matter. However, I must concur with Mr Rich-Phillips on this occasion. The basis of my decision is that I have noted public statements by Mr Somyurek to the effect that he has indicated he is not at fault in these matters — that the allegations are not correct — and as he has made those public statements, I think he does have an opportunity to make some response to the house.

At the same time I think Mr Dalidakis's point about the rights of the other people involved in these matters is important. I also note that Mr Somyurek — and I have had a discussion with Mr Somyurek — is genuinely trying to help the house in terms of some of the matters that have been raised, but at the same time he is conscious of the fact that he has obligations in the investigation that is underway and he is bound by the confidentiality aspects of that inquiry. I have seen some material to that effect, and I accept that Mr Somyurek is trying to do his best.

In this circumstance, relying on a comment that he either should or should not have said previously but that nonetheless is in the public arena, I think it is appropriate that the question stand. I invite Minister Somyurek to respond.

Mr SOMYUREK (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — In the past I have professed my innocence; I am not even going to do that at the moment. This is hard, because clearly there has been a process from the complainants when I do profess my innocence. That is how sensitive this process is. I stand by my statements, but it is a very difficult situation when the complainants do not appreciate me expressing

my innocence as well. Perhaps it is better if I just say nothing on this score until this is all resolved.

Wild dogs

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. Wild dogs continue to cause major economic and social problems in our rural sector, particularly in the east of the state —

Mr Davis — Some of them are over there!

Ms BATH — Or in the north part of the chamber. With successful aerial baiting programs having taken place in 2014, can the minister advise on the amount of wild dog aerial baiting undertaken this autumn in comparison to last year?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Ms Bath for her question, her first question to me and I think perhaps her first question in the house. The management of wild dogs requires an integrated approach with a number of different measures. Around 4000 baits will be dropped over Crown land during spring 2015. There will be one aerial baiting drop, as was the case in each of the previous financial years, so the level of aerial baiting will be maintained.

Supplementary question

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — I thank the minister for her answer. Can the minister explain why there has been a significant reduction in aerial baiting, allowing dog populations to significantly increase across the east of our state?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I can confirm for the house that there has not been a reduction in the amount of aerial baiting being undertaken by the government.

Kindergarten funding

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. During the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings the minister stated that a significant number of Victorian kindergarten service providers already meet the new ratio requirements and therefore do not require additional funding support. Could the minister outline how many Victorian kindergarten service providers meet those new ratio requirements?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I welcome the question from the member. It relates to a very significant announcement that this government made earlier in this week about supporting

the implementation of these new ratios. As I announced with the Premier on Monday, we are proud to be investing up to \$83.7 million in additional funding over four years to support kindergartens to transition to these improved educator-to-child ratios. What the ratios will entail is that from 1 January we will be moving from 1 educator for every 15 children to 1 educator for every 11 children. The research shows — and this is the reason we are doing this — the more one-on-one attention that children can receive in those critical early years the more children are able to develop their literacy skills, their communication skills and their socialisation skills.

The National Quality Standard set the benchmark for these new ratios. In fact they have been put in place in legislation that was introduced in this Parliament by the previous government. However, we had no action from the previous government in relation to how they were going to implement these new ratios. We have moved very quickly to give the sector certainty on this issue.

Ms Crozier — On a point of order, President, I ask you to ask the minister to directly answer my question, not attack the former government.

The PRESIDENT — Order! On the point of order, I think the minister is trying to provide some context. I do not think that she has been over the odds in terms of referring to the practice of the previous government, and I do not regard it at this point as being an attack on the previous government, which would be out of order under our standing orders. The minister might come back to addressing more the current circumstances than reflecting on history.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you for your guidance, President. The issue at hand here is that this is a very significant reform. We are very proud that we are investing in these new ratios. We have made other significant investments in early years education in the budget, through \$50 million in relation to kindergarten infrastructure funding and \$9 million in relation to early childhood intervention services. However, in respect of the ratios, we have been working with the sector, as I have indicated to the house previously. Surveys were sent out to kinders. It will be up to each kinder to make a decision in respect of whether they keep the current enrolment numbers that they might have in place or whether they go up or whether they go down.

The funding that we have put in place provides an incentive to kindergartens to actually take up the opportunity to take on further children to participate in kindergartens and get the benefit of an additional educator. We are very hopeful that kindergartens will

make that decision to enable more children to participate in their local kindergarten, because we do want to continue to drive up our kindergarten participation rate. We have a very high kinder participation rate in Victoria, but I have spoken in this house before about particular cohorts in the community that are missing out, in particular Aboriginal children. There is a big gap between non-Aboriginal children and Aboriginal children participating in early childhood services and other cohorts as well. We want to continue to encourage all children to get the benefit of a kindergarten education.

As I indicated to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, there are some kinders that already have those ratios in place, and that is a positive thing.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Ms MIKAKOS — I do not have that number at hand, but I am happy to provide the member with that figure. Rather than being very impatient and implying criticism, the member should be welcoming the new ratios. We have moved to provide the funding to kinders to enable them to put these ratios in place. You did nothing.

Supplementary question

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Is the minister confident therefore that all Victorian kindergarten service providers will be able to meet the new ratio requirements by 1 January 2016?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I again welcome the member's question. I have confidence that the sector will work assiduously to implement these ratios. They have been aware that the ratios have been coming for some time. This is why we have moved quickly to provide the funding for these ratios. We were waiting for the federal government to provide some funding certainty on the 15 hours, and they have not.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms MIKAKOS — Your federal colleagues have not provided any funding towards the new ratios. We are providing the funding for the ratios, so we will work very closely in consultation with the sector to encourage them to put the ratios in place. Ms Crozier needs to explain. Does she support the ratios or does she not support the ratios? From her question she is certainly inferring that she does not value the new ratios.

The PRESIDENT — Time!

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I have the following answers to questions on notice: 580–9.

Mr Davis — On a point of order, President, I have been reflecting on your earlier ruling and thinking through some earlier comments that were made in a question to Mr Somyurek. In a number of his comments he referred to the terms of reference for a number of the inquiries and in some way implied that they were some sort of shield or otherwise. You may not wish to make comment on this at the moment, but the point I am trying to make is that it is very clear that the chamber is entitled to ask those questions. The terms of reference or riding instructions for a separate administrative inquiry or separate administrative process in no way override the position of the chamber and the Parliament to ask questions of a minister.

The PRESIDENT — Order! It is true to say that the house obviously does have an ability to ask questions of the minister, and the terms of reference are not, as Mr Davis put it, a shield. Nonetheless, a member can obviously be somewhat cautious in the responses that they make, given that they do not want to contaminate that other process. I would have thought that Mr Somyurek’s answers — both the written answers today and the comments he made in the house — were an attempt to satisfy the house’s questions whilst not contaminating the process. In broad terms Mr Davis is correct in saying that the house is entitled to pursue a line of questions in most matters, including these days in many legal matters, provided they are not directly sub judice and where there is a danger that the house’s deliberations might have an impact on the courts, not that I think those worthy ladies and gentlemen down in the courts pay much heed to us.

In respect of Ms Wooldridge’s amended supplementary question, Minister Somyurek indicated that he would look to provide an answer to that.

With regard to Ms Crozier’s substantive question on ratios, Ms Mikakos has undertaken to provide that number to Ms Crozier, a number that she did not have at hand today, which is quite understandable.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Western Victoria Region

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My constituency question is directed to the Premier and concerns his government’s abandonment of country newspapers. I have been contacted by the editor of the *Moorabool News*, Helen Tatchell, who expressed her disappointment that the government is not supporting country newspapers with government advertising. There are many country publications serving western Victoria, including the *Moorabool News*; the *Miner*, which is run by Alan Marini; and the *Pyrenees Advocate*, so ably run and until recently owned by Craig Wilson. They play an important role in rural communities, which still need their local papers to keep them informed, to help them fight their battles and to celebrate their successes. I am advised that government advertising in smaller country newspapers is at historically low levels. Without the government as an advertising customer it will become harder for many of these mastheads to fulfil their vital roles. Advertising, including government advertising, is vital for the survival of rural newspapers. My question is: can the Premier explain why his government is reducing its advertising in country newspapers?

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Public Transport and has to do with her announcement of the upcoming grade separations at Blackburn and Heatherdale roads in my electorate. Local councils and stakeholder groups, including resident groups, have spoken to me about how they would like there to be a facilitated process whereby they can have some input into the works of these projects. I ask the minister to get back to me about what form of consultation the Level Crossing Removal Authority is considering for this project and how it could be made more accessible.

Eastern Victoria Region

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. Of serious concern to the people of my Eastern Victoria Region electorate is the scrapping of the wild dog bounty and the reduction in aerial baiting. Last week one of our local newspapers, the *Pakenham Gazette*, reported a vicious attack on a Nar Nar Goon North farm in which a pregnant ewe was among the sheep killed. The owner of the farm believes the sheep was hunted down by a single out-of-control dog. A similar attack recently occurred in Gembrook, where one of my constituents had four of his pet sheep

mauled by a pack of dogs. The Labor government says it believes that the effective management of pests requires an integrated approach, but at the same time it has cut the \$100 wild dog bounty and reduced autumn baiting. How will Labor address the wild dog problem in my electorate without a wild dog bounty program and with reduced aerial baiting?

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — In last night's adjournment debate I raised a matter that was raised with me by a number of multicultural groups across South Eastern Metropolitan Region. They are concerned about being able to access funding for their usual programs. Part of that concern is related to the current work being undertaken by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and his department in addressing some of the issues raised by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in relation to the roles of the office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship and the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

I note that today the Leader of the Government said there is an independent review of the office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship and the Victorian Multicultural Commission being undertaken. Neither I nor the members of the community realised that it was an independent review.

The question I ask is: how can the public have input into this independent review, what is the time frame for reporting and is the report going to be released so that communities, particularly those in the south-east as well as those in other parts of the state, can place their best foot forward and know what they are dealing with?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I make the point that there were three parts to that constituency question when there is supposed to be only one.

Western Metropolitan Region

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport. Residents living on the Altona loop train line have been enduring substandard services not only because successive governments have failed to duplicate the loop but also due to the lack of direct services to the city during non-peak times during the construction of the regional rail link. Now that the regional rail link is open I do not understand why these residents will have to wait several more months for service improvements. They were promised that the timetable would be changed once the rail link was opened. My question for the minister is: given that the

regional rail link was under construction for years and that the Andrews government has been in power for seven months, giving it and Public Transport Victoria plenty of time to plan, why is the updated timetable still months away and without a release date, and what failure in governance has caused this botched planning?

Northern Victoria Region

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Training and Skills and regards Yenbena, which is a registered training organisation in the township of Barmah providing a safe and supportive environment for students from Indigenous and low socio-economic backgrounds and students with disabilities to attain employment-targeted qualifications. Yenbena offers a variety of qualifications, including certificates I and II in conservation and land management pathway to horticulture and agriculture. Yenbena has plans to introduce certificates I and II in both shearing and dairy production to meet local job demands. Yenbena has informed me that due to an administrative error it is currently not receiving any funds from Skills Victoria.

Yenbena would like the minister to visit to see how Skills Victoria funding would allow it to broaden its reach to students who often fall between the cracks of mainstream education. I would be happy to arrange the visit for the minister. I ask: will the minister visit Yenbena and supported its funding application to Skills Victoria in 2015?

Eastern Victoria Region

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I raise a constituency question for the attention of the Minister for Police, and I do so on behalf of concerned constituents in the shire of Yarra Ranges, which is part of my electorate of Eastern Victoria Region. I also do so in the context of the Labor Party, which when in opposition prior to the election did not commit to funding any additional police. Once elected to government, Labor provided just a handful of additional police for Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula in its first budget but none for the rest of Victoria or for the shire of Yarra Ranges.

The community in the shire of Yarra Ranges has increasing concerns regarding the challenges of ice and family violence in our community and also the impact of the new guidelines as far as one-member patrols. The question I ask the minister is: can he provide an assurance to my constituents in the shire of Yarra Ranges that police resources will be maintained at existing levels, taking into account population growth

over the term of government, and that there will be no reduction in or detriment to police patrol hours across the municipality?

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is directed to the Premier. I am sure the Premier will recall his promise prior to the last election that any government he leads would build a port in the west of the bay. Given his broken promise on this matter, will the Premier confirm that plans for Bay West are now in the same place as those for his ‘shovel-ready’ western distributor?

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Questions on notice

The PRESIDENT — Order! I have received a letter from Ms Wooldridge, the Leader of the Opposition, with regard to her concerns that a number of questions she had on notice have received answers but the answers do not address the substance of the questions. These go to the matter of the costs of the Easter Sunday public holiday and the proposed public holiday for grand final eve. I am a little torn on these ones, partly because it is fairly clear that the government does not want to detail the costs or does not know the costs. Ms Wooldridge seems to indicate in one of her questions that she is aware of some supplementary funding to cover the Easter Sunday public holiday. Certainly in that respect I think the minister at least could have answered to the effect that there either was or was not supplementary funding, and if there was, it should be a quantifiable amount. On this occasion I will reinstate question 570 from Ms Wooldridge to the Minister for Health via the Minister for Families and Children.

Question 571 is to the same minister, but Ms Wooldridge does seem to understand that there was supplementary funding. Based on the fact that that seems to be her understanding, I will let the minister contradict that position and indicate that there is not supplementary funding or indeed provide a more apposite answer to that question. So I also direct that question 571 be reinstated.

With regard to question 572, which refers to the AFL grand final eve and the cost of that public holiday to Victorian health services, I am mindful of the fact that a regulatory impact statement has been undertaken with regard to this matter. Perhaps that will provide a better informed position on the costs associated with that holiday than we were perhaps able to achieve for Easter

Sunday, given that a regulatory impact statement had not been done for that decision at that time. No doubt that public holiday will inform the statement in respect of future public holiday costs.

I am prepared to reinstate question 572 at this time, but I indicate that if the minister does come back and refer to the regulatory impact statement, then perhaps the answer to this question will be subject to some further evidence provided to the house following that process. I am not quite sure when that process is to be concluded, but I dare say it is not too far off. Therefore I will reinstate question 572 as well. Hopefully the minister will be able to assist Ms Wooldridge with her questions.

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

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr HERBERT (Minister for Training and Skills).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I move:

That this house —

(1) notes that —

- (a) people with a disability make a significant contribution to Victoria;
- (b) mainstream employment opportunities for people with disability should be emphasised and expanded;
- (c) in the absence of adequate mainstream employment opportunities, Australian disability enterprises (ADEs) provide employment opportunities to approximately 5000 Victorians with a disability;
- (d) in 2013 the then government removed the schedule 2 exemptions from the procurement policies of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board applying to government agencies' purchases produced from the labour of correctional enterprises, Australian disability enterprises and other businesses that primarily exist to provide services to people with a disability;
- (e) due to the challenges of providing tailored employment for people with a disability in a highly competitive environment, many ADEs are under acute financial pressure;
- (f) under the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016* the state government has an

obligation to 'reduce barriers to people with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment'; and

- (2) calls on the government to —
- (a) eliminate the need for public sector agencies to competitively tender all procurement when buying from accredited disability agencies;
 - (b) establish a strategy to boost the level of procurement from Victorian ADEs, including consideration of interstate legislation (most notably NSW Public Works and Procurement Regulation 2014, clause 5 — supply of goods and services by approved disability employment organisations), by 30 June 2016;
 - (c) restore the exemptions on Victorian government agencies' purchase of products from ADEs that were removed in 2013; and
 - (d) as a sign of good faith, immediately seek to make products made by Victorian ADEs available at Parliament House.

I am very pleased to move this motion today, which is around disability and disability procurement processes in Victoria. I will go through the motion and explain it to the house. The motion notes, firstly, that people with a disability make a significant contribution to Victoria. I remind the house that approximately 20 per cent of us have a disability. We, people with disabilities, make a significant contribution to this state, and this contribution does not have to be quantified in terms of economics. Some of us are mothers, fathers, uncles, aunties, carers, and some of us need to be cared for. Some of us are supporters, and some of us need to be supported. All of us make varied contributions, and they are all equally valuable.

Some of us attend day centres, some of us need respite, some of us need simple modifications within our workplace to enable us to work to our full potential. Many of us want to work. However, history is against us. Consistently throughout history we have been positioned as different, deviant, undesirable and treated consistently as inferior. Our needs are too often dismissed, then minimised, then marginalised, and it is time to say that we deserve more recognition. This motion is just one step in the process towards increased recognition. We need to redefine people with disabilities from being in a model of service provision, framed as recipients, to being framed as valued members of society and contributors.

Paragraph (1)(b) of the motion notes that mainstream employment opportunities for people with disabilities should be emphasised and expanded. It goes without saying that getting a job is hard, and many of us in the

chamber have raised this issue, particularly when looking at the unemployment figures over the last six months. It is difficult to get a job, and we cannot assume full employment any more. People with disabilities are, unfortunately, overrepresented in unemployment, and they often do not show up in figures. Often it is a hidden statistic. Many people with disabilities are sick of being characterised as passive, needy and helpless. It is time to view people with disabilities as contributors.

There has long been an argument in the disability space about making an assumption of ability. There is a well-known catchphrase, 'Ability, not disability', which has guided our service provision but needs to also guide our attitudes in general. As I have said in this house before, I urge that we move to a rights-based framework for talking about and framing policies for people with disabilities. A rights-based framework will empower and build the capacity of individuals, of families and of communities. We will be coming from a space where, rather than assuming dependence, we are assuming that people have an ability and a contribution to make. But I am off topic; I come back to the access to mainstream employment opportunities.

Employment opportunities play a key role in enabling people with disability to reach our full potential, and it should be more available. That is why I have included in the motion the need for opportunities to be emphasised and expanded. Paragraph (1)(c) states that in the absence of adequate mainstream employment opportunities — and I note again that there is an absence of adequate mainstream opportunities for all — Australian disability enterprises or ADEs provide employment opportunities to approximately 5000 Victorians with a disability.

If people do not know what an ADE is, I will give a brief explanation. ADEs are not-for-profit organisations with charitable status. They provide meaningful employment for people with disabilities. Many people who work within these services have significant disabilities. An ADE operates in the same way as other businesses, but there is one major difference. An ADE employs people with a disability, and its employees are supported in their work. There are currently 89 ADEs in the state of Victoria, with ADEs in each region. I invite all members to visit one in their area, and I would be happy to help facilitate these visits.

Supported employment in ADEs means that support workers are available to give employees the assistance they need with tasks. For example, an employee with learning difficulties may need regular reminders from their support worker about how to complete a task.

These support workers also become paid employees of the ADE.

One example in my own electorate is Mambourin, which I have visited. Its mission statement says it is about, 'Promoting independent living by offering employment, education and training services to adults with a disability'. When I visited this service I did not see dependence; I saw contribution. I saw a genuine focus on potential and development. I have worked in the disability space for many years, in fact since I was 17, and ADEs back then were a very different entity. They have evolved into genuine services with a genuine focus on potential and development, and for this they should be applauded.

Getting back to Mambourin, this is a commercial business which employs about 60 people with disabilities who live in the area. Mambourin has two main services. One is a packaging service and the other is a gardening service. With the support of experienced staff, the supported employment groups work to fulfil commercial contracts. I spoke to many of the people at Mambourin, and there were many stories of individuals using this business as a stepping stone to mainstream employment. The employees and employers at this site described many examples of where people had begun work at the ADE and then had moved on to mainstream employment, receiving full award wages.

The future of ADEs such as Mambourin hangs in the balance. Widespread concern for such businesses and for employees with disabilities who are supported within these industries prompted me to raise this motion today. Paragraph (1)(d) of the motion reads:

in 2013 the then government removed the schedule 2 exemptions from the procurement policies of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board applying to government agencies' purchases produced from the labour of correctional enterprises, Australian Disability Enterprises and other businesses that primarily exist to provide services to people with a disability ...

This occurred for many reasons, and I look forward to other members speaking on this issue. I want to make it clear that I am not here to criticise the decision that was made; rather, I am asking the government to look again at procurement policies specifically in relation to ADEs. I ask the government to consider the fact that many ADEs are now struggling and have long waiting lists yet have the capacity to employ more people and to employ them for longer hours. Many of the people with disabilities working within these services currently work part time but would like a full-time job.

Procurement policies are often linked to value for money, and over the last six months, both in this

chamber and at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings, we have spoken about what value for money means. The government has made many encouraging statements, and it is my understanding that it defines value for money in terms of quality, not just quantity, and that it has a genuine commitment to who benefits. My argument is that people with disabilities deserve to benefit. They provide a quality service, and we should take advantage of this.

A recent survey by National Disability Services reported that very few ADEs do business with state government departments or agencies. This is a huge untapped potential. My motion goes on to say, at paragraph (1)(e) and (f), that:

due to the challenges of providing tailored employment for people with a disability in a highly competitive environment, many ADEs are under acute financial pressure;

under the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016* the state government has an obligation to 'reduce barriers to people with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment' ...

Unfortunately a very preventable situation has arisen whereby ADEs are under financial pressure, as are many businesses in our state. It does not take a lot to give them a hand up and to make a positive contribution. I also remind the house of the Parliament's commitment to the social inclusion of people with a disability, which was made by this government and the previous government. Under the previous government we had a parliamentary inquiry into the social inclusion of Victorians with disability. The previous government's response to that inquiry stated in part that:

The next state disability plan 2017–2020 —

the one that comes after the 2013–16 one —

will incorporate Victoria's transition to the NDIS and a continued role for the Victorian government in enabling people with a disability to participate and contribute to social, economic and cultural life.

One way to contribute to social, economic and cultural life is via employment. This is the essence of my motion today. The social inclusion inquiry defined social inclusion in a very meaningful way. It talked about experiencing respect for difference and for individual aspirations, and it talked about the right to have control over one's own life. One way to have control over one's life is to have control over the work one does.

The inquiry also talked about people with a disability having opportunities to contribute to and participate in society in a meaningful way and to feel valued. It talked

about the need for people with a disability to experience significant and reciprocal relationships and to have appropriate supports where necessary. These ideals can be upheld in an ADE. It is within this context of social inclusion and the commitment that this government and the previous government made to that, as well as with a recognition of the contribution made by people with disabilities to Victorian society, that I call on, firstly, the government to eliminate the need for public sector agencies to competitively tender for all procurement when buying from accredited disability agencies.

The single most effective action a government can take to ensure the meaningful and ongoing employment of people with disabilities is purchasing goods and services from disability enterprises. The legislative framework exists for this already; it just needs top-down impetus to make it happen. Victoria, it should be noted, has been right at the forefront of disability reform in many areas, but in recent years New South Wales has started to steal the march on us.

This brings me to the second thing I am calling on the government to do, which is to establish a strategy to boost the level of procurement within Victorian ADEs. This process should include a consideration of interstate legislation, most notably the New South Wales Public Works and Procurement Regulation 2014, clause 5, which relates to the supply of goods and services by approved disability employment organisations. I call on the government to establish this strategy by 30 June 2016. This date has been chosen very deliberately: it is just in time for the next budget.

I previously circulated to many people in the chamber clause 5 of the New South Wales Public Works and Procurement Regulation. I will highlight a few points that it picks up on:

- (1) A government agency may procure goods and services that are supplied by a person or body approved as a disability employment organisation under this clause.

This makes it much simpler for ADEs. Clause 5 also states:

- (7) A register of disability employment organisations is to be kept for the purposes of this clause and is to include particulars of approvals given under this clause.
- (8) The register is to be kept by a person or body appointed for the time being by the Minister for Disability Services to maintain the register.

It is timely for Victoria to consider this interstate legislation. Both New South Wales and Queensland have made commitments to undertake procurement

from disability employment organisations, and it is time for Victoria to step up.

The New South Wales procurement program has been highly successful. It has put tens of millions of dollars through disability enterprises and has been said to have created around 500 jobs, all for an investment of much less than \$200 000 per year. A critical factor in the success of this program has been the emphasis given to it by the Premier. The New South Wales Premier stated that the government was committed to securing employment for people with a disability and that procurement from ADEs was a significant way of achieving this.

Obviously this is not the be all and end all, but it is a great step in the right direction. The investment in New South Wales is used to employ one person within National Disability Services. This person works with government procurement officers to ascertain what work is available and then to identify one or more disability enterprises capable of performing that work. This person is responsible for timeliness and quality, and the risk to government is at arm's length. This motion is not meant to be prescriptive but to give the government some ideas to consider.

A secondary benefit to the state government of investing in ADEs is that if ADEs can no longer provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities — and many of the ADEs in this state are saying that they are coming to crisis point — many of those individuals will have no option other than to seek support from the state government-funded disability service system, which is already under huge stress. As I stated before, establishing a strategy around procurement initiatives will help fulfil a key objective of the state disability plan — the obligation to reduce barriers for people with disabilities to obtaining and maintaining employment.

Furthermore, I call on the government to restore the exemptions on the purchase of products from ADEs by Victorian government agencies. These were removed in 2013. In the context of the strategy that I am calling on the government to come up with under section (2)(b) of my motion, I would also ask, as a sign of good faith, that the government immediately seek to make products made by Victorian ADEs available to us at Parliament House. An example of what could be sold is the type of products made by Karingal Kommercial.

Karingal Kommercial is an ADE that operates a range of businesses in the Geelong region — in Mr Purcell's electorate. As I have described before, these businesses provide employment for people with a disability in a

supportive environment, and they pride themselves on operating to the highest of commercial standards. Karingal Kommercial has a Seasons gourmet food range which includes jams, relishes, chutneys, dessert sources, dressings, spices, muesli and gourmet hampers. The purchase of such items here at Parliament House would not be a big deal for us, but it would make a big difference to the people with disabilities who supply these high-quality products.

I also recommend that we have a showcase event of products from ADEs, perhaps in Queen's Hall, later this year to raise awareness amongst parliamentarians and staff in the departments about the breadth and availability of products and services from ADEs.

I thank members for listening. I have brought this motion before the house for consideration. I urge the government to carefully and thoughtfully consider the recommendations contained therein, and I commend the motion to house.

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) — It is a pleasure to rise to speak today on the motion of Dr Carling-Jenkins. I sincerely thank her for her remarks. She showed such passion and knowledge; she was very thorough and had some great ideas, particularly the last one, which was to organise a display in Queen's Hall. I would be interested to explore that idea further with her.

I share the passion of Dr Carling-Jenkins about the field of disability. I was actively engaged in this field in my past life. Through my experiences I have seen that disability and disadvantage often go hand in hand. I recently spoke with a group of Victorian certificate of education students, who in the midst of preparing for a run of practice exams were enthusiastically discussing their options for further study and employment. They were all very excited about their pathways into university, TAFE or employment. They all had a common goal to do something worthwhile with their lives that would bring them success, fulfilment and contentment.

I want all young people to have this enthusiasm and passion and have these opportunities. However, for the more than 18 per cent of Victoria's population who have some form of disability, the path to success, fulfilment and contentment is not always so smooth. That 18 per cent of our population is equivalent to about 1.5 million people who have various levels of impairment that they deal with every single day. Add to this their age, their sex, their ethnicity and where they live in this state and you soon realise that each of these factors has a profound effect on the care, support,

treatment, assistance and opportunities that they have available to them and ultimately what their quality of life and experience is like.

We can all agree that in relation to disability there is one undeniable fact, that we have to do more. We should do more, and we must do more. Amongst those 1.5 million people are those who want to work, those who are capable of working and those whose lives would be made profoundly better as a result of their being given an opportunity to take their place and make a positive contribution to an employer who is willing to give them a go.

As Dr Carling-Jenkins told us, in Victoria there are 89 registered Australian disability enterprises, which collectively currently employ around 5000 people with a disability in fields ranging from printing, cleaning, grounds maintenance, packaging, mail and catering. Beyond the obvious financial benefits for them in having a job, there are also the emotional, psychological and social impacts.

I would like to reflect on some of my personal experiences. I was a carer for people with disabilities for more than five years. I worked at Alkira Centre in Box Hill. Alkira is a community organisation that was formed in 1954 by a small group of parents who wanted for their children what every parent wants for their children — support, understanding and opportunity. Following on from the efforts of those determined parents, we now have an organisation that provides a range of services for more than 150 people with an intellectual disability. My mother has been a carer of people with an intellectual disability for around 30 years, and it was her passion around social inclusion and the work she did in fighting discrimination that led me to work in this field.

I could share many stories about the significant contribution that people with a disability make to Victoria, but I want to use my experience to emphasise the importance — as noted in this motion — of expanding employment opportunities, whether they be through mainstream employment or Australian disability enterprises.

Living in one of the Alkira residential facilities was a man named Bob. He attended day placement five days a week. He could choose from activities ranging from arts, health and fitness, living and personal development and vocational skills. Bob's intellectual disability meant that he often struggled with his emotions, particularly if he became frustrated or bored. Bob had great communication skills and no physical impediments, and he was able to use public transport

independently if he was confident of where he was going. Alkira was able to assist Bob identify a job opportunity at a recycling plant near his home. He was to work two days a week. Bob was accompanied by a staff member to assist him to navigate the bus route and ensure that he was comfortable in his new workplace environment. After a few weeks Bob was waking up at 5.30 a.m., packing his lunchbox and was out the door, off to work. When I rocked up to work it was a sheer delight to see him returning from his day at work. I would hear about his day, his new friends, his pride about his independence and what he was saving up for.

For Bob this experience was an opportunity for him to have a break from the people he lived with and went to day placement with day in and day out. He also got a break from the regular carers and staff he had been spending most of his days with for over a decade. Bob's behavioural issues and the challenges he had in controlling his emotions all but disappeared. I was very proud of his achievements, and he was very proud of his achievements. He paved the way for other residents to be assisted to explore their own ambitions for paid employment.

In essence, what I saw firsthand is that having a job not only helps a person with a disability avoid the often associated financial hardships, but it provides them with experiences of achievement and success that they may otherwise not enjoy. It allows them to be more than their disability. It allows them to be an employee, a team member or a colleague, and in many cases it opens up a friendship group that may never have otherwise been established.

These are the powerful outcomes of having someplace to go between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m., even though many of us may often resist and revile this routine, especially if your 9.00 a.m. goes until 11.00 p.m. That is why the federal Labor Party's introduction of the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) was so significant and critical. It is about putting the person rather than the disability front and centre, and then adequately providing the support and assistance that will enable each individual's capacity and ability to be realised, whilst addressing their needs. This is the biggest reform the sector has ever undergone, and it is comprehensive and significant for the disabled, their families, their carers, their networks and agencies. It is all about what I mentioned earlier — doing more.

In conjunction with the momentous change occurring across the sector, there is the continuation of the operations of Victoria's disability services. Its core role remains the delivery of programs and resources that enable those with a disability to exercise choice and

control over their lives; the provision of specialised support for people with a disability and resources and programs that build capacity to respond to their needs; and the provision of support for the capabilities, participation and quality of life for Victorians with disabilities.

It is Labor's belief that every Victorian should be able to lead a fulfilling life, and that the barriers that impede this, such as those to employment, education, housing and civic participation, must be removed. That is why this government is committed to working with the community to review and update the state disability plan to make sure it reflects the aspirations of all Victorians with a disability and breaks down the barriers that they face.

Their voices, their stories and their experiences are what we need to listen to and take onboard. There is much we already know that needs to be done, including improving transition from school to post-school further education, employment and training; rolling out a coordinated communication strategy to better inform young people with a disability, their parents and teachers about what further education, training and employment options may exist; developing and implementing an assessment and planning framework to better match post-school supports to a young person's needs; developing and implementing approaches that strengthen the pathway to employment for young people with a disability; building skills and work readiness; developing and implementing approaches to build the work awareness and work readiness of young people with a disability both in school and after school; increasing professional development opportunities for artists with a disability; providing the training market with information that will support them to improve outcomes for learners with a disability; leading the way in the employment of people with a disability; promoting the employment of people with a disability through information on the Business Victoria website; and improving the capacity of the Victorian public sector to employ, retain and offer professional development to people with a disability.

Our plan will be developed in partnership with people with a disability and their families. I am sure Dr Carling-Jenkins will also be actively involved in this process. This robust consultative process is intended to produce a plan that is clear about responding to challenges in the future and in readiness for the NDIS environment. The Office for Disability has set aside \$100 000 to support the development of the plan and for the community consultation process.

I again thank Dr Carling-Jenkins for her motion today, and I look forward to working with her. I am happy to support her motion, the government is happy to support her motion and I commend her motion to the house.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise this afternoon to make some remarks on the motion moved by Dr Carling-Jenkins with respect to acknowledging the contribution made to Victoria by people with a disability and acknowledging the role that mainstream employment plays for those people.

In their contributions both Dr Carling-Jenkins and Ms Symes spoke about the important role employment can play for people with a disability in providing engagement in the mainstream community. Ms Symes made the point that employment also provides the opportunity for a person with a disability to move out of their residential environment for the purposes of employment and the benefits that provides within the residential environment. She also spoke of the opportunities for the individual to have exposure to a work environment, the discipline of a regular routine and real engagement, independent of their living environment, as being very significant.

I am reminded of Wallara, one of the key agencies in my own electorate, which has been in Dandenong for in excess of 50 years and is located in Potter Street. Wallara offers a growing range of disability support services, including supported accommodation and support in the home. More recently a growing element of what Wallara offers has been Wallara Industries, which provides a range of employment opportunities in the south-eastern suburbs for people with a disability. Its broad range of employment activities include product assembly, packaging, logistics services and mail distribution. These activities are provided to third parties on a commercial basis and engage a number of the residents of the Wallara complex. Wallara Industries has been very successful. It has grown and developed its employment services in the last 15 years or so, and this has augmented the range of services that Wallara previously offered to the community of the south-eastern region and of Dandenong in particular.

One of the key areas Dr Carling-Jenkins focused on in her motion was access to government contracts for disability enterprises. We all agree on the importance of providing opportunities for disability enterprises to contract with government, access government work and be able to offer that employment to people with a disability. As the motion focuses to a large extent on government procurement policies, I will take the opportunity to run through a bit of the background of

the current Victorian Government Purchasing Board procurement framework.

This new framework was introduced in 2013. Prior to that we had policies which had been in place since around the mid-1990s and were very prescriptive. Basically those policies treated all government procurement in the same way, with the exception of setting different dollar thresholds for the value of procurement. If a procurement was worth less than \$25 000, there were certain requirements around obtaining quotations before proceeding to contract; if its value was between \$25 000 and \$150 000, there was a different set of criteria; and if the estimated value of procurement was above \$150 000, the requirements were more extensive. It was a very blunt set of policies based purely on the expected dollar value of the particular procurement. However, at those individual levels of procurement there were exemptions.

The Victorian Government Purchasing Board put the policies in place and then had an extensive list of exemptions, being the schedule 2 exemptions, which Dr Carling-Jenkins referred to in her motion. I point out to the house that the exemptions in schedule 2 are not limited to disability enterprises; they are far broader than that, and this is one of the challenges for the procurement policy.

The exemptions which existed under the old procurement framework included procurement for the direct purpose of providing foreign assistance; expenditure on goods and services by offices of the state operating outside Australia; expenditure specifically authorised by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister for Finance; Department of Justice expenditure incurred by the sheriff in the course of executing writs, warrants and orders of the court; periodicals, textbooks and books of reference, including supplements to such publications et cetera; expenditure for the use of the Governor and for the upkeep and maintenance of Government House; purchases from Indigenous enterprises; procurements by covered entities, being those which would be otherwise covered by the policies where it is for the purpose of assisting an entity that is exempt from the policies; and as a result of a design contest et cetera. Also included on that list was an exemption for purchases from Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE).

The list of exemptions which existed under the old framework was extensive, and it was one that was continually growing in the sense that there were always calls for different sectors to be included, be they manufacturers, small business, Indigenous enterprises

or innovative enterprises started by young entrepreneurs. There was a continuous request for different exemptions from the procurement framework.

What occurred after 2013 was a recognition that the policies that had existed for the last 20 years did not reflect modern procurement. The challenges of modern procurement were not necessarily tied to a dollar value. The fact that something was above or below \$25 000 or above or below \$150 000 did not reflect whether that procurement was complex and risky for the state of Victoria, as opposed to being a simple procurement.

There are some examples of where buying a small fleet of vehicles for a government agency, which might run to \$100 000 or \$200 000, is a simple procurement. It is something government does on a regular basis, and it is not a complex procurement or a risky procurement. Likewise, you could have other procurements — and I am thinking particularly of the purchasing and development of some IT systems, where the cost may be below the \$150 000 threshold — where the complexity of those systems and the risk to government from those procurements is very high.

There was a recognition by the Victorian Government Purchasing Board in the period from 2010 through to the end of 2012 that procurement policy should focus on risk and complexity rather than simply on the dollar value of the procurement. That is what is reflected in the current suite of procurement policies, which were gazetted at the beginning of 2013. They require individual government agencies to think about what they are going to procure and what risks and complexity may be associated with those procurements.

It also requires agencies to flag what they intend to procure for the next 12 months. Tenders are not simply dumped in the marketplace today with a closing date in two weeks time; rather, it is flagged a year in advance that departments or agencies intend to procure X. That is to allow entities that are seeking to engage with government through contracts with the government to know in advance what the government is going to be buying and what opportunities there may be for the private sector to engage with government through procurement.

One of the other things we emphasised with the board when the new policies were introduced was the need to lower barriers. One of the frustrations for the private sector in engaging with government, whether it is disability employment entities or others, is the way in which a lot of government procurement is unnecessarily geared towards large-scale suppliers — simple things like, for example, a government agency

that might be buying \$20 000 worth of outdoor furniture requiring a supplier to carry \$10 million worth of public liability insurance or \$10 million worth of professional indemnity insurance. Such things might be appropriate for large suppliers but are not appropriate for small to medium enterprises (SMEs). One of the things that we emphasised to the board and that is reflected in the new policies is the need to remove barriers to make it easier for SMEs to engage with government without the unnecessary contract terms which suit large employers and large entities but do not suit smaller entities.

Likewise, in implementing the policies — and this goes to the issue Dr Carling-Jenkins raised around exemptions — the new framework does not set out exemptions. What the framework requires is that agencies, when they are planning to go to market, give much more consideration to how they engage with the market and the form of engagement they take.

Under the new policies for market engagement, the mandatory requirement in developing market engagement strategies for individual procurements is that, firstly, the agency must apply a market approach that eliminates barriers to participation by small to medium enterprises and local businesses. That is the point I made before about ensuring that there are no arbitrary barriers to procurement because ‘they existed in the past’, because ‘we have always done it that way’ or because ‘we have always required \$10 million worth of insurance even if we are only buying \$10 000 worth of goods’.

Additionally, there is a requirement that all agencies engage with potential suppliers in a fair and equitable manner, and that is where the opportunity exists for continued engagement by the Victorian government with ADEs.

One of the challenges in these policies, which are being implemented by government now, is that it is a rolling process and each agency must be approved by the Victorian Government Purchasing Board as it goes through a transition. It is not a cut-over date for everyone; it is a rolling progression as agencies transition from the old framework to the new framework. It very much puts the onus on agencies to think about the way in which they engage and the way in which they lower barriers.

I place on the record that background around the current procurement framework and the rationale for it. I go back to where I started my contribution. The issues raised by Dr Carling-Jenkins around the importance of providing opportunities for people with a disability to

have employment in the broader community are good ones. Such opportunities are supported by coalition members through the agencies in our electorates, such as Wallara, which I have had the pleasure of visiting a number of times. They are supported by coalition members. I commend Dr Carling-Jenkins for moving this motion this afternoon.

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — I also thank Dr Carling-Jenkins for bringing this motion before the house. As the disability spokesperson for the Greens, I have also worked extensively in the field, mainly in accommodation services. When I was 17 I worked at Kew Cottages — and I do not want to say how long ago that was. I have seen a lot, including when I worked at Kew — which was during the period when the *Age* ran a massive campaign about the conditions at Kew, and the editor at the time, Graham Perkin, wrote about how terrible and antiquated the accommodation was, without adequate bathrooms and all of those things — the transition from those times to the rebuilding of Kew and then on to the building of community residential units, a few of which I have worked in.

It is interesting, too, that in my role as the Greens spokesperson on disability I have encountered and worked with many young people with physical disabilities who find ridiculous barriers to employment all the time. It can be as simple as someone not being able to get their chair through a door, having a desk that does not quite fit their chair, having a hearing impairment and finding that their employer will not purchase the equipment they require or having a vision impairment and finding that the office cannot be arranged to make it easier or even possible to work in. These employers simply lack imagination. They do not understand that they should be looking at someone's ability rather than their disability.

While the Greens support the motion in principle, I would like to raise a few things around the issue of workplace reform. Members may be aware that over the past year there has been a major court case about the shockingly low wages, sometimes as little as \$1 a day, that people who work in some services have received. As I understand it, while that case has been resolved the issue has not been. Among the other things that we should also be looking at when we consider employment for people with disabilities is how we can make sure that they receive a living wage that gives them dignity and enables them to live in the community. The idea of having a procurement policy that includes procurement from disability agencies is logical. It is a worthwhile and practical way for government to support these industries.

Dr Carling-Jenkins's motion would make a good reference to a parliamentary committee — but not this year. I think this year's calendars of all the committees are quite full. We should look at the issues of employment for people with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities or mental health concerns. We should consider what are the barriers, what stops them from getting good employment and what protects them from being exploited. As I said, the Greens support this motion in principle. This is something we need to talk about now, but it would definitely be worth having a parliamentary committee look at these issues more broadly.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — I am delighted to speak in support of this motion. I do not know whether it happens to everybody before they come to this place, but I too have worked in disability services at various times. In fact my first work experience job was in a disability service. I also have many friends with disabilities. I understand the challenges of seeking employment but also of having interaction with the community and being able to be involved in cultural and other community activities. As members know, employment is a very big part of how we become part of our community and how we find value in it.

Dr Carling-Jenkins's motion is timely, given that the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) is being rolled out in some regions and its rollout is imminent across the country. We need to consider how Australian disability enterprises (ADEs) will work within that scheme and the challenges they are facing now with the changes to the law on how they can decide what wages they can offer. A case in 2012 changed that altogether. It was found that the tool that had been used for assessing a wage for a person with a disability was no longer valid and that a new tool was needed.

I agree with that part of Dr Carling-Jenkins's motion that notes that a lot of the ADEs were put in a very difficult position of having to pay more at the same time as they lost some of the exemptions in the government's procurement policy. They suffered a double whammy, and the NDIS will play into that. Restoration of the exemptions called for by the motion will put the ADEs in a much better position to employ more people with disabilities. They will be able to employ them at a wage commensurate with the Australian Human Rights Commission's decisions on this issue and they will be able to compete with other employment agencies. Given that the ADEs are producing things that government agencies can consume, it makes a lot of sense for us to maybe not just test apples with apples, as many of the other

speakers have understood this to be about. In government procurement generally, and not just with ADEs, we need to consider a whole range of issues, including who is the best person to purchase from.

I am very supportive of this motion. As Dr Carling-Jenkins said, currently 5000 people are employed by ADEs. I hope that with the rollout of the NDIS and therefore people being able to make decisions about their lives more autonomously, more people with disabilities will be seeking some form of employment. We may see more ADEs establishing themselves in Victoria. I know that in my region there are a number of them. I appreciate that they are finding it very difficult, particularly given that 2012 case which determined how they can now assess wages for people with disabilities.

I appreciate the financial pressure that these organisations are feeling. I appreciate also the value that they give not just in the products they produce but also to the workers they employ. That value is not just in their 9 to 5 work, or whatever time they are working, but at other times when they can feel that they are valued in the community. That can be because they are catching the bus to work, they have money to take their own holiday, they can go to the theatre or they can feel much more engaged with our community than if they are sitting at home and not able to work and feel productive. I think that it is a common instinct to feel that we are productive. People with disabilities have that same instinct: they want to feel that they are productive.

Restoring the schedule 2 exemptions will enable us to be more sensitive on this issue, and along with the rollout of the NDIS we will be able to take into account the very worthy challenges that ADEs have in employing people. I commend this motion, and I hope that we see what it calls for become a reality.

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak in support of Dr Carling-Jenkins's motion. Procurement has always been a very tricky policy for various governments over the years, particularly after we opened up our economy in the 1980s and 1990s to compete with the rest of the world. We invited companies around the world to start competing for work, including for government contracts and so forth. It has become a struggle for state governments in particular to decide what sort of policy to put in place to encourage and foster local businesses, big and small, as jobs have started disappearing over the years because there is no level playing field around the world. A lot of governments around the world today still subsidise and support their businesses, and unfortunately our

businesses are unable to compete. That has become a real challenge.

I know that the Victorian government over the last 15 years has been struggling with that. We have been able to put some policies in place through the Victorian industry participation program to try to encourage Victorian businesses and give them some assistance to be able to compete for Victorian contracts, government contracts and so forth. There has been some improvement to the system over the years, and Labor governments have played a major role with further refinements in the last six months.

I come back to this particular issue of disability. Government ministers put their different hats on. They do not want to be seen as discriminating against or favouring a particular group. They ask themselves, 'Are we going to be in breach of the World Trade Organisation conditions?' et cetera. But to be frank, this is probably one area, as a government member of Parliament, where I would not mind saying, 'What the hell? If we can't support people with a disability and give them preference, we have a problem'. I think that is something we should look at seriously. We should look at how we can support these people. I say that for a number of reasons, and I will go through them shortly.

National Disability Services (NDS) does a tremendous job supporting people with a disability to find employment. Victoria has 89 Australian disability enterprises, which are not-for-profit disability organisations that employ around 5000 people with a disability. Without these organisations these people would really struggle to find employment. Let us face it, people with a disability in this state and in this country really struggle to find a job. To be frank, a person with a disability who is competing with an able-bodied person for a job is starting from a fair way behind. Therefore if we can provide assistance as a government, as employers and as a society to people with a disability, we are doing the right thing because someone needs to help these people. Someone needs to recognise their problems.

A person may have a disability, but they can contribute to society and they can be very productive. They have an enormous ability to be productive in our society and to contribute. They do not want to be a burden on their parents, on the government or on society in general. We should remember that every person with a disability we are able to provide employment for will not be on the national disability insurance scheme when it is fully operational. Taxpayers will not have to fund that person. Giving a person a job contributes to their basic

human dignity. It helps them to feel really good about themselves and be able to get on with life. I know that a lot of people with a disability would like to have a job.

I do not want to play politics — I think everyone in this house supports this motion, and I commend Dr Carling-Jenkins for proposing it — but I think there is an obligation on us to do something and try to encourage that thinking. So when we talk about the government's policy and performance in relation to whether or not we should give disability organisations preference — if I can use that word — when it comes to tenders for government contracts and jobs, I do not think we should be embarrassed; I think we should be proud. Sure, we need to look at value for money and we need to look at the issue of quality, the ability to deliver and all of those sorts of things, but we should make an allowance in the decision-making process and provide the best assistance we can for these organisations.

I want to talk about a case study, going back a few years, involving the New South Wales government, which has a very good system in place. It is part of that government's policy to provide preference and assistance to organisations that support people with a disability to find employment. It also gives people who are running their own businesses a sort of leg-up by encouraging various government departments to purchase from these organisations without applying strict procurement arrangements.

As I said, I want to refer to a case study by the NDS involving the New South Wales Ministry of Health's resource distribution unit (RDU). I did a little bit of research earlier on that case study on a contract for collation and mailing. According to the NDS case study:

This contract was awarded under clause 5 of the 'Public Works and Procurement Regulation 2014 — Exemption for approved disability employment organisations'.

That clause used to be part of our procurement policy, but unfortunately that changed in 2015. I wholeheartedly support reintroducing that requirement, and I am happy to advocate changing our position and bringing back that exemption for approved disability employment organisations. The case study continues:

NDS acted as contract manager on behalf of the RDU and awarded the contract to Afford —

that is the name of the organisation —

due to their extensive logistics experience.

Scope of this project was to pick and pack the brochures for 'Munch & Move' and 'Live Life Well' school programs.

These are resources used by pre-schools, child-minding centres and schools; they are available in English plus several other languages.

The outcome of that project is that orders were received by the RDU, and they were then emailed to Afford. Afford's six supported employees working on this project then picked the orders from small to very large order sizes. These orders were dispatched to schools all over the state. After placing a shipping sticker onto the box, the supported employees recorded the weight and organised for bulk pick-ups and deliveries. The work was complex due to the variable size of orders and numerous distribution points, but the Afford team completed each job in full, on time and to the complete satisfaction of NSW Health. That is proof that people with disabilities can do a productive job and can do it well. Due to the success of this project, the resource distribution unit continued to use Afford for this type of work for over two years.

The manager for this project is the resource distribution unit manager, and there is a full analysis of how the case study highlights the opportunity for New South Wales government departments to potentially meet their business objectives as well as providing contracts that lead to employment for people with a disability. The point that has emerged from this case study is that people with a disability have skills and can deliver goods and services to New South Wales government standards. The partnership between NSW Health, NDS and Afford has provided meaningful and sustainable work for the six employees who worked on this contract. Structures and barriers to employment of people with a disability can be broken down and managed, and the potential impact on the community is highly positive.

That is a real case study and a real example of what people with a disability can do and what governments can do. It is something we should do as the Victorian government and as Victorian parliamentarians — that is, look at how we can adopt that model and not be apologetic about it. We should be proud to say that we are delivering for people with a disability. The benefits are that this makes individuals feel good about themselves and gives them a purpose in life, and it also shows that as a society we care about people and can take the pressure off their carers, parents and partners. They also no longer have to be subsidised and supported by taxpayers. I am not saying we should not do so. When we cannot provide them with jobs, we should look after people with disabilities. We should be paying them and looking after them, but the best thing you can do for a human being is give them a job or the opportunity to have a job and earn a living.

With these comments I commend the motion to the house.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — It gives me a great deal of pleasure this afternoon to rise and support the motion moved by Dr Carling-Jenkins. I add my voice to those who have congratulated her on bringing this matter before the house, because it is an extremely important matter and the depth of that importance is emphasised only too well by the fact that here today we have the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, the Greens, the Australian Sex Party and the Democratic Labour Party all in furious agreement. I am not sure that is going to happen all that often.

Mr Bourman interjected.

Mr FINN — The Shooters have not said anything on this. I was not sure whether they were going to. If the Shooters and Fishers Party is with us as well, that is even better.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — I hope they do get an opportunity, because that will be a very good thing. We acknowledge the depth and importance of this issue, and I congratulate Dr Carling-Jenkins on raising this matter. This matter brings to the table some very basic truths, the most basic being that people with disabilities are people. Nobody loses any form of their humanity by virtue of their disability. People with disabilities are as much human beings as people who are able bodied, or able minded for that matter. Just because somebody has an intellectual disability, it does not make them any less of a human being, nor does it take away any of their rights. It does not take away any of the dignity owed to them by way of their humanity. That human dignity must always be respected, and those human rights must also be respected.

I have to say it is not always so. I am sure every one of us has heard people making disparaging comments from time to time that would indicate that those people have the view that people with disabilities are somewhat less than human. I have heard people in this chamber say that. Going back a few years to a particular debate, I recall people saying that it would be fine if we were to do away with people because they have a disability. To me that smacks at the very core of human dignity and human decency, and it is something we should not tolerate.

As shadow parliamentary secretary for autism spectrum disorder, I have mentioned in this house before that I have been getting around a fair bit and seeing a great deal of the work that is being done not just for children

with autism but also for adults with autism as well as for families facing the effects of autism. As I have said before, it is not just the individual child or adult with autism; it is a family problem. I have been getting around and seeing that a great deal of very good work is being done, and one of things that was brought to my attention very early in the piece is the extraordinarily high rate of unemployment among people with autism.

To my way of thinking that is very odd, because I would say that in close to 100 per cent of cases people with autism have a gift. In some way or other they are absolutely brilliant and highly gifted in a certain field or area. It seems to me that society is letting itself down in not tapping into that gift or that talent. It probably goes back to the education that we have been providing these children over the last 20 or 30 years.

One of the greatest culprits in this regard is the Victorian department of education, because it has taken the view that one size fits all. It has taken the view that to move with the times is just too difficult. It has taken the view perhaps that children with autism are not worth the trouble of changing the way that we do things. I take a very different view. My view is that the one-size-fits-all policy does not work and will never work. It may work to various degrees with what might be called able-bodied or able-minded students, but in terms of students with autism it is never going to work because the individuality of each child is emphasised even more by the autism that they carry.

As a society and as a government, and can I say to my friends over at 2 Treasury Place, as an education department, we must start thinking differently. We have to start thinking about these people as people and not as problems. We have to extract from them and give them the ability to extract from themselves the talents that they have to offer and the gifts that they have been given. We as a society will benefit enormously from that, and of course the individuals will benefit enormously. There are no two ways about that. We know the sense of self-worth that employment brings. Ms Patten spoke earlier about something as simple as catching the bus to work and the difference that can make to an individual. These are things that must be taken into consideration.

Something I think we have to direct our attention to in the autism area is behaviour, because behaviour is an area that dictates whether a person is employable or not. I was delighted last Friday to be out at La Trobe University and to meet the researchers at the Autism Research Centre. They were telling me that they have come up with a way of diagnosing autism in children as young as six months old. That allows early intervention

to remove the behaviours that might otherwise condemn these children to unemployment later in life. It is a very exciting prospect that we can find out early, get in and do something about it and change these young people's lives. We can change their families' lives. It will be of huge benefit to the community, and we can all be very excited about it. I left La Trobe University last Friday afternoon genuinely excited about what I had seen there. I thought, 'Here is the future. Here is something that is going to change so many lives for the better'. That always is something that excites me enormously.

I will not speak for too much longer. On the subject of procurement, that is a matter that should be constantly under review. Whilst a person may have a disability, that disability should in no way measure permanently what their capabilities are. Those capabilities will change and their potential to make a contribution will change, just as technology will change. For example, my son, who is 14, has autism spectrum disorder, as I am sure the house would know, and he can work the television and the various mechanisms involved with the television far better than I ever could — not just the remote control, but everything.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr FINN — It is probably not a big leap, as Mr Ondarchie says. These children all have a great gift, and it is our job to find out what it is and to use it. That will be of great benefit to them as children and later, once they are adults. That is what happens — children grow up into adults; we seem to forget that. We talk about early intervention, we talk about education, we talk about schools and then when they reach the age of 18, forget about it, you are on the unemployment benefit or you are on the disability pension or whatever. We tell them to come back and see us when their funeral benefit is due. That seems to be the attitude of many sections of the government. It has to change. It is just unsustainable, and it is an appalling attitude to have anyway.

Once again I commend Dr Carling-Jenkins on bringing this matter before the house. It gives me enormous pleasure to support the motion. I sincerely hope this will not be the last time that we see matters of this nature brought before the house, because they are matters of enormous importance and should be of enormous concern to every member of this Parliament.

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — I put on the record that the Shooters and Fishers Party most wholeheartedly support this motion. We echo the

sentiments of everyone who has spoken in the debate today.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I am pleased to sum up the debate on this motion today that was aimed at establishing a strategy whereby the government supports in a practical way people with disabilities who are employed currently or who have the potential to be employed in Australian disability enterprises (ADEs).

I thank Ms Symes for her contribution, particularly around disability and disadvantage. I thank her for sharing her own experiences in fighting for social inclusion and for her description of Bob. It is important that we share the stories of people we know and give a voice to them in Parliament. I thank her for that.

I thank Mr Rich-Phillips for his contribution as well and for his description of and familiarity with the service in the Dandenong area that is obviously well known to him. It is a very successful service by the sounds of it. That is just the type of service that could benefit further from a solid government procurement strategy. I also thank him for his outline of the update on the government procurement policies in 2013. I understand better the complexities of the exemptions and the work on government procurement policies. I ask that this government consider enabling ADEs to get a slice of the pie and to put in place a very simple procedure and strategy like the one in New South Wales, where one person works to advocate for agencies. It sounds like the new procurement policies that came in laid a very good and solid foundation for the addition of such a strategy, so I thank him for his contribution.

I want to thank Ms Hartland for her contribution and for sharing her story of working at Kew Cottages, which is not something I was aware of before. It was very brave of her to talk about her experiences at Kew Cottages. I agree wholeheartedly with her comments on the lack of imagination that we have generally around disability issues. I accept her point on workplace reform. It is an issue, and it is something that we definitely need to explore. ADEs have certainly come a long way from the former sheltered workshops that were around when I first started working in the disability industry over 20 years ago. There is a lot of room to improve further. I thank Ms Hartland also for her suggestion that we have a look at doing this in a more meaningful way within a committee process once the committees are a little more freed up.

Ms Hartland interjected.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS — Yes, next year or the year after! I thank Ms Patten for sharing her experiences of having friends with disabilities, and of working with people with disabilities and for her description of the holistic value employment can offer to people with disabilities. I agree with her comments about hoping this becomes a reality.

I thank Mr Melhem for his contribution. He spoke about the challenges of procurement and the need for businesses to be able to compete, which gave a really good background. I liked the way Mr Melhem framed his comments about giving preference to people with disabilities. He spoke of being proud of doing that in this state and said that it is a really good thing, meaning this is not simply about productivity; it is about the basic human dignity of having a job and about our obligation as a state to do something. I am very encouraged that these comments — to the effect that that we should be adopting a model without apology — came from the government.

I thank Mr Finn for his contribution and for sharing the story of his family experience of having a son with autism spectrum disorder and also for sharing his knowledge of the area, in particular the area of autism. I appreciated that Mr Finn acknowledged the depth of the issue, and certainly Mr Finn has a depth of knowledge of this issue. I reiterate the point Mr Finn made about the lack of worth often associated with people with disabilities and that we need to be careful in this Parliament about the disparaging comments we make and the point about procurement being something that should be constantly under review. These are moving feats; we never quite get there, because there is always something we should be working on and improving.

Finally, I thank Mr Bourman for his contribution, which was short and sweet and to the point, as always, which is fabulous and what we have come to expect from his party.

Mr Bourman interjected.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS — Mr Bourman said they aim to please. Thank you, Mr Bourman; that it is fantastic. In summary, I commend the motion to the house.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ramsay) — Order! I thank Dr Carling-Jenkins, and I too thank the contributors. It is rare that in this chamber we hear debate on a motion that comes from the heart. There was a lot of passion and a lot of life knowledge on this topic, and from the point of view of the Chair, it is very much appreciated when we have debates on that level. I

thank all members for their contributions on this important motion.

Motion agreed to.

OUTDOOR SPORTS

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — I move:

That this house notes the —

- (1) significant financial contribution that outdoor sports such as shooting, fishing, boating, camping and four-wheel driving make to the state of Victoria;
- (2) financial benefits that these types of outdoor activities bring to rural and regional areas that desperately need it;
- (3) social benefits and positive impact that these types of outdoor activities have on families;

and recognises that the industry and organisations who encourage and promote outdoor activities should be supported and promoted, particularly in regional Victoria.

I will not go through the motion. We all know what it is. It is basically a motion to tell everyone how much of a financial contribution, social contribution and general feel-good feeling outdoor activities bring.

Outdoor recreational activities are enjoyed by a large number of the citizens of Victoria. These activities include, but are obviously not limited to, shooting, fishing, boating, camping, four-wheel driving and even prospecting. A previous study, which we have referred to many times, has revealed that the state benefits to the tune of \$439 million from hunting alone. This amount is not limited to just the provision of guns and ammo but also includes things such as fuel, food, accommodation, camping gear and so on. This figure does not appear to include any of the other forms of shooting.

Hunting is not the only way to enjoy shooting sports. There are other ways to enjoy shooting, such as pistol shooting, rifle target shooting and clay target shooting. Who knows what the real value of shooting is to the economy? You can add to that the fact that all these forms of shooting generally require a form of expenditure, as a lot of shooters live in urban areas and have to travel, with rural areas being the most likely places to go, though there are some indoor ranges in urban areas.

I come now to fishing. We all have to get our equipment from somewhere, and fishing gear can be found in many places. Even some multinational companies department stores have a fair range of equipment, although it is mainly intended for the very occasional or beginner user. Fishing gear can also be

found in a large variety of outdoor stores, and as you get out to rural and remote areas, general stores can have a great range in stock. Without getting into a how-to on fishing, fishing can be done with lures or jigs but is most commonly done with bait. The use of bait generates more than one benefit, as the bait must be caught and processed before being sold. There are jobs in catching and selling the bait and enjoyment in using it. Every sale is an injection of tax and income that provides jobs.

A lot of people fish from the shore, but a lot of people also fish from boats. Boating is actually a much bigger industry than I ever really appreciated until I started this job. It is worth about \$4 billion to \$4.5 billion a year Australia wide. The size of the boating segment became quite apparent to me after I talked to the boating industry association. Whilst not all people can afford a new boat, there are large second-hand boat dealers that seem to do a thriving business. People upsize boats, downsize boats or just want to have, as with everything else, another one. Boats are rarely spartan. You will find that radios, global positioning system devices, fish finders and a lot of safety equipment adorn most boats. With the march of technology, eskies are slowly making way for 12-volt fridges. All these items should come from Australia. Whilst we should buy Australian wherever practical, even imported goods create retail jobs.

There has been some discussion on the figures on how much international tourists spend on fishing in Australia. In 2006 — which is the most recent data I could find — it was estimated that international tourists spent in excess of \$200 million on fishing in Australia. That is a lot of money. Nine years on it would be reasonable to expect that that amount would be higher and that Victoria would be the recipient of a rather large chunk of it, given the great fishing we have, such as snapper in the bay and the massive tuna off Portland. Camping stores these days provide more than just camping gear. You will find your fishing gear and all sorts of other stuff in there — knives, torches, fishing rods and kayaks; you could go on forever.

We do not make any four-wheel drives in Australia, so whilst there are retail jobs in — —

Ms Shing — We make Bushmaster.

Mr BOURMAN — They will not sell them to me.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BOURMAN — We will get onto that next time, about me getting a Bushmaster for myself.

Ms Shing — I'm sorry for my interjection.

Mr BOURMAN — That is all right. The wider automotive component manufacturing sector is estimated to be worth around \$11 billion a year in Australia, of which the four-wheel drive aftermarket is a large chunk — about \$2 billion, to be precise. To go off-roading most people will not use a standard vehicle. They may spend large amounts accessorising and personalising their vehicle, but it rarely stops there; there is always something to change. I have been in that boat myself.

To experience and enjoy the outdoors you have to get there and back, which brings me to the province of petrol stations. Having lived outside a small town in the past, I have an appreciation of what a petrol station does for a rural economy. They can provide a lifeline. Not only do they sell fuels such as petrol and diesel, but they also provide other services. It is quite common for service stations to provide such things as fast food, general groceries and magazines, and these days stuff for mobile phones too. Every camper, every shooter, every boater and every fisher who buys anything from these service stations is giving the state more tax and keeping someone in a job.

There is a reason for these activities and the discretionary expenditure involved in pursuing them: we enjoy it. Getting out of town provides a lot of people with the ability to slow their life down, get away from the rat-race and interact with the outdoors. Given the often fast-paced and stressful lives we live, getting out into the bush can be a cathartic experience, and I for one enjoy the open spaces and fresh air. One of the benefits of fishing, particularly if you live in an urban or suburban area, is that you can go to the shoreline and find yourself immediately in open space. If you get a boat, you can go a kilometre out into the bay, from where you can hardly see the land. You could be anywhere.

The social aspect of these activities cannot be underestimated either. As I understand it, duck season is a time when a lot of people catch up for a yearly event. It may not be to everyone's taste, but a lot of people will spend the opening of the season just socialising. Spending time with people in outdoor activities and encountering people with similar interests can lead to new friendships or acquaintanceships that can last a lifetime. Of course this is not limited to shooting; it applies to all outdoor recreational activities. They are rarely undertaken with exactly the same people every time. Clubs are joined and information is shared, and in a lot of cases there are internet resources.

Behind all this are the many industries that supply the goods and services. As I mentioned before, tax is paid and jobs are created in a wide range of businesses, from global importers to local shops, tour operators, local franchises and all the downstream businesses that feed them. For example, a coffee van may pull up at a factory in the morning to deliver a caffeine hit for the workers.

Given that regional areas are feeling the hurt, and as the hunting season alone brings significant money to some rural economies, they may well need this income to continue. It is incumbent upon any government at any level to do its best to support these pastimes. By supporting these activities governments are enabling these jobs and income streams to continue. It is not about handouts; it is about reducing red tape, not unnecessarily restricting lawful activities and investing in appropriate infrastructure. It is about enabling industries to flourish, and our society will benefit as a result.

As our society becomes more urbanised, with more people moving to urban and suburban areas, I see successive governments focusing less on rural areas, and these communities are feeling the effects of that. We often hear figures of unemployment in regional areas, and some of the numbers are quite high. Every sale made to a recreational shooter, fisher, four-wheel driver, boater or camper is doing double duty by injecting discretionary income into these communities and creating jobs. Furthermore, the people enjoying this recreation are having a good time and, most importantly, improving their quality of life.

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) — I thank Mr Bourman for putting this motion forward for discussion. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on the significance of the various contributions made economically, socially and holistically to our communities by outdoor activities, including shooting, fishing, boating, camping and four-wheel driving. I would like to touch on each of these. At the outset I pay my respects to everyone in Gippsland — which is a mecca for these sorts of activities in Victoria — for the work they do in improving the amenity, the availability and the general level of service for people who travel to the area to engage in outdoor activities and get amongst everything from adventure tourism through to a simple walk along a rail trail.

The way our great outdoors is celebrated in Victoria is the stuff of legend and also, as Mr Bourman indicated, the source of a burgeoning product market. We have massive economic growth as part of the outdoor industries market, whether it is through direct

consumption or longer term investments such as four-wheel drive vehicles.

The way we enjoy the great outdoors is enhanced wherever we can do so with our families. To that end I note that a number of significant policy initiatives have been placed front and centre by the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water to bring camping more squarely within the reach of everyday families, including removing costs for basic campsites at 570 sites around Victoria.

We also have the fantastic fishing industry. I speak of it from the perspective of great envy because for some years I have been known as something of a fish repellent. I attract the mosquitoes, but once I dip a line, the fish all depart. This was never more evident than when I visited the Tarwin River recently to enjoy one of the new platforms that has been erected near Venus Bay. It is the eighth such platform to be completed to allow the local community and the massively increasing numbers of visitors to dip a line. The scenery was absolutely pristine — you could not imagine anything more perfect in terms of the early morning light — and a group of excited people were enjoying the environment and, until I arrived, the peace and quiet. What then happened was that I suspect the fish heard my footsteps up the ramp because all of a sudden they were nowhere to be seen.

With my apologies to those who have been forced to endure the challenges that my presence has brought to various fishing sites around Victoria simply because I scare them all off, I want to acknowledge that the hauls have been enormous. They are prolific, they are enjoyable and they make good eating. They bring families and communities together in a low or no-cost activity which is outdoors, which enables people to benefit health-wise and which also contributes to local economies. People may do this through staying at a bed and breakfast, by stopping at a petrol station or by buying some of the local produce for which Gippsland is absolutely and justifiably famous — and that is a complete plug for the region.

We have many opportunities to contribute to communities, to add to them and to enhance them through our participation in outdoor activities. Fishing is just one of those activities; it could be surf fishing or enjoying Lake Toolondo and the bounty that exists there. Whether it is fishing for barramundi in the Hazelwood pondage or having a crack at finding something other than carp in the Murray, there are numerous opportunities to get involved in a really healthy way.

In addition, shooting is a really important activity for regional Victoria in terms of the numbers of visitors it brings to some of the most beautiful parts of our state. I know many shooters who are absolutely passionate about conserving the natural environments that they enjoy. They take great care and pride in leaving the environments as they find them and are keen to make the best possible use of what they catch. They want to ensure that they observe bag limits and do not litter. They want to ensure that they pass on the best possible tips and information about stewardship and land management to others, and they are great partners in undertaking pest control, identifying wildlife, managing populations and basically overseeing the health of regional land and land assets.

I have decided to give clay shooting a bit of a go. I doubt I will be any good at it; in fact someone else will probably have to get in there with a sneaky shot to save my dignity. Nonetheless, clay pigeon shooting and other sports shooting activities are also really important, as are the ancillary industries associated with outdoor-related activities, such as gun dog training and the like.

We have voluntary armies throughout regional Victoria which assist with making activities like this as accessible as possible. Whether it is kayaking or canoeing, bushwalking or hiking, or maintaining an understanding of the four-wheel drive trails to access some of the most beautiful parts of the state, volunteers are the backbone of how we are able to access these particular parts of our wonderful national parks and other environments.

We have activities that include horseriding, sailing and orienteering. Everyone can find an activity that will increase their quality of life, improve their health and provide economic benefits. In essence we have the culmination of a group effort — public and private enterprise, profit and not for profit, community and business, and voluntary and professional — all geared towards ensuring that we are able to enjoy our pristine environments and do so whether it is at its most basic, in terms of a swag unrolled in a free camping site in regional Victoria, or whether it is glamping, where you get to sleep under the stars in 5-star luxury, under 1000-thread count linen, and have a fully cooked breakfast delivered to your door. The options are endless and can definitely be tailored to whatever it is that individuals, couples, families or groups would like to do.

There are enormous benefits for the state of Victoria, most significantly for regional Victoria, and these benefits deliver jobs. They drive growth, and they

ensure that people are absolutely aware of the key advantages we have, living in this state.

Phillip Island is another location that falls within the Eastern Victoria Region. It boasts so many natural advantages that it almost puts other parts of the state to shame as far as ecotourism and adventure tourism is concerned. Just last week I enjoyed another tour of the Phillip Island Nature Parks, including the Koala Conservation Centre, where I am pleased to say I met a very old and grumpy koala by the name of Harriet. She sleeps for about 23 hours a day, and it did occur to me that she was enjoying a rather a good lifestyle she was enjoying. I thought I should leave her where she was and keep going, because if I had stopped to enjoy her lifestyle for much longer, I would not be here speaking today.

The other aspect of Phillip Island that shines is the way in which it caters for enormous numbers of visitors during peak periods. This is not an isolated example. Gippsland proper is able to deliver hospitality, warmth, a retail experience, entertainment and culture to people who are enjoying these outdoor activities, and it often means that people will stay for longer in order to enjoy them. They will combine outdoor activity with other activities, whether it is enjoying an event or seeing more of the great outdoors at a more leisurely pace.

Enormous contributions are also made in terms of the social benefits that these activities have for schools and families and also for social clubs. Groups such as scouts and primary schools can enjoy the great outdoors, again often at a low cost or no cost, and children can acquire important skills as far as developing independence, initiative and general skills that might earn them a badge if they are a scout or some other form of recognition, which is instrumental to good growth and development. This outdoor lifestyle reminds us that there is a counterpoint to spending one's time looking at an iPhone or in front of a television with a remote control. It says that there is always an opportunity to give it a go, whether it is rope climbing or canoeing. It says that it is fun to get dirty, to get outside, to get amongst it and to find out about the natural environment, to really enjoy it and to breathe air that has not been pumped through an air-conditioning system under fluorescent lighting.

We are seeing that outdoor communities and industries are contributing enormously not just to regional growth and development but to the entire composite picture of the state of Victoria. I am not saying this from a partisan point of view or a government point of view. I have enjoyed the smell of wet eucalyptus and mud under my feet for as long as I can remember. I am still

enjoying it — and enjoying seeing new and more parts of Victoria that are also benefiting from the contributions made by those who participate in outdoor activities.

We see the stewardship of land management and a great pride in the need to conserve and make sure that we adequately safeguard against risks to the natural environment. We see, for example, the early identification of change, the management of weeds and the management of invasive vegetation, often by those who are enjoying the great outdoors. We see collaborative approaches with public sector agencies and not-for-profit or community groups. We see a commitment to making sure that the natural environment is there to be enjoyed by people not just now but well into the future. We see that people are also able to pick up new skills.

Our boating industry, which Mr Bourman touched on, is also crucially important in terms of making sure that people do not just enjoy our land but also are able to enjoy our marine environments. Enjoying that space in the fresh air while looking at some of the most gorgeous country in Australia — for example, the Gippsland Lakes — is one of the very best parts of boating. I encourage anyone who has not yet had the opportunity to get into a tinny, or something more luxurious, to do so to see what all the fuss is about, whether it is watching pelicans from above, seeing the sun set, dipping a line or scaring fish away, as is my wont.

In conclusion, I note that contributions are made from across different sectors and industries, and from members across this house, to the health and wellbeing of the outdoor industry in this state. People come from all over the country and the world to enjoy the enviable services and natural beauty here in Victoria. I cannot see anything in this motion with which I disagree, and when I travel into regional Victoria I cannot see anything that gives me cause to pause about any downside to enjoying the great outdoors. To that end, I am very much looking forward to getting out amongst it myself once the house rises for the winter break.

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — It is a great pleasure to stand in this house to talk about the pursuits and activities mentioned in Mr Bourman's motion. As a member of The Nationals and the coalition it is a pleasure to talk about the benefits associated with camping, shooting, fishing and hunting; the importance of vermin control; our support of sporting shooting organisations; and access to our forests and national parks.

One of the few advantages of being around longer than most other members is that I have the benefit of history when it comes to understanding the coalition's treatment of our national parks and state forests when it was in government versus the treatment by the Labor Party. What Labor tends to do when it is in government is lock up our forests and turn them into national parks, kicking out park users and custodians who have looked after these parks for hundreds of years. The Acting President, Mr Ramsay, saw that happen in another life when he was president of the Victorian Farmers Federation. He saw that throughout the entire Victorian Environmental Assessment Council process, when many forests along the Murray River were locked up and turned into national parks and many of the pursuits listed in Mr Bourman's motion were banned in Victoria.

It was a very sad process when we had cattle kicked out of the high country. Labor went through a consultation stage when it had already made up its mind what it was going to do. Its members were sitting around people's kitchen tables talking about people's values and the benefit of their work and how they were going to work with some of these families; however, the decision had already been made, and these families had to cease activities they had partaken in for many generations.

The motion today gives the house the opportunity to again bundle all of these outdoor activities together. It notes the financial benefits of four-wheel driving and generic camping, whether that be near coastal areas or rivers or in the outback. We tend to associate the boating industry with fishing; however, we are also talking about the incredible economy that exists around speedboats, waterskiing and sporting boating. During the drought around 2006–07 I remember economists talking about little Lake Eppalock in central Victoria. At the time the banning of powerboats from that little lake was detrimental to the local economy to the tune of around \$30 million.

If a drought can affect one small lake and one small community to the tune of \$30 million, we really have to look at what that boating industry entails, with sailing boats, speedboats, waterskiing and fishing boats being a powerful part of our economy. Mr Bourman went through some figures in relation to the boating industry. Fishing is an incredibly lucrative part of our economy. It has been estimated that every person spends about \$250 on an average fishing trip taking a couple of days, generating a staggering \$2.3 billion annually to Victoria's economy. It is an amazing part of our economy.

Hunting represents 2.5 per cent of the economy of the shire of Mansfield and 1.6 per cent of the shire of Gannawarra's economy. In many of those instances it revolves around duck hunting, and the coalition had a strong record supporting duck hunting during its four years in government. We have been under pressure from other groups to ban duck hunting altogether or to put restrictions on it. All we can talk about is our record in government, and it was incredibly strong. We were incredibly supportive of the 43 000-odd Victorians who enjoy shooting in one form or another.

Many shooting industries need some security. They need a government that supports them, and they need to be able to plan what they will do in the future. The coalition is very proud to be able to point the shooting industries to our history. For the first time ever we were able to support the shooting sports clubs of Victoria with a \$12.8 million fund. Due to the time constraints associated with the last election, we were only able to spend \$3 million of the fund. The first round of that fund was made available last year, and we were able to get the applications out, receive completed applications for the grant, and in the case of the successful applications, get the contracts signed, sealed and delivered prior to the election.

The \$3 million we were able to spend on our shooting clubs had a profound effect on many of the clubs. None experienced a more profound effect than the Greenvale Field and Game Club, which is now located on the outskirts of Kilmore. The Greenvale club was once located in the suburb of Greenvale. However, residential housing forced it to move. A member of the Greenvale club at the time had a block of land on the eastern side of Monument Hill out of Kilmore, so the club relocated some 30 kilometres to the north and set up in Kilmore. It was only a matter of 10 years or so before residential development started encroaching upon that parcel of land as well, and the club was forced to move again. It moved to a site where a member had access to some land about 15 kilometres to the east of the Kilmore township. The Greenvale club has now been operating there for a number of years.

The grant that was made available by the coalition government enabled the club to purchase some 500 hectares, and that will enable it to build what will end up being a world-class facility. It will give the club the appropriate buffers. It will be impossible for the club to be built out in the foreseeable future, and it will be able to plan one of the world's great field and game sites.

Many hundreds of members were there on the morning that we announced that grant, and they let it be known

that the years of struggle to try to find permanency around a home for the club were over, because the location was able to be secured. The coalition is very proud it was able to support these people in material ways so that their club and their sport can be secured into the foreseeable future. We did not just talk about it, we actually did it. It was great, and the club members certainly appreciate the work that was put into making that grant happen.

We have had mixed messages coming from the Labor Party. It keeps telling us that the shooting fund is still alive, although it was not in the budget. The money had simply been taken out of the budget. It is a bit of a pea and thimble trick here from the Labor Party. It says one thing in the house and does something totally different when it comes to the budget. Labor members say they support shooting groups and sporting shooters. They say the money is there, but when they are questioned about where that money is — that \$9.8 million that has been taken out of the pre-election budget update, money that the Labor Party has taken out of the hands of Victorian shooters — they are simply unable to tell us. Labor members assert it is there, yet under forensic examination we find that the money is not there. This is an ongoing saga that we have faced with the government in relation to a range of programs. When asked to truly back up what it is saying, it is simply unable to do it.

It is also worth talking about some of the other aspects of the motion. In relation to four-wheel driving and caravanning, we were able to make a range of grants during our time in government to support small communities to set up refuge stops to encourage grey nomads, drivers of recreational vehicles (RVs) and campers to call in and use specific towns as an overnight stop. We helped each of those small communities that were trying to encourage the grey nomads to stop and spend some money in their town.

We assisted with grants for new facilities, mainly through the Putting Locals First program which enabled the councils to partner up with the state government to increase amenity in these caravan and recreational vehicle stops. This has increased the ease with which people can now jump in an RV or a caravan and enjoy outback and regional Victoria. If you wish to pay for an overnight stop in an actual caravan park, you can. However, now it is easier than it has ever been. Many towns have websites, effectively making them RV-friendly towns. You can simply park by the side of the road in a particular area in a specific town. That is certainly on the increase.

I know that the improvement of our camping grounds around the state is something the Minister for Environment and Climate Change in the former government, Ryan Smith, the member for Warrandyte in the Assembly, took great pride in. He aimed to encourage people to visit the Murray River region, but in his first year he was faced with floods, which made that goal incredibly difficult to attain, and during one of the other summers we were in government we also had floods. However, as we know, the Murray River is an incredibly popular area for tourists and campers throughout the summer months.

The fishing reforms that were made under former Premier Denis Naphine, the member for South-West Coast in the Assembly — who wanted to ensure that Victoria became a fishing mecca — and the programs he put in place have led to work that is now being carried on by the current government, and that is a positive. It is great that the member for Murray Plains in the Assembly, Peter Walsh, as the former Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, and Denis Naphine were able to take the lead in this area. They truly understand the importance of fishing. They understand that it is not just about recreation; it is an incredibly strong and vibrant part of our economy in terms of its wholesale, resale and recreational benefits. As Mr Bourman mentioned, fishing has enormous social benefits to individuals — the relaxation, the socialising and the friendships formed. These are incredibly strong aspects to this activity, which has incredibly strong benefits to Victorians. It is important to Victorians that they have a government that truly understands the benefits of recreational fishing.

Boating has been spoken about. This is an incredibly valuable industry. Caravanning is the same. A lot of work has been done by Outdoors Victoria in relation to the sport and recreation portfolio. Outdoors Victoria is a peak organisation, and it looks after all outdoor recreational activities. It certainly looks at these outdoor industries as a driver of regional development.

I will finish off with some statistics. Victoria's boat industry employs around 17 000 people, with a \$4.5 billion value to the state's economy. The bicycle industry employs around 10 000 people. The combined annual economic value of Wilsons Promontory, Port Campbell and the Grampians is around \$481 million. Our alpine resorts are valued at \$505 million per year, and our beach and coastal visits are valued at around \$734 million per year. In outdoor recreation, we have over 2400 full-time jobs among these operators, and they turn over \$182 million annually.

This is a huge industry. It is a huge part of what we believe in. It is what we have stood for in opposition. The coalition is very proud of what it was able to deliver when it was in government. It is what we still stand for now that we find ourselves in opposition. We hope that the government is strong in its support of these activities. We hope that the government will stay true to its word and that it will not go down the track of introducing more national parks and locking up more of Victoria than it already has. Only when we see that the government is going to continue to leave these places open for activity will we be sure that it is going to be true to its word.

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am delighted to rise to speak on Mr Bourman's motion today about the contribution that outdoor sports, such as shooting, fishing, boating, camping and four-wheel driving, make to the state of Victoria, and other such matters. It is a narrow band of outdoor activities that Mr Bourman has referred to in his motion, and given the extraordinary financial contribution that many outdoor activities make, I wonder why we should not have an all-encompassing motion that refers to the myriad activities you can do in our great outdoors.

Mr Bourman talked about the general feel-good feeling of being in the outdoors, and we in the Greens absolutely concur with him on that point. We have a beautiful environment, and we love to enjoy it out there. We can enjoy it in many ways: walking, cycling, abseiling, rock climbing, hang-gliding, paragliding, photography, nature studies, orienteering, caving and mountaineering. Those of us who like to go into the forest can do some stag watching. We can try to find Leadbeater's possums living in some of the few remaining habitats in our forests. There is horseriding, skiing, swimming and mountain biking. For those vulcanologists out there, I draw the attention of the house to the Cerberean Caldera, located near Mount Donna Buang, the 370 million-year-old extinct volcano. I can assure the house that it is an extinct volcano. There are many activities that contribute to the economy of Victoria, and I would like to think that the house would take note of all of them. Many of those activities take place in our national parks.

I cannot concur with Mr Drum, who said that having more national parks means locking up Victoria, because having more national parks means there is more opportunity for Victorians to enjoy the great outdoors and get that general feel-good feeling that Mr Bourman referred to. I would even go so far as to speculate that perhaps we would have even more people participating in fishing, boating, camping and four-wheel driving if

they were not fearful of a bullet shooting by their ear while they were doing it.

With that, I would like to draw the attention of the house to an element of shooting that the Greens have a contention with, and that is in relation to duck shooting and the contribution it makes to our economy.

Mr Bourman referred to a study that talked about \$439 million being generated, which further indicated that \$106.3 million of that is strictly related to duck hunting. I certainly hope those figures have not been prepared with the same rigour as applied to those provided by the timber industry, which claims to employ 21 000 people, even though the Australian Bureau of Statistics census indicates that there are only 559 jobs in the forest and logging industry. I hope that these duck-related figures are in no way a reflection of how the government calculates its logging figures, because it would be quite distorted.

I would like to draw members attention to an analysis done by the Australia Institute in relation to duck hunting, which found that claims that duck hunting or any recreational hunting contributes significantly to the economy of Victoria are false. In making these claims the duck hunting lobby assumes that without hunting any related expenditure would be lost in Victoria. On the contrary, the analysis of the Australia Institute shows that if duck hunters were prevented from hunting ducks, they would go fishing, hunt other species or go camping, and that there would be no impact on expenditure in Victoria from a duck hunting ban.

Revenue from non-hunting tourism is far more important to Victoria's economy. I will certainly go on to speak about that a little bit more. In fact the analysis of the Australia Institute showed that people would be less likely to holiday in an area in which duck hunting took place. I wonder if the figures Mr Bourman quoted included certain concerned community members. Some in this chamber might label those community members protesters, but I like to refer to them as concerned community members. I am sure they contribute to fuel consumption and the four-wheel drive aftermarket industry. I do not think that is purely the domain of those people participating in those particular outdoor activities.

I am pleased to hear that socialising does go on during duck season. In fact the Greens would love it if duck season was 100 per cent socialising and there was no shooting. That would be a wonderful outcome for the health and wellbeing of our community. It would certainly build family connection, goodwill and good health at the same time.

In terms of the motion itself, I wonder whether the measures available are true measures or massaged figures. I will quote some real figures on the benefits of national parks. National parks contribute enormously to our state and certainly assist those rural and regional areas that desperately need it, which lends itself to point 2 of Mr Bourman's motion. We do not argue that rural and regional areas desperately need financial benefits, and certainly there are plenty of opportunities for them to gain those benefits, particularly through national parks and nature-based tourism.

I will highlight to members a 12-year-old study which found that in relation to the Grampians National Park there was a direct economic input of \$189.2 million and an additional contribution to the state of \$246 million. That study was done back in 2003, so today those figures would be far greater than that. If you add all of the benefits that our national parks contribute, they would have a far greater economic impact than the hunting industry.

I want to talk about the economic benefits of Parks Victoria, because there is a direct relationship in terms of the government employing people through Parks Victoria. For the period 2013–14 there were 200 employees in regional and metropolitan Victoria employed by Parks Victoria. The Greens assert that that is not enough because we do not have enough rangers on the ground in our national parks. In fact we are seeing some gates shut because Parks Victoria cannot maintain our national parks. That is a travesty, and it means that people cannot enjoy our parks to the great extent that they want to. The reality is that the total of 41 000 employees is an enormous amount of employment being generated through Parks Victoria alone. National parks support an extraordinary amount of activity in the tourism industry, including accommodation, tour operators, local restaurants, cafes and shops. There are enormous benefits to focusing on national parks.

Why is this motion limited to outdoor sports? Why does it not fully embrace nature-based tourism? Nature-based tourism is the way of the future and is certainly the way forward. It has the ability to grow Victoria because we have significant natural assets that people want to come and visit. People want to see what Victoria has got to offer. According to figures that were gathered by the National Parks Association of NSW, nature-based tourism brings \$23 billion into the Australian economy every single year. Tourism is one of the largest contributors to our economy, and much of it is derived from our national parks. Their contribution to our economy cannot be overstated.

In terms of Victorian national parks, in the year ending March 2014 the number of travellers who visited a state or national park increased by 8 per cent to 2.5 million, and it is estimated that nature-based tourism will increase by 10 to 30 per cent globally in the next decade. For those regional and rural areas that desperately need a vibrant economy, there is no doubt that nature-based tourism has an enormous role to play in securing financial viability for those areas.

I note that this motion looks at the financial contribution and social benefits associated with duck hunting, but it does not talk about the environmental benefits or costs. In modern-day accounting and in undertaking a cost-benefit analysis, you would do a triple-bottom-line assessment. Just because something makes money it does not mean it cuts it. Is there a social benefit and is there an environmental benefit? These are important considerations that are lacking in the motion at the moment.

In relation to the environment, there is enormous support for the Victorian government to expand and create national parks and conservation reserves, as shown in a recent survey that was conducted in October. Victorians do not see the expansion and creation of national parks by the government as locking up these areas; they see it as a benefit for the state. If we evaluate the environmental benefits in any cost-benefit analysis, we would factor in issues around water. We know that a pristine and healthy environment has an enormous impact on not only the water supply but also the water quality. In Melbourne we are fortunate because our forebears set aside enormous reserves for water catchment in our state. We have a great natural water system with some of the best water in the world. Any impact on that will be at significant cost to Melburnians and significant cost to the environment.

We know that Victoria has the most carbon-dense forests in the world. The mountain ash forests in the central highlands of Victoria contain more carbon than any forest anywhere. It is important that that value is appreciated. We know that the removal of vegetation has one of the highest impacts in relation to greenhouse gas emissions, so why would you want to remove vegetation when people love going to visit it? It is important to consider that impact. I am not a shooter — it is not what I do — but if I was playing around in the bush, I would like there to be some bush out there to be played in rather than just bare dirt. It is important to measure those environmental values as well.

Let us talk about the biodiversity outcomes in relation to an environmental assessment. Our national parks are really important as places providing refugia for wildlife.

Where does our wildlife go if there are no national parks, and where do we go to see our wildlife? I would hate to think that we would have to rely only on the Phillip Island Nature Park, as much as it does excellent work, as the only place we can see a koala because there were no forests left for koalas to live in. It is a really important part of the triple bottom line assessment.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms DUNN — I am not sure whether that was Mr Bourman or Mr Young, but I am saying that the environmental impact assessment is an important element when you are looking at the cost benefits to regional communities; it is a very important part of it. It would be remiss of me to say that a part of these environmental values is around assessing the protection of endangered species, and with that our own state fauna emblem, Leadbeater's possum. Those are all important considerations and should be part of any assessment that notes significant contribution.

I turn now to the value of tourism and a place that is very close to where I am. I see firsthand what happens in the area of the Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges. Tourism is valuable to communities and it fundamentally underpins the local community in that area, because people can go outdoors and have a full range of activities available to them. Mount Dandenong is an old volcano, so they probably will see an old volcano there, but in relation to what tourism means to that region of Victoria, \$1.01 billion was produced from tourism in the Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges, which equates to 13.4 per cent of gross regional product.

Those figures alone show that we can never turn our backs on the importance of tourism to regional areas. Tourism in the region also provided 10 400 employment positions, which amounted to 11.7 per cent of total regional employment. It is a significant employer and a significant contributor to the local economy and it needs to be accounted for in relation to this motion.

I am pleased to see that paragraph (3) of the motion notes the social benefits and positive impacts that these types of outdoor activities have on families. It is important that our families actually spend time with each other, out there in the great outdoors. I cannot think of anything better than to be outdoors with my family. There is no doubt, and there have been many studies into it, that parks play an integral role in providing the space to engage in activities that help form the social bonds and the social fabric that give us

value as human beings. It is important to note that those benefits come from our parks. It is an important element, and I am pleased to see it as part of this motion.

Another thing we cannot forget when we are talking about the great outdoors is the cultural value and recognition of Indigenous people, who have been living on this land for thousands of years. That is also an important part of the story of Victoria.

In terms of the last part of the motion that looks at recognising industry and organisations that encourage and promote outdoor activities, I particularly pay tribute to those organisations that currently work tirelessly to see the introduction of a great forest national park. A great forest national park would allow a whole range of outdoor activities and provide a range of economic advantages to those regions. It would be great to be able to encourage and promote those organisations, which include the Royal Society of Victoria, The Wilderness Society, the Victorian National Parks Association, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Earth, Places You Love.

Environment groups representing 1.4 million Australians include Humane Society International, Birdlife Australia, Environmental Justice Australia, Environment Victoria, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), MyEnvironment Inc., Warburton Environment, Friends of Leadbeater's Possum, Healesville Environment Watch Inc., Knitting Nannas of Toolangi, Yarra Riverkeepers Association, the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc., Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association, Bushwalking Victoria, Bushwalking Australia, Wildlife Victoria, Lawyers for Forests, Middle Yarra Landcare Network, Friends of Warrandyte State Park, Wonga Park Environment Group, Jumping Creek Catchment Landcare Group, Andersons Creek Catchment Area Landcare Group, Yarra Ranges Landcare Network, Monbulk Landcare, Upper Yarra Landcare, Thompsons Road Area Fireguard and Landcare Group, Southern Ranges Environment Alliance, Friends of Kurth Kiln, Friends of Gembrook Park, Say no to Ivy Group, Cardinia Hills Ragwort and Landcare Group, the Cockatoo Creek Conservation Group, Puffing Billy Railway and Johns Hill Landcare Group — a small handful of people who are incredibly active in relation to encouraging and promoting outdoor activities and quite specifically the great forest national park.

I agree with Mr Bourman when he talks about the double duty of providing income and jobs for people. It can be done very well. It can be done via nature-based tourism. It can be done not only with those activities

listed here but with much more, and it is a great way to secure the economic future of regional Victoria.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I have much pleasure in speaking to Mr Bourman's motion, and I do so like Mr Drum, as a proud rural Liberal member of this chamber and also as a man from the land, having been brought up on a farm and being active in outdoor pursuits since I was a child. That gives me an opportunity to relate a brief story in relation to my introduction to shooting and shotguns.

When I was born at the Freemasons Hospital, my father very excitedly raced down to Melbourne to see his new first son. He bought a shotgun on the way. It was a Merkel under and over shotgun. He proudly showed my mother his present, before she was able to show her present to him, being me, and so the gun came first. It has always been that way in my family ever since. We have very strong relationships with the Colac Gun Club and with Holt's there, which I am sure Mr Bourman would know, and also with the Winchelsea Gun Club, the members of which have helped us control many of the foxes and other vermin we have on our property. The drives we used to have every Sunday were a really great social experience.

I have been lucky enough to hike over most of the high country and alpine country and also to enjoy camping opportunities there. I have enjoyed learning about much of the history around Jamieson and the Lovick country. I feel somewhat blessed that through my school years I was able to enjoy that experience in the high country — at Feathertop, Buller and Stirling — as well as living on the land and knowing how important it is for everyone to have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.

I always run into trouble when I make a contribution after a member of the Greens has spoken. The trouble with the Greens is that there is no balance in their contributions; it is all or nothing. While the motion is fairly explicit in talking about the importance of shooting, fishing, boating, camping and four-wheel driving, I agree with Ms Dunn that there are other pursuits that can be enjoyed in the outdoors.

Nevertheless, the arguments of the Greens always turn to their philosophies of non-meat-eating lifestyles and locking up the national parks or allowing strict access so that people are not able to enjoy the opportunities they might well have. There is no mention of the fire prevention works and vermin control required in some of the national parks, where there is a requirement to remove some vegetation to reduce the risk of both the impact of vermin and the threat of bushfire. Unfortunately those things never provide a balance

when a member of the Greens makes a contribution to debate in this place on national parks or native vegetation.

However, I am on a very strict time limit to allow other speakers to contribute to the debate. I support all three paragraphs of the motion. It has been well said that a significant financial contribution is made by not only Australians but also our international visitors when visiting the outdoors and enjoying the sports there. All the little shops — from the takeaway shops to those selling bait and others selling outdoor products — along with Ray's Outdoors, BCF and Anaconda, which sell outdoor products, are creating wealth in small towns.

On the financial benefits to rural and regional areas, many little towns would not exist without tourism — that is, visitors and people travelling through them while engaging in outdoor pursuits, whether that be fishing, boating or shooting. The financial benefits in dollar terms have already been recognised.

The social benefits are very important. I encourage my children to get out into the outdoors regularly. As Ms Dunn said, it is important that as families we do things in the outdoors. Certainly camping is something that is easily enjoyed by families. It actually provides some social interaction rather than people being concerned with just iPhones, iPads, i-this and i-that. Camping provides an opportunity for families to share experiences and have social interaction without the interruption of modern technology. The first rule when we go camping is that we ditch all the technology by leaving it at home. We enjoy the campfire and the fishing and shooting — and some of the benefits of those pursuits in eating as well.

I agree that industries and organisations that promote outdoor activity, particularly in regional Victoria, should be supported. I know that the Shooters and Fishers Party has been active in developing policy plans that encourage governments to invest in those pursuits in a balanced and environmentally economic way that does not infringe on the rules of preservation of our environment but allows us all to enjoy the benefits of the outdoors. On that basis, I have great pleasure in supporting Mr Bourman's motion, and I commend it to the house.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I will speak briefly in support of this motion. In starting, I suggest that there would be no-one in this house and probably not even in this Parliament who has not enjoyed one or more of the many forms of outdoor sports and activities mentioned in

Mr Bourman's motion. One not mentioned is glamping, or glamorous camping, of which I am a fan — and if Ms Shing were here, I think she would agree with me.

We enjoy these activities all the more because we get to participate in them in the beautiful bush and countryside of Victoria. Only a week ago I spent the day in the forests of the Yarra Ranges, which is a beautiful part of our state and awesome country. I really enjoyed the break and being able to get away. As in so many other areas across Victoria, thousands of Victorians as well as many interstate and international visitors enjoy camping, fishing, four-wheel driving and numerous other activities in this beautiful environment.

In his initial statement Mr Bourman gave many statistics on the economic benefits across these areas. It was a really fascinating and well-researched statement. He pointed out that every week hundreds of towns and local communities across Victoria are visited by families, members of sporting clubs and social groups, and tourists. These groups are there to participate in one of the many sporting or other outdoor activities that are available to us all. On virtually every occasion these visits leave the towns and communities a little better off economically and a little better off for the social inclusion they provide.

Anything that contributes so much to the health and wellbeing of our fellow Victorians and to the communities they support should be actively encouraged and supported by the government elected by those same Victorians. We are all aware of the physical, social and economic damage caused by the problems of obesity, stress and other health issues associated with the pressures of our increasingly sedentary lifestyle. Governments at all levels are attempting to deal with these issues through more community engagement and by advocating for a healthier lifestyle.

Few things demonstrate a healthy lifestyle more than participation in sporting and other outdoor activities. It has long been understood that people who regularly participate in these kinds of activities are less likely to suffer from health problems than those who do not. At a time when we see our health services dealing with more and more stress-related illnesses and when the health and fitness of our children is at alarmingly low levels, anything that can be done to promote a healthier lifestyle should be encouraged.

I felt that the focus of Mr Bourman's motion was on the healthy impact on families of outdoor activities. It also directs our focus to something we should consider very closely. While many of us participate in and enjoy the

activities mentioned in this motion, we very rarely stop to consider the social and economic impact they have on our state. This motion is a very timely reminder of that. Mr Bourman has reminded us that while we are participating in the activities of our choice, whether it be four-wheel driving, camping, glamping, fishing or any of the dozens of other activities, we should not take for granted the freedom we have to do so here in Victoria and the availability and accessibility of the land and countryside in which we undertake those activities.

Maybe this motion would best be seen as the re-emergence of an issue that is often placed on the backburner by successive governments, an issue that does not get the real attention it deserves. It is often said that markets are guided by the wallets of consumers. We can also say that governments are guided by the actions of their constituents. I believe Mr Bourman is representing not only constituents but the groups that make up and speak for the participants in the many outdoor activities and sports referred to in this motion.

I encourage the government to look closely at this motion and the reasons why it has been brought before us today. I hope that something constructive comes out of our debate and that this is considered to be more than just a feel-good motion. I hope that broader actions and inquiries by the government could result in something positive for the countless Victorians and visitors to our state who participate in these activities. I am pleased to support this broad and far-reaching motion today.

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) — I rise today to speak on the motion put forward by my colleague Mr Bourman. It would come as no surprise to anyone that the Shooters and Fishers Party has moved a motion of this type, but some might argue about its importance, and they have argued about that with me. That is just the point. This motion is about demonstrating how important these things are to our way of life and to the great state of Victoria. The motion gives examples of fishing, shooting, four-wheel driving and camping. However, it encompasses a vast range of activities that can be enjoyed in the wilderness of Victoria. I have enjoyed listening to the contributions of other members on the things they do.

I started fishing at a very young age. My old man and I used to spend countless nights on the bay in a little timber boat with a putt putt motor that he called a clinker. We also had a property at Nagambie where I used to do a lot of freshwater fishing in channels and dams and things like that. However, I found my real passion was for shooting. I was a little bit older when I started that, and hunting with dad was always

something I really enjoyed. Target shooting followed that, and now that I have a bit of financial stability, collecting.

Over the years I have noticed that people spend a hell of a lot of money pursuing these activities, so much so that there have been several studies commissioned to determine just how much. One thing that is often examined is where this money flows. Again and again it is shown that people pursuing these activities spend a large portion of it in regional Victoria. It goes into small towns. There are two tiers to the cash flow from these activities. There is the money that is spent directly to participate — ammunition, bait, fuel, food, accommodation and other gear — and then there is the flow-on effect. There are small country businesses everywhere that benefit from the increased tourism and the sheer number of people who travel across Victoria for no other reason than to pursue their hobby.

The industries that are supported by this direct expenditure are quite numerous, and I could not list them all, but they include camping stores, gun shops, tackle shops, tyre dealers and other retail stores. Then there is the boating manufacture industry, which has a huge local industry potential. I believe the boatbuilding trade should be recognised in Victoria, and that is possibly something to talk about at a later date. Other industries include mechanics and vehicle maintenance and modification services, service stations, general stores and supermarkets. Even veterinarians benefit. You would not believe how well some gun dogs are looked after.

Then there is the local expenditure. I have just mentioned the shops and businesses in local areas, but the expenditure also extends to caravan parks, local pubs and restaurants, and there is a variety of flow-on effects for the towns in which this occurs. This happens all over the state and is concentrated in certain areas depending on the activity. For example, at the opening of the duck season there are convoys of people heading north to the Kerang wetlands, south to Geelong's Lake Connewarre State Game Reserve, east to Gippsland where the Field and Games Australia Heart Morass is located, or even west to Lake Toolondo which had a ripper season this year thanks to the government's action on delivering water.

I know all too well the stress and impatience during the height of snapper season when you encounter a back-up of boats waiting to use the Altona boat ramp that stretches for miles. This does not just happen at that location, it happens at boat ramps all around the Victorian coast. Keen fishermen attempt to escape work early one afternoon, only to find that it takes hours just

to get the damn boat in the water. Nonetheless, people from all over the state flock to the bay to go out to try their luck, and might I add that the fees for launching boats are not cheap.

While all of these Victorians are travelling across the state, near and far, they stop in those small regional towns. It was recently estimated — and, yes, I bring this up again — that hunting alone is worth more than \$439 million to Victoria. This was shown in a study commissioned by the former Victorian Department of Primary Industries in 2013, which left a few things out, in my opinion. It did not take into account the hunting of pests for mitigation purposes only and those who are listed as having a licence for primary production only were not surveyed, so the economic benefit and impact on their trade as farmers was not taken into account. This was recreational hunting only. As I said, hunting is worth \$439 million. It is an industry in itself.

We have not even begun to estimate how much Victorians spend on target shooting. For quite a few years I spent more on smashing clays than I did ducks, as you can do it all year round. That put a lot of pressure on my dad when he was financing me as a kid and then on me as an apprentice on pretty average wages. But we loved to do it, and nothing stopped us. The figure of \$439 million is not to be scoffed at, and it is growing every year. More people are getting involved, and the demographic is swinging to include a large number of women and children, which is absolutely fantastic to see and very encouraging. There are 200 000 or so licensed shooters who just love to spend money on their sport.

However, shooters are outnumbered by fishermen by nearly 4 to 1, and that will be 5 to 1 if the government has any measure of success with its Target One Million plan. It is a shame it has not adopted a similar policy to target 1 million shooters. Currently there are over 700 000 fishermen in Victoria, and their fishing habits are divided equally between marine fishing and inland fishing. Most of the marine fishing I have done has been in the bay, and as for inland fishing — guess where that happens? It is not in the city, it is in regional Victoria. It is not uncommon to see a tinnie being dragged up the highway as a few mates get away for the weekend or a family all packed into one car with several fishing rods poked awkwardly over the shoulder of one unlucky child. Fishermen are everywhere, and that is why in 2008–09 the estimated direct expenditure on fishing was \$2.3 billion.

It is very hard to argue that shooting is not a major contributor to the Victorian economy in its own right, but it is absolutely impossible to say that the fishing and

boating industries are not. The boating industry captures a wide range of people too. You have the little guy with his 10-foot tinnie that he might push out onto a lake or river to try his luck at a cod, and then you have the monstrous vessels that are taken offshore to partake in open-water fishing, vessels which often have a large range of bells and whistles hanging off them.

As a part of what I do as a shooter or a fisherman I use vehicles when I have to. When I go out onto a lake to shoot ducks I am in a boat. If I try to get into somewhere dangerous to shoot a deer, I am in a four-wheel drive. But there are many people who use those vehicles for their primary activity. Four-wheel driving is a growing sport, and I have a few mates who are becoming quite competitive. Many getaways are spent trekking across the high country in four-wheel drive vehicles on which there has been an enormous investment in equipment and accessories, an investment that was made in Victoria. How many people make the trip north for a camping weekend along the Murray to watch the Southern 80? That is another activity centred on how much money someone can pour into a boat to make it faster.

The social benefits of these activities are enormous. The first thing I think of when talking about social benefits is being happy — how happy it makes us to do these things. I am happy when I am out participating in these things, and I know everyone else around me is too. I look forward to getting out there, and the more I can do it the happier I am. There is the physical activity. I tend to lose a lot of weight during the hunting season, especially when we get a good quail season and there is a lot of walking, and I find it really beneficial. It does not matter what you are doing, whether it be walking through the bush; wading — there is a lot of wading; pulling up a big fish, which is quite strenuous; or even digging out your stuck four-wheel drive.

The most important thing I see as a social benefit is time spent with friends and family. Some of my most cherished memories are camping trips with my dad and all his mates, who I do not get to see a lot these days except on those trips. I look forward to being away just with that close group. I have a lot of cherished memories of being with my grandfather. I will always remember the time I spent with him, and that would not have happened apart from these activities.

Then there is the one we all need — time away from work. Something I hear quite often, especially being in this job, is ‘I can’t wait to get out of the city’. I have never really spent a lot of time in the city; I actually hate being in the city. I cannot stand it. It depresses me, so I hear often from people who say, ‘I just can’t wait to

get out of here and out into the country'. That is what it is all about: escaping the hustle and bustle of this kind of life.

These activities have a whole range of social benefits, and they also bring people together. There are clubs and organisations that bring people from everywhere. The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia has 33 000 members and over 17 branches, and Field and Game Australia has 17 000 members and 60 branches. I have a mile-long list of fishing clubs up in my office. I could not list them all, but so many people come together to share a common interest. There are other clubs for four-wheel driving, trail riding, fossicking — you name it, there is a club.

These are all things that make a better Victoria, a happier Victoria, a place where people will travel from all over the country to get a taste of what we have right at our back door. The government has the ability to influence all of this, and it does so quite often. Unfortunately it is often in a negative way, through restrictions and regulations that bring us closer to being the ultimate nanny state. People are discouraged from participating in many activities, and I do not believe it is right for the government to actively discourage participation in something that brings so many great things to the people of our state. Ultimately I would like to see a reduction in red tape and stupid regulations that may prevent someone from getting outside, being active and having a healthier and happier life.

Lastly, I will touch on Scouts Victoria, which is a wonderful organisation that actively engages 21 000 young Victorians in a wide range of outdoor activities that lead on to some of the recreational endeavours I have spoken about today. Children as young as six are getting out into the great outdoors, away from their computer, their iPad and social media, and are enjoying life. It would be a real shame if these kids grew up and gave up on those things they love doing because it was too expensive or simply too hard. The government can ensure that this does not happen.

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — I rise to speak on this motion, and I congratulate Mr Bourman for bringing this very important motion to the chamber. This motion is about our lifestyle in country Victoria, but it is also a motion about activities that are important economic drivers of the country Victorian economy.

In country Victoria our young people do not have the MCG in their backyard so that they can go to the footy every weekend. They do not have the galleries they can visit that metropolitan people do. Getting out into the outdoors is what our young people do, and it is what a

few of us older people do as well. Whether it be getting out onto the Goulburn, the Murray, Lake Eildon, Lake Mulwala or Lake Eppalock, or into the high country or Strathbogies, or into the Barmah or Gunbower forest, the outdoors is our backyard, and that is where our people go on the weekend.

Outdoor sport is very important to the lifestyle of country Victorians, but it is also very important to our economy. It not only drives local tourism with visitors from Melbourne and elsewhere but also provides a great opportunity for people to come and see our regions more broadly. They then often come back for other reasons. Whether it be four-wheel driving, riding trail bikes, skiing on either water or snow, driving speedboats, camping, fishing, hunting, bushwalking or birdwatching in country Victoria, these are the activities we participate in and that people from Melbourne and elsewhere enjoy. They come to our region and drive our economy through tourism by participating in these activities.

Ms Dunn mentioned there were 2.5 million visitors to Victoria's national parks and state parks in the year ending March 2014. A vast majority of them probably participated in the types of activities that I have outlined. The economic activity is more than just tourism. It drives local employment, and we have some wonderful facilities. To see how important outdoor life is to country Victorians you only need to see the shops in country Victoria that are there to service this type of activity. The favourite for my nephews is Trelly's Fishing & Hunting World in Shepparton. Trelly is a hero in our household and has been a good friend of mine since we were teenagers. But you also see the big stores that have started up: the BCFs and Ray's Outdoors. They would not be there unless people really enjoyed these activities and wanted to get out into the outdoors.

We see Boats and More Shepparton, which is another great facility that sells speedboats for people who are on the Murray or up at Eildon. The houseboat hire activity on Lake Eildon drives the economy around the Eildon area. The bait shops, takeaway shops, pubs and restaurants benefit from this tourism, as do the caravan parks, motels, service stations and many more.

Outdoor sports are an important part of our lifestyle and economy in country Victoria. I thank Mr Bourman for bringing this motion to the house. The debate has enabled us to convey to the city members of Parliament just how important these activities are to those of us who live in regional Victoria.

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — It is clear from the contributions to the debate today that most people agree with the content and spirit of my motion, and it is clear that pretty well everyone has a connection to the outdoors in one way or another. I will not thank everyone, but I want to give the Greens a bit of a thankyou for the lengthy and ultimately irrelevant discourse on my motion.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

Budget update: report 2014–15

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I rise to make a contribution on the budget update 2014–15. In doing so, I want to draw attention to a number of key aspects, particularly matters around the planning portfolio and the regulation of our building system, our building practices and our building codes. Building is a very important part of our economy. It is the largest employer in our economy, and it is critical to providing housing for our population, with the aim of providing safe housing that is affordable, available and of a sufficient variety that all different types, sizes and variations of families are able to find suitable accommodation at a reasonable cost.

I note the recent occurrences where the risks of inappropriate building practices have come to the fore in relation to the Lacrosse building site in Docklands. This is a major point that our community needs to focus on. We need to have a system where not only do we have products that are of a sufficient standard and reliability, whether they are manufactured locally or brought into the country, but we also have testing facilities in place that are of sufficient quality to enable the assurance of products of the type that are used in our construction industry. We need to have the architecture and design capacity to make sure that buildings are designed in such a way that they use products of that reliable and sufficient quality, as I have outlined. We then need to have builders who are capable, appropriately qualified, appropriately registered and able to use those products and build to a design in a reliable format.

We need also to have in place appropriate surveying. I pay tribute to the work of building surveyors and note the vital role they play in our building system statewide. The certification of building steps that is inherent in the work they do and the guarantees they provide mean we need to ensure that their capacities and qualities are also up to the task.

I note the series of issues involved in the Lacrosse building fire and the terrible problems that occurred there. There were items on one of the balconies which led to the risk of a fire starting on that balcony. There were subsequent matters that occurred in terms of the fire itself which proved to be a challenge for the firefighters to manage.

I note the letter sent in recent months to registered building practitioners by the CEO of the Victorian Building Authority, Prue Digby. It is an important piece of correspondence. I know that steps have been launched to review perhaps 170 buildings in total, and that set of steps is entirely appropriate and important in ensuring that what has been built is safe. I note also that the cladding under discussion with respect to the Lacrosse building needs to be of the type that is suitable for purpose. It needs to be certified by the appropriate testing laboratories, and there needs to be in place proper design and construction steps to ensure that buildings are able to be built to the appropriate quality.

It is important that we ensure that this is not about one particular brand. This is about the quality of all of these products and the quality of the system that is in place to ensure that we are able to guarantee a high quality of construction.

I welcome some of the steps. I note that regulatory gaps may well be exposed, and I know that federal and state ministers are going to need to work their way through these points. These are critical steps — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! Mr Davis's time has expired.

Auditor-General: *Technical and Further Education Institutes* — 2014 Audit Snapshot

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) — We are experiencing an economy in the middle of a transition. There are a number of reasons for that, as has been discussed in debate on a number of motions in this house over the past few weeks. One is the terms of trade going into a period of rapid decline, which is changing the investment patterns across the economy. Another is trade opportunities with Asia, and another is changing consumer demand patterns. There are also changes to the macroeconomic environment, such as the declining dollar and downward pressure on interest rates. Together they all lead to a change in employment patterns across the economy and to the realistic expectation that we will continue to see changing employment patterns. What this means is that we need a vital and strong training system from high school

right through the vocational education and training (VET) sector and higher education.

This is a really important report in that context. What it says is that there are some serious challenges in the TAFE sector, which is a core element of the VET sector. One of the core conclusions of this audit snapshot for 2014 is that there was a further deterioration in the financial performance of the TAFE sector in 2014. In particular, of the 10 TAFEs that provided financial reports for this report, there was a combined net deficit of \$84.3 million in 2014 compared to a combined net deficit of \$15.1 million across the sector in 2013.

Digging down further beneath those headline figures, there were six TAFEs that were assessed by the Victorian Auditor-General as having high financial sustainability risks and short-term challenges that needed to be addressed. In addition, there were nine TAFEs that were identified as having longer term financial sustainability risks. I will quote a sentence from that report. The Auditor-General concluded:

While some steps have been taken by the sector to respond to the structural changes, bigger steps are needed by TAFE boards and the Department of Education and Training to turn around the financial decline within the sector.

Bigger change is needed. It is worth noting that the report says, at page 7, that following the 2014 election significant changes occurred and significant additional funding entered the pipeline. It is noted that following the election new funding of \$320 million over five years was announced. That included \$20 million which had been injected as a priority — an urgent injection that had been allocated by 31 December 2014. That represented a response by the government to the core financial weakness in the sector and to the deteriorating position that had been identified by the Auditor-General.

It is also worth noting a couple of other conclusions in the report. The Auditor-General concluded that some positive changes had occurred in relation to performance reporting — for example, moving away from measuring TAFE performance against a suite of mandated indicators across all institutions. However, the Auditor-General also said:

Performance reporting could be further improved by setting KPIs for all strategic objectives.

In addition, then, to providing more money — better funding — we need to continue to strengthen the performance reporting environment of the TAFE sector.

Another element of the financial risk management and evaluation processes that the Auditor-General examined was the risk management systems that the various TAFEs had in place. The Auditor-General identified a number of ways in which those risk management processes could be strengthened. This is therefore not just about better funding, as much as that is necessary to improve the sector; a number of recommendations relating to performance reporting and risk management are important to note. I applaud the reporting of the financial status of the TAFE sector. The core finding — —

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

Auditor-General: *Operational Effectiveness of the myki Ticketing System*

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I will make a statement today about the Victorian Auditor-General's report entitled *Operational Effectiveness of the myki Ticketing System* of June 2015. The top-secret business case that led to the \$1.5 billion myki mess promised a cost-effective and faultless system that would potentially allow for new time-of-use fares. This business case spruiked disposable short-term tickets and said that smart cards would eventually be used to pay for car parking, gallery admission fees and even some school costs.

What was promised was: there would be disposable short-term tickets for tourists and non-regular users — the system failed there; there would be ticket and top-up machines on transport similar to the Metcard system — it failed there; cards would be able to be used to pay for parking and museum entry fees in the future — it failed there; smart cards would provide \$4 million to \$5 million in added revenue every year — it failed there; the cards would allow people to touch on in 0.4 seconds — it failed there; the government could increase fares easily and without fanfare — it did not allow the government to do that; the system could be used to create peak and off-peak fares — it failed there; the system could be introduced in 2007 — it failed there; and the rollout would take 6 to 12 months — and it failed there.

The bungled document predicted that a new smart card ticketing system would cost \$753.6 million, although the authors admitted that final figures were hard to predict. When the smart card contract was signed in 2005, its budget was almost \$1 billion, which eventually blew out to over \$1.5 billion. Consultants and executives from the then Transport Ticketing Authority said the smart card would be easy to use and

reliable. The business case is reported to have said, 'In short, it would substantially improve the customer experience'. I would ask people on the public transport system if they think that is true.

The consultants and executives did acknowledge the potential for slippage in the rollout timeline, which was supposed to start in metropolitan areas in January 2007 but did not begin until late 2009. The document was written in April 2004, two months after the then Minister for Transport, Peter Batchelor, endorsed smart cards. The government made a decision to go ahead with something and then wrote the business case. Labor has form on this.

Let me tell members what the Victorian Auditor-General said in his report:

The implementation of myki experienced significant delays and related cost increases, due largely to deficiencies in the original contract and governance arrangements.

This has resulted in a poor outcome for Victoria's public transport system and users, which has compromised achievement of myki's original business case objectives and related benefits.

The overly ambitious and vaguely specified initial project scope and contract for myki contributed to this outcome.

These deficiencies meant the state was not in a position to assure it was paying for a ticketing system that met clearly articulated and agreed performance standards — particularly during the initial build and rollout.

If members look across the globe at other smart cards, they will see that Hong Kong delivered its Octopus card in three years, Perth its SmartRider card in four years, Houston its Q card in five years, London its Oyster card in six years and the Netherlands its OV-chipkaart in seven years. In Victoria it took nine years, and those opposite still have not got it right. This is a typical bungled Labor project. We have seen plenty of them. It was a disaster, and it continues to be one. It is just like the desalination plant, which Victorians are paying \$1.8 million every single day for — another bungled Labor project. Labor spent \$640 million not to build a road in this state — not to build a road — such is the hypocrisy, something Mr Dalidakis talks about, of the Labor Party. Everything Labor touches it stuffs up. This has been a total mess in Victoria — a mess the Labor Party started, yet it denies responsibility for fixing it.

Myki, the desalination plant, the north-south pipeline — Daniel Andrews, the Premier, is building a state of white elephants, and this is another example of Labor's mismanagement. Labor members cannot manage money, they cannot manage projects and they cannot manage the Victorian economy. They sit there

and say not a word about this. They started it, they stuffed it up and they should fix it. It is about time they put their hand on their hearts and said, 'They were wrong. They need to look the people of Victoria in the eye and say, 'We will fix it'. Right now Daniel Andrews, Tim Pallas, the Treasurer, and Jacinta Allan, the Minister for Public Transport, are deficient in their jobs, and they owe Victorians.

Auditor-General: *Operational Effectiveness of the myki Ticketing System*

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) report tabled in Parliament, *Operational Effectiveness of the myki Ticketing System*. We are all aware of the myki ticketing system's chequered history, so I read the report with genuine interest. The rest of the developed world has a transport smart card system, so it was inevitable that Victoria would eventually follow suit. There has been much criticism of the myki card since its introduction in 2012 — most of it probably deserved. On reading the report I see that overcharging has been the single most common complaint from myki users since its rollout. The operational performance of myki has also attracted significant complaint from users. The previous system, Metcard, was also fraught with problems — hence the move to a system of operation that would better serve Victorian commuters.

I think we need to go back in time and get a picture of how public transport users used to get around Melbourne and country Victoria. For about 80 years the travelling public was used to a conductor and cash payments on the day of travel. It was a culture shock for most people to have to pre-plan their method of payment for public transport. If you asked the average person in the street their preference, I know they would say to bring the conductors back. But that would be turning back the clock. In today's world of automation and growing population, it is imperative that we move with the rest of the developed world and adapt ourselves to changing times.

A review of myki took place in late 2010 to determine its future. The coalition government decided to stick with myki, but the modifications made to myki's original scope further extended its delivery time frames and changed the way the state pays for the system. The current myki contract is due to expire in June 2016, with an option to extend it for a further six months, to December 2016. Public Transport Victoria is currently planning the myki re-tender, which it expects to complete by November 2016. While the VAGO report states that the cost of myki has been significantly higher than expected, it also says Public Transport Victoria has

improved oversight and management of the myki contractor.

While myki is still plagued by delays and the travelling public is not altogether happy with being overcharged — nor should it be — ongoing improvements to the system are necessary to its survival. The myki re-tender is due next year, so it is imperative that myki take up and implement the Auditor-General's recommendations. To this end I fully support the recommendations of the VAGO report.

Auditor-General: Operational Effectiveness of the myki Ticketing System

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I am very pleased to rise this afternoon and speak to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) report *Operational Effectiveness of the myki Ticketing System* of June 2015. From the contributions we have heard in the chamber over the last 15 minutes or so, and the interjections from government benches, it is clear this is a very important report. It highlights the many failings of this ticketing system, which has a very long and sad history.

The Auditor-General's report makes reference to a number of previous reports examining the myki system: the Victorian Ombudsman's 2011 *Own Motion Investigation into ICT-enabled Projects*, conducted jointly with VAGO; the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's 2012 *Inquiry into Effective Decision Making for the Successful Delivery Of Significant Infrastructure Projects*; and related internal reviews undertaken by the Department of Treasury and Finance in 2011 and 2014. That says an enormous amount about the state of the myki ticketing system when the coalition came to government in late 2010. It was a complete and utter mess. It was plagued with significant and real concerns, not only financial but operational as well.

The Auditor-General has referred to a number of those concerns in this report, including those relating to performance. The report also highlights the 'poor initial planning' that resulted in 'myki's original scope and contract being vaguely specified and overly ambitious'. Those remarks are in the opening comments. The report goes on to talk about the cost of developing myki. This is where I think Victorians were absolutely horrified at the actions of the former Labor government, which could not manage a project. This was one of the ICT projects that blew out under Labor by a most extraordinary amount. It was budgeted for around \$494 million and blew out to over \$1.5 billion. It is an extraordinary amount of money — a billion dollars

blown because Labor could not get this right at the outset, and that is because it has a very poor record in managing projects and in managing money.

Mr Elasmr spoke about the significant complaints from consumers, and many other ticketing systems around the world are far simpler, are better understood by commuters and would have been far cheaper. We have all experienced problems with the myki ticketing system, and when in opposition the then shadow Minister for Public Transport, Fiona Richardson, called on the government to rethink its decision to scrap the short-term tickets and rip ticket vending machines out of trams. In December 2012 she said:

The Liberal government's decision to remove single-use tickets will leave commuters with no fallback option and will make the transition to myki even more difficult.

In the same month she called on the Liberal government to:

... reverse this ridiculous decision to remove single-use tickets.

Now Labor is in government — and this is typical and a very common theme with Labor governments — it says one thing before the election and then does another. In March 2015 in the *Herald Sun* the now Labor government disclosed the following:

The Labor government says it won't bring back single-use tickets or return ticket machines to trams, despite arguing strongly for that to happen when in opposition.

This is becoming and a tedious and common theme — the government says one thing in opposition and, for political purposes, says another in government. It is very deceitful for the Victorian community.

The *Herald Sun* article states further:

The state government ... confirmed that it was not considering reintroducing single-use tickets or the machines on trams to buy them.

Again the coalition was left with this dreadful debacle of a ticketing system. It undertook significant reform to get it to where it is. It is not a legacy of the former coalition government, it is a legacy of Labor. It cannot manage money, and it cannot manage projects.

Auditor-General: Palliative Care

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Victorian Auditor-General's report into palliative care in Victoria — a very important component of our health care system. The concept of dying and death can be a very confronting prospect for a person suffering with a terminal illness and also for

their loved ones, doing their utmost to care for them as best they can. For the sufferer, fully understanding their prognosis, considering the options and deciding what kind of care they would prefer can be extremely emotional and at times complex.

In Victoria about 36 000 people die each year. This figure is predicted to double in the next 25 years. Of this figure, about half will die following a period of chronic illness, including cancer, stroke, heart disease and neurological disease. Patients suffering from these chronic illnesses with a terminal prognosis would receive the most benefit from the palliative care program. Through managing pain and distressing symptoms, the palliative care program in Victoria aims to improve the quality of life of patients, making it easier to make the necessary decisions about how patients want to be cared for as they die. We have all seen a family member or friend who unfortunately has needed to receive palliative care, and despite the heartache that accompanies this situation, I am sure all members would agree that the way in which palliative care is provided is extremely supportive, especially in the way patients transition through the services.

Victoria upholds the World Health Organisation's definition of palliative care, which is intended neither to hasten nor postpone death. In Victoria palliative care services are provided across a range of services, with the majority of services provided in community settings. The report states:

With the population ageing and the need for palliative care on the rise, health services and community palliative care organisations face increasing pressure to manage the often complex needs of patients, their carers and families. There is also a shift in preference for palliative care to be provided in the home.

This will require further coordination in the future.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) plays an essential part in ensuring that the palliative care sector is prepared for these increased projections. I will refer to a few key findings which the report has uncovered. It found that DHHS further clarified its priorities in 2011 in its strategic directions; however, progress in some areas has been slow, and problems with its performance monitoring framework make it difficult for DHHS to meaningfully track and report on how effectively these objectives have been implemented. It also found that the demands on health services and community palliative care organisations are escalating. The community sector and inpatient hospital services are being forced to become more agile to accommodate people's wishes, in particular when their final wish is to die comfortably at home.

The report states that patients should be supported to die in their place of choice, be that in hospital or in their home. The provision of palliative care services at home is more cost-effective than in hospital. However, some metropolitan community palliative care services are struggling to cope with increasing demand. This means that some patients cannot access palliative services in their home, and this combined with increasing stress on carers at the end of life can result in people spending their last days in their less preferred and more expensive hospital setting. The report also states that there is more that could be done for carers and families. Further work is needed to ensure that carers and families can access support at critical times.

Whilst Victoria is a leader in providing effective and supportive palliative care in Australia it is important that we continue to offer this essential service in the future and address the report's findings. It is important that DHHS sets clear expectations for delivery of palliative care services across Victoria and provides the necessary funding to health services and community organisations to ensure that people who wish to die at home are able to do so.

I commend this report to the house.

Auditor-General: Operational Effectiveness of the myki Ticketing System

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Victorian Auditor-General's report into the operational effectiveness of the myki ticketing system, to commend his recent report into myki and to talk about the debacle that has been the introduction of Victoria's smart card ticketing system.

Like many Victorians, I have been an exasperated observer of the rollout of myki. Unfortunately the Auditor-General's report comes as no surprise to me, nor to the long-suffering public transport users of Melbourne. The evidence of the mess is stark, and it is spread over 10 years. Completion was three and a half years overdue. There was a \$550 million cost blowout, which is 55 per cent over budget. The public transport ombudsman was swamped with over 5400 complaints. Technical problems destroyed public confidence in the system and led to many people being overcharged, including as recently as a couple of weeks ago, when one poor commuter was facing a \$2.7 million myki commute bill. The cause is said to be deficiencies in contract and governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities not being well defined or implemented, poorly defined functional performance requirements and unrealistic delivery time frames.

The Auditor-General's report card is clear: it was a fail. The report card reads like a case study from the appendix of a Management 101 textbook called *How to Stuff Up a Public Transport Ticketing System*. The question is: what has the government learnt from this experience? The Auditor-General points to major problems in inter-agency coordination. He points to the decision to keep the myki business case secret under cabinet-in-confidence conventions. The business case is the foundation document in a major project like this. It is where the operational functions are detailed and modelled. It is like trying to build a rocket where the first step is to lock the design plans in a safe and throw away the key and the second step is to let three government agencies come up with their own design plans and then see what happens.

The Auditor-General points out that the implementation of myki occurred alongside rolling reviews of ticketing and reviews of myki itself. Indeed reports into the dangers and pitfalls of automated fare collection dating back to the early 1990s should have paved the way for a much better system — lessons that should have been learnt from when Metcard was implemented in the 1980s. In the 1998 Metcard review the Auditor-General found that:

... the decision to fast-track Metcard's implementation resulted in a failure to properly analyse the system's costs and benefits, and set unrealistic milestones, leading to delays.

The Auditor-General has reflected on the results of four other reviews of myki since 2011. These earlier myki reports all found the same problems, with roles and responsibilities not being clearly defined. These reviews found that the original contract was large, complex and outcomes based. In all this mess something is crystal clear. The government has not learnt from the past, and secrecy in major projects produces problems.

The Auditor-General finds that the cabinet-in-confidence veil of secrecy around the original myki business case and the secrecy surrounding all major project business cases is a dominant cause of problems. He notes that the Department of Treasury and Finance itself wrote to the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 2012 asking for all major project business cases to be exempted from cabinet-in-confidence conventions. The Department of Treasury and Finance is yet to receive a response.

Far from providing the standard we all expect, the government is like a goldfish in a fish bowl. Victorians are watching the government swimming around in the bowl, banging into the same rock time and again, and the rock it is banging into is cabinet confidentiality. In

particular the Greens hope the Auditor-General's warnings in relation to the re-tendering of myki in less than 12 months will convert into an upgrade in management techniques within Public Transport Victoria.

But we deserve more than hope; we want to know what the government is planning to do in a systemic way to ensure that the project management disasters of myki do not happen again. In particular, will the government release the original myki business case to Public Transport Victoria so it can manage the re-tendering process with a complete set of foundation documents? Or will Public Transport Victoria have to source the documents directly from the *Herald Sun* due to cabinet confidentiality conventions?

Supreme Court of Victoria: report 2013–14

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to take the opportunity to speak on the *Supreme Court of Victoria 2013–14 Annual Report*. I congratulate Chief Justice Marilyn Warren, the judiciary in both the criminal and civil divisions, and court staff — judicial, administrative, security and others — on the many achievements that are highlighted in this very interesting report. I congratulate them on their dedication to addressing the many challenges the court has faced and continues to face.

As I mentioned, this report is very interesting, and I recommend it to all members of Parliament and members of the community if they want to know what the Supreme Court does and how it does it. Of particular significance are the reforms to criminal appeals in the Court of Appeal and preparations for the implementation of similar reforms for civil appeals. Alternative dispute resolution provided by associate judges has been very important in providing litigators and the public with a faster resolution of cases at no cost. This saves time that would otherwise be taken up by judges in the preparation of judgements.

A highlight of the report was to read about the activities of the Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Committee, chaired by Justice Kaye, which was established to address two recommendations from the 1991 report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The committee, in conjunction with the Judicial College of Victoria, seeks to educate judicial officers about the cultural and socio-economic issues that affect Aboriginal people who come before the courts.

Another highlight of the report was to read about the development of the Law Library of Victoria. In 2014,

after a year of collaborative effort toward combined purchasing, the four jurisdictions authorised the law library to negotiate and manage annual subscriptions on behalf of the courts. This is a landmark achievement and the first realisation of what is envisaged in the creation of a law library. It is being achieved through the combined efforts of the court's administration and the judiciary, and it continues to be a focus for the director, with further benefits anticipated in the year ahead.

The report outlines future challenges that exist for the court in criminal matters arising from changes to the sentencing regime introduced by the previous government. The introduction of baseline sentencing is likely to impact on the sentencing discretion that the law commits to judges, the court's approach to non-parole periods, the interplay between head sentences and non-parole periods, and the classification of the seriousness of offences during plea hearings. Fixed sentences and the removal of sentencing consideration of mitigating circumstances may also increase the disincentive to plead. As a consequence there is likely to be an increase in the prison population and in correction costs, fewer guilty pleas and more delays and greater complexities in both the trial and sentencing stages.

A continuing challenge for the criminal division is the increased workload presiding over major reviews and applications made under the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997, which has effectively doubled with 14 matters in 2009–10 and 28 matters in this reporting year. This is of concern since such cases require considerable marshalling of judicial and other resources. The criminal division cannot function without an adequate number of judicial officers or without appropriate facilities to meet such rising demands.

Under 'Remarks of the Chief Justice', the chief justice is quoted in the report as saying:

Again I mention the Supreme Court building. Court Services Victoria will provide a strategic opportunity for the Supreme Court of Victoria to promote its case for the commitment by government to a major project, namely, a new Supreme Court building. Nothing has changed from previous years and problems remain with lack of security, inadequate arrangements for the public and the unnecessary constraints placed on the management of electronic trials.

Ultimately a new Supreme Court building is needed. I take this opportunity to thank again the chief justice and the judges of the Supreme Court for a tour that some of us went on earlier in the year. If you visit the court, you can see some of the problems outlined in the report by the chief justice. Pages 20 to 23 of the report outline an

architectural design for a new Supreme Court. I urge the government to work closely with the court in overcoming the many challenges highlighted in the Supreme Court's annual report, particularly in relation to repealing some of the ill-advised changes to sentencing introduced by the previous government, increasing judicial resources, supporting a new Supreme Court building and continuing to support the court's achievements in the administration of justice.

STATE TAXATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Assembly's amendments

Returned from Assembly with message agreeing to following Council's suggested amendments:

1. Heading to clause 15, omit "3E" and insert "3F".
2. Clause 15, page 23, line 9, omit "circumstances." and insert "circumstances."
3. Clause 15, page 23, after line 9 insert —
 - “(3) At least once every 6 months the Treasurer must cause to be laid before each House of Parliament, and publish on an appropriate government website, a report setting out —
 - (a) in respect of the exemptions (if any) granted by the Treasurer under subsection (2) during the period covered by the report —
 - (i) the number of exemptions; and
 - (ii) the name of each foreign corporation or foreign trust in relation to which an exemption was granted; and
 - (iii) the value of each exemption, being the amount of duty foregone, or likely to be foregone, by the State because of the exemption; and
 - (b) in respect of the exemptions (if any) granted by the Commissioner or a member of staff of the State Revenue Office during the period covered by the report under a delegation under section 3F —
 - (i) the number of exemptions; and
 - (ii) the total value of the exemptions, being the total amount of duty foregone, or likely to be foregone, by the State because of the exemptions.
- (4) The Treasurer must issue guidelines for the exercise of the power of exemption under subsection (2).

- (5) The Treasurer must cause guidelines issued under subsection (4) to be published in the Government Gazette.
- (6) Guidelines issued under subsection (4) are not a legislative instrument within the meaning of the **Subordinate Legislation Act 1994**.”.”.
4. Clause 15, page 23, after line 9 insert —
- “3F Delegation of exemption power**
- (1) The Treasurer may delegate, by instrument, to the Commissioner —
- (a) the power of the Treasurer to exempt a person under section 3E(2);
- (b) the power to delegate the power delegated under paragraph (a).
- (2) If power has been delegated under subsection (1)(b), the Commissioner may, subject to the terms of the instrument of delegation, sub-delegate, by instrument, to a member of staff of the State Revenue Office the power that is the subject of the delegation, other than the power of sub-delegation.
- (3) Subject to subsection (4), sections 42 and 42A of the **Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984** apply in relation to a sub-delegation in the same manner as they apply in relation to a delegation.
- (4) Despite section 42A(1)(a) of the **Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984**, the Treasurer cannot exercise the power to exempt a person under section 3E(2) while a delegation under subsection (1)(a) is in effect.
- (5) In this section —
- member of staff of the State Revenue Office* means —
- (a) an employee referred to in section 67 of the **Taxation Administration Act 1997**; or
- (b) a consultant or contractor engaged under section 68 of that Act.”.”.
5. Heading to clause 26, omit **“and 3B”** and insert **“to 3C”**.
6. Clause 26, page 31, line 13, omit **“circumstances.”** and insert **“circumstances.”**.
7. Clause 26, page 31, after line 13 insert —
- “(3) At least once every 6 months the Treasurer must cause to be laid before each House of Parliament, and publish on an appropriate government website, a report setting out —
- (a) in respect of the exemptions (if any) granted by the Treasurer under subsection (2) during the period covered by the report —
- (i) the number of exemptions; and
- (ii) the name of each corporation in relation to which an exemption was granted; and
- (iii) the value of each exemption, being the amount of land tax foregone, or likely to be foregone, by the State because of the exemption; and
- (b) in respect of the exemptions (if any) granted by the Commissioner or a member of staff of the State Revenue Office during the period covered by the report under a delegation under section 3C —
- (i) the number of exemptions; and
- (ii) the total value of the exemptions, being the total amount of land tax foregone, or likely to be foregone, by the State because of the exemptions.
- (4) The Treasurer must issue guidelines for the exercise of the power of exemption under subsection (2).
- (5) The Treasurer must cause guidelines issued under subsection (4) to be published in the Government Gazette.
- (6) Guidelines issued under subsection (4) are not a legislative instrument within the meaning of the **Subordinate Legislation Act 1994**.”.”.
8. Clause 26, page 31, after line 13, insert —
- “3C Delegation of exemption power**
- (1) The Treasurer may delegate, by instrument, to the Commissioner —
- (a) the power of the Treasurer to exempt an absentee person under section 3B(2);
- (b) the power to delegate the power delegated under paragraph (a).
- (2) If power has been delegated under subsection (1)(b), the Commissioner may, subject to the terms of the instrument of delegation, sub-delegate, by instrument, to a member of staff of the State Revenue Office the power that is the subject of the delegation, other than the power of sub-delegation.
- (3) Subject to subsection (4), sections 42 and 42A of the **Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984** apply in relation to a sub-delegation in the same manner as they apply in relation to a delegation.
- (4) Despite section 42A(1)(a) of the **Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984**, the Treasurer cannot exercise the power to exempt an absentee person under section 3B(2) while a delegation under subsection (1)(a) is in effect.
- (5) In this section —

member of staff of the State Revenue Office
means —

- (a) an employee referred to in section 67 of the **Taxation Administration Act 1997**; or
- (b) a consultant or contractor engaged under section 68 of that Act.”.”.

Committed.

Committee

Resumed from 23 June; further discussion of postponed heading to clause 15.

Amended heading agreed to; postponed amended clause 15 agreed to; postponed amended heading to clause 26 agreed to; postponed amended clause 26 agreed to.

Reported to house without further amendment.

Report adopted.

Third reading

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

That the bill be now read a third time.

In doing so, I thank all members for their considered contributions, in particular the outstanding contribution of the acting chair of committees, who led us through the most efficient committee stage I have ever enjoyed in my life.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

**APPROPRIATION (2015–2016) BILL 2015
and BUDGET PAPERS 2015–16**

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 June; motion of Mr HERBERT (Minister for Training and Skills) and motion of Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children):

That the Council take note of the budget papers 2015–16.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — I am very pleased to make a brief contribution to the debate on the budget for 2015–16. Victoria needs economic stability and innovation, and I am just not certain that this budget provides it. With optimistic growth assumptions and robust revenue predictions, this budget pins its

hope on the best possible outcome as it relates to the state’s finances. Whilst I am heartened by the government’s optimism, I have concerns that it will only take a small piece of the Jenga puzzle to be pulled at the wrong moment for it to all come crashing down. A projected budget surplus of \$1.2 billion is not enough of a buffer to help this state if things go awry. It is a \$1 billion side letter.

This budget predicts that the state’s economy will grow from 2.25 per cent to 2.5 per cent — just 0.25 per cent — that unemployment will continue to fall, that inflation will average out at just 2.6 per cent and that population growth will remain steady at 1.8 per cent. It predicts expenditure growth at 3 per cent. I ask the Treasurer: what if it does not? Where will the surplus be then? As a small business operator I am concerned about these narrow margins. For example, we do not know how many exemptions the State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill 2015 will cost the budget’s bottom line. History tells us that rosy first budget predictions of a new government are hardly ever correct. If Mr Pallas and the Premier are on the money on all these indicators, I will be very happy of course, but I will also be surprised.

Whilst I am shaky on some of this budget’s predictions, I am very pleased to see a good deal for the people I represent in Northern Metropolitan Region. I applaud the government for making investments in this important region, which is helping to drive our state’s economic growth. New schools are to be built in Richmond and Mernda, while technical schools are being delivered in Whittlesea and Banyule councils. Schools being upgraded as a result of this budget include Brunswick and Greensborough secondary colleges; Carlton, Clifton Hill and Mill Park Heights primary schools; and Northcote and Preston high schools. The TAFE Rescue Fund has promised significant funding to the Melbourne Polytechnic in Preston and RMIT University.

Victoria Police and emergency services have been strengthened through this budget, and it is good to see the government keeping its election promises in this area. I note there is more money for our state’s firefighters, who do such an amazing job. The investment of \$15 million for the Mernda police station is vital and welcome. However, the allocation of \$15 million for new booze and drug buses as part of the well-meaning *Ice Action Plan* is misguided. It will not have any impact on the use of drugs in this state. One might question why the investment is not just for drug buses, seeing that alcohol seems not to be part of the *Ice Action Plan*.

The government is not looking at the facts in this area anyway. What this state needs is investment in treatment and prevention, and while I appreciate that some funds have been invested in drug treatment and support for families, the \$15 million should have been invested there and not in law enforcement. I call on the government to rethink its approach. There is simply not enough being done in the areas of drug treatment and harm minimisation. Governments need to catch up with what society has already realised, which is that the war on drugs is over. We cannot enforce our way out of this. I will not stop saying this until governments listen. We have lost this war on drugs, and this budget and the *Ice Action Plan* should have acknowledged that.

Whilst I welcome the six level crossings being removed in Northern Metropolitan Region — those on Moreland Road, Bell Street in Coburg and Preston, High Street, Glenroy Road and Camp Road — I look to the Minister for Public Transport to provide more detail in relation to the rollout dates of those projects. Level crossings are of course contingent on this government passing the port of Melbourne lease through this Parliament. I have some concerns about the port of Melbourne sale, but in principle I agree with the government's position that this would be of economic benefit to the state. If it can help fund the removal of dangerous level crossings, then I am all for it, but to make one contingent on the other seems ludicrous, especially when the Premier announced yesterday that work had begun on removing these death traps. This surprised me, as my understanding of the budget is that without the port sale there will be no removal of the death traps.

The \$50 million for a one-year trial of 24-hour public transport on weekends has been a longstanding policy of the Australian Sex Party. I am very pleased the government has decided to jump onboard this vital issue. When the trial is successful, and I am sure it will be, the government should make this a permanent commitment. It is vital for a fast-paced, internationally recognised 24-hour city like Melbourne, and it makes common sense, both socially and economically. It will help people move around safely and help small businesses. It will enable us to meet the wonderful international reputation we have as a vibrant international city.

The Melbourne Metro rail project is vital for our city, and I am glad to see this major investment being made. At this stage the project has been allocated between \$9 billion and \$11 billion. I have a suspicion it will not take long before that budget blows out.

When we think of the ways in which our state can be more productive and more prosperous, we need to look

outside the square — for example, at the fashion sector in Victoria. I have said a number of times that our Parliament should pay attention to this vital, ever-growing and changing industry. The fashion sector provides a huge number of jobs for our state — in retail and small business, in manufacturing, in tourism, in marketing and in farming; the list goes on. Its impact is in the many billions of dollars. I am working closely with my parliamentary colleagues and industry leaders to make fashion an economic driver for Victoria and bring it further into the public spotlight. It needs more than just a cursory mention in the creative industries portfolio. We need a minister for fashion. It is time the government thought outside the box.

The taxation and regulation of cannabis for recreational use would be a boon for Victoria. The industry has proven itself a winner in other countries like the US and the Netherlands, and the government should do economic modelling on this issue and treat it as a matter of importance. It is about a new economy for a new progressive future. The financial benefit would be not only in the taxes and licensing fees associated with a cannabis economy but also in the savings we would make if we were to cease wasting precious law enforcement and legal resources prosecuting and jailing so many individuals for their use of this drug. Last year there were 2901 arrests for cannabis possession. That is insane. That is eight every day.

Estimates are that we spend over \$100 million on policing the possession of cannabis alone, not to mention the hundreds of millions of dollars we spend on policing the cultivation of this product. Other jurisdictions have recognised that if you regulate and tax cannabis, hundreds of millions of dollars can be raised for health and education budgets. Now is the time for Victoria to do the same. Now is the time for this state to become a progressive beacon in drug law reform across the country, whilst also securing a healthy revenue source to make this great state even greater.

This budget stands on economically shaky grounds, and it is overly optimistic. I will not exactly eat my hat, but I will be surprised if revenue and expenditure predictions match what has been forecast. I will try to be optimistic, and I hope this time next year we will be celebrating the completion of many projects and budget promises in the north and in the rest of Victoria.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan).

Debate adjourned until next day.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the house do now adjourn.

Kindergartens

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Families and Children. It regards facilitating better arrangements for interaction between kindergartens and primary schools when a kindergarten is co-located with a primary school. My request of the minister is that she investigate ways to streamline the access between kindergartens and the adjoining primary school when the kindergarten is co-located with the school. This would continue work I initiated during my term as minister.

One of the key reasons to co-locate kindergartens with primary schools is to provide better transitions from kindergarten to primary education. This is achieved because a child is more familiar and comfortable with the school surroundings, students and teachers. When I was minister I had the then secretary of the department, Richard Bolt, initiate work on breaking down some of the barriers that exist for schools that wish to run their own kindergarten and also on the issue of access between the two facilities.

This issue has again been raised with me by a primary school in my electorate that has a council-run kindergarten on site. Its staff have advised me that although there is no doubt the children are benefitting from the co-location, the benefits could be greater if movement between the two facilities was easier. Currently the boundaries of licensed children's centres are limited to the kindergarten site only, and parental permission needs to be gained for each and every visit kindergarten children make to participate in activities on the school site. This is onerous for kindergarten teachers, who need to gain permission slips, and it also prevents any spontaneous interaction, as they need to plan days in advance for a visit to the primary school facilities.

The school is of the opinion that there needs to be a streamlined approach to gaining permission for access between the two sites. One solution may be for parents to sign one permission slip on an annual basis that covers all interaction between the kindergarten and school. An annual permission slip would allow for interaction only with the primary school and only within the primary school grounds. Individual permission slips would still need to be signed for all

other excursions that are outside the primary school grounds or the licensed children's service site.

Earlier this week during constituency questions I raised this same issue. The issue is important not only to the school that raised it with me but also to all Victorian primary schools and kindergartens that are trying to provide the best transition for kindergarten children by having a kindergarten co-located with a primary school. I have to say I was extremely disappointed that the Minister for Families and Children approached the President to have my question ruled out of order because it related to a statewide issue and not just to my local constituency. I would have thought that the minister would have been more interested in the best outcomes for children and particularly the best way we can facilitate smooth transitions to achieve better outcomes, but unfortunately the minister was more motivated by playing politics than listening to concerns about matters within her control.

My request of the minister is that she investigate ways to streamline access between kindergartens and adjoining primary schools where the kindergarten is co-located with the school and that she continue the work I initiated during my term as minister.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! I suggest that that was very close to a set speech, but I will let it stand nonetheless.

VicForests logging coupes

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Agriculture. The minister will be aware that VicForests has published its latest timber release plan on its website. This plan was approved by the board of VicForests in April. The minister may be aware that the many hundreds of native forest coupes that VicForests is planning to clear-fell for woodchips include the last remaining coupes in the Toolangi State Forest, the home of the Leadbeater's possum.

Hopefully the minister will recall that she voted against the legislation that introduced the current approval process for the VicForests native forest logging schedule on 7 May 2013. In doing so the minister lined up with the Greens in holding serious concerns about the lack of public scrutiny and transparency around the government's continuing destruction of Victorian forests. This latest schedule for native forest destruction has been proposed before the first meeting of the new forest industry task force. This new task force is being formed for a number of purposes, including to develop

a plan for the protection of the critically endangered Leadbeater's possum.

If the coupes nominated in VicForests' latest timber release plan proceed to be logged, it will reveal massive hypocrisy, with one part of government trying to protect the habitat of endangered species while the Minister for Agriculture is busy chopping down the habitat of the Leadbeater's possum.

The action I seek of the Minister for Agriculture is that she acknowledge the role of the yet-to-meet timber industry task force and issue an amendment to the latest allocation order issued under the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004 to prevent the further logging of native forests prior to the meeting of the new task force and prior to VicForests consulting with the task force. This will not destroy any jobs, but it may be something that future generations will thank the minister for.

Gippsland health services

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) — The matter I wish to raise this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Health. I draw the minister's attention to the issues, challenges and opportunities that are currently being faced in the provision of health services in Gippsland. I have had lengthy conversations with the chair of the board of the West Gippsland Healthcare Group, Mr Brian Davey; its CEO, Mr Dan Weeks; and the board members and management about the growth and changing needs of the West Gippsland area in terms of service delivery, surgery and elective lists. We talked about the footprint of the existing building and the steady pressure that is being applied to services because of the region's growth.

I am looking forward to hearing more about the progress of a departmental review to determine the needs of the West Gippsland health service area and to moving on from the inefficient and unhelpful scaremongering that may be being disseminated in public quarters by local representatives. To that end, I ask the minister to attend a meeting at the West Gippsland Hospital with the board and/or the CEO to hear in situ about the challenges that are being faced by that hospital and to gain a greater understanding of the opportunities and projects that are being considered by the hospital to ensure that it remains an active provider of healthcare services for the area.

I also invite the minister to visit the Neerim District Soldiers Memorial Hospital, which I had the great pleasure of attending in recent times to meet with the chair of the board and the CEO to understand how this small hospital is able to cater for the needs of a vibrant

community, and to an ageing population. The hospital's services include an ophthalmology unit and five surgeons, who attend as part of down-the-line services from Melbourne. We also talked about how Neerim South and the surrounding areas can accommodate these changes in population and healthcare demand over the coming years through understanding the changing demands on services and how the hospital can stay abreast of those changes and meet them head-on.

I look forward to the minister's response to these two requests for meetings.

Funeral services

Mr DRUM (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Health. It concerns some changes that seem to be happening in an ad hoc manner within Victoria cemetery trusts. It seems as though some cemetery trusts are engaging in funeral directing services, which is causing great concern to the state's funeral directors. Under Victorian legislation cemeteries are run by trusts and cannot be privately owned. The cemetery trusts do not get into the funeral business and funeral directors cannot enter the cemetery or crematoria markets.

However, on Saturday, 6 June, the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust advertised in the *Age* for expressions of interest in providing mortuary services at Bunurong Memorial Park (BMP). The advertisement invited expressions of interest to provide services at a shared mortuary service facility being developed at BMP in the south-eastern growth corner of Melbourne. The advertisement says that the services should include basic body preparation, embalming, dressing, encoffining and coolroom handling. Clearly that would take the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust into the realm of providing funeral services. It has caused major concern among the funeral directors of Victoria. Funeral directors are not opposed to cemeteries entering the funeral space if, given their monopoly, funeral directors are also given access to the cemetery and crematoria industry.

I ask the minister if she would clarify whether cemeteries are about to enter the funeral market. Given the apparent changes to the government's position on cemetery trusts engaging in funeral directing services that are outlined in the Funerals Act 2006, when will the Cemeteries Act 1958 be updated to remove any impediment to the funeral industry providing cemetery and crematoria services in the Victorian community?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! I have some doubts about Mr Drum's last point,

because I suspect he may have been asking for a change in legislation. Would Mr Drum be kind enough to clarify that action?

Mr DRUM — Yes, you are right, Acting President. If I could leave the action as asking the minister to clarify if cemeteries are about to enter the funeral market.

Women's Information and Referral Exchange

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos, and it is with regard to the funding agreement for the Women's Information and Referral Exchange, known as WIRE Women, which is due to expire on 30 June this year. WIRE Women has been operating for over 30 years as Victoria's only women's service that provides information, referral and support to women regardless of the issues they are facing. Every year it answers some 12 000 requests for free and confidential information. Funding for WIRE Women is crucial in keeping the infrastructure required to support women in the community. It allows for the continuous delivery of existing and new services. The increase in cases and upward trend in referrals indicates a need for continued funding to support the infrastructure and the community. I understand that funding has been allocated in the Victorian budget for WIRE Women.

The action I am seeking is that the minister update the house on the funding arrangement for WIRE Women for the next financial year 2015–16.

Melbourne Wholesale Fruit Vegetable and Flower Market

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — I raise a matter for the attention for the Minister for Public Transport as the minister responsible for the newly developed wholesale fruit, vegetable and flower market. I am aware of some concerns of both my own constituents and constituents who have spoken to my lower house colleagues. There are three issues that I will briefly cover, but one action I seek. The concerns are to do with undercover parking, access to the market and opening times.

I am advised by a gentleman from a market in Foster, which is near my home, that the amount of undercover parking available at the Epping site will be insufficient to cater for the needs of the country retailers who currently have undercover parking at West Melbourne. The concern for the average greengrocer is that the new site will not have sufficient weatherproof cover to

protect his or her stock, and that the quality of that stock may be reduced by operating on the open tarmac.

The second issue is the provision of overnight truck parking. At West Melbourne there is provision for country drivers to park in the country retailers allocated park between delivering and collecting their goods during the night. There is uncertainty about whether the onsite secure parking arrangements that are afforded for those who travel long distances will be issued for the new site, noting too that many of the operators carry a lot of cash because it is still a cash business and it would be a security risk if they were to park externally.

The last issue I raise is in terms of opening times. A delay in opening times in Epping that has been mooted could potentially have an adverse effect on product delivery. My constituents feel that the proposed opening times are not conducive to rural businesses and will have a negative effect on staffing issues.

The action I seek is that the Labor government work with the Melbourne Market Authority to address the concerns of country retailers and allow them to continue to operate as they have at the West Melbourne site without any detriment to their businesses or to their country customers in Victoria.

Police numbers

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I raise a question in the adjournment debate this evening for the attention of the Minister for Police, and it relates to the staffing of police stations around Victoria. There is some speculation, originally published in the *Weekly Times* in April earlier this year, about whether one-member stations would remain open. The Minister for Police issued a statement which says:

The Andrews ... government supports one-man police stations in regional Victoria ...

As Minister for Police, I made a commitment in Parliament in February that this would keep all existing police stations open.

My adjournment matter relates not to a single-member station, but to some larger stations that I know are under-resourced. In the case of the Coleraine police station, I understand it is gazetted to have a sergeant and two other members, but at the moment all three positions are vacant. In effect, while not formally closed, that police station, as I understand it, does not have any members attached to it.

I draw the attention of the minister, and I have raised this matter previously in this place, to the issue of the Somerville police station, which is virtually complete. I

drove by the station just the other day, and save for some relatively minor works, I imagine the Somerville police station will be finished in the coming weeks. The most recent advice from the Acting Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings was that it was unlikely that station would be opened to the public. There would be some police members stationed there, but in effect it would be office space for those members and there would be no public access, no counter service, no divisional van or other members attached to respond to police calls. I suppose in essence my adjournment matter for the Minister for Police is that he define an 'open police station'. In the mind of the community, an open police station is one that is accessible to the public at certain times of the day or week — that is, there are members there.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! I assume Mr O'Donohue is asking the minister to define an open station.

Mr O'DONOHUE — I ask the minister to provide me with a definition of an open police station. As I said, in the mind of the community an open police station is one that is operational. Currently there are stations that do not have members attached to them and are not operational.

Mr Davis — In fact they are closed.

Mr O'DONOHUE — In fact they are closed.

Waverley Park powerlines

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I seek the assistance of the Minister for Planning. The matter on which I seek his assistance relates to the Waverley Park development in Mulgrave. To familiarise the chamber — and indeed the minister, perhaps — with these matters, in 2002 the Waverley Park planning arrangements were put in place. They allowed for a series of developments at the Waverley Park estate and included a planning permit that required the relevant developer to put powerlines underground. Properties were sold through that period until more recently with clear statements in the sale contracts that the powerlines would go underground.

It is important to note that around the same time, in 2002, Daniel Andrews was elected to Parliament. He is the local member, and he is well aware of these planning matters. For 13 years he has ducked and weaved on this and, in my view, not fully supported the residents. One thing that has occurred more recently is

that the planning minister, Mr Guy, called this in because Mirvac sought to — —

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr DAVIS — The former planning minister in the last period of government — —

Mr Jennings — The last period of government is the current one.

Mr DAVIS — I am saying that the former planning minister, Mr Guy, called in this matter and convened a planning panel. The planning panel reported, I understand — and I am happy to be corrected if my information is wrong — in February to the current planning minister, Mr Wynne. The government has been in power now for more than 200 days, and it is time that a decision was made by Minister Wynne. He has the matters in front of him. Members of the community are very agitated about this. Members of the Waverley Park Residents Action Group are very agitated about this. They have a legitimate expectation that the contracts they entered into to purchase their properties will be honoured and that the powerlines will go underground.

In these circumstances, what I am seeking is a very swift decision by Minister Wynne, who has dithered and delayed, and the swift release of the planning panel's report. What is important here is that people honour the agreements that have been entered into and that planning not be used to frustrate what are legitimate expectations of those in Mulgrave.

Responses

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I have written responses to adjournment debate matters raised by Mr Mulino on 27 May, Mr Davis on 28 May and Ms Bath on 10 June.

In relation to tonight's matters, Ms Lovell raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Families and Children seeking that the current minister channel her approach to policy consideration of the co-location of kindergartens. I am sure the minister will respond accordingly.

Ms Dunn raised a matter for the Minister for Agriculture seeking her overview of the current timber release plan. I know, Acting President, you are wanting me to refer specifically to the protection of the Leadbeater's possum. I was responding in relation to the timber release plan that the member is concerned may lead to pressures being put on the habitat of the Leadbeater's possum.

Ms Shing raised an interesting series of issues relating to health in her local community. I know you, Acting President, were concerned that she was raising multiple matters by referring separately to the West Gippsland health service and the Neerim South health service and hoping the Minister for Health could visit both those locations. You might have had a concern that she may have been asking for two actions, but no, that could be achieved in one trip, so I think your concerns can be allayed.

In fact Ms Bath took that approach when she raised a matter. From the very beginning of her matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport she identified that she had three issues but that only one action was sought, so by design she was trying to make sure that you, Acting President, were not concerned about the issues she raised. She identified some concerns about the redeveloped market in Epping. She wanted to make sure that both the opening hours and the parking arrangements were not adversely affecting her constituents or other agricultural producers in coming to the market and that they were finding that a satisfactory experience for themselves and their produce.

Mr Drum raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health. He was very concerned that there may be in what is currently demarcated between the responsibilities of cemetery trusts and crematoria and the activities of funeral directors some convergence of what have been discrete activities. He wants some surety on whether that delineation will be maintained by the minister or whether there are some intended changes to those practices which would open up the field to one profession or set of responsibilities or the other.

Mr Melhem raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Families and Children seeking her clarification of and ongoing support for the funding arrangements to support the women at the Women's Information and Referral Exchange, who undertake important work on behalf of women and their families in the western suburbs in particular. He would like the minister's confirmation of support being provided to that service.

Mr O'Donohue raised the interesting challenge for the Minister for Police to provide a definition of an open police station. I know the minister has an open mind on this subject, and I know he will be responsive to Mr O'Donohue's inquiry.

Mr Davis gave us a history, perhaps not in chronological sequence or with the tense always

accurate in describing the decision-making process. Nonetheless, he wants the current Minister for Planning to take responsibility in an area that his predecessor was unable to and resolve an issue that relates to the undergrounding of powerlines for the development at Waverley Park.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr JENNINGS — By interjection, Mr Davis is inviting me to confirm what I said to him, that he made it very clear that his previous colleague — —

Mr Davis interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! One should not refer to the Premier as a toady.

Mr Davis — I withdraw calling the Premier a toady.

Mr JENNINGS — What an excellent double act we have witnessed there — a fantastic piece of work between you, Acting President, and Mr Davis. Mr Davis made it very clear that the issue he wants resolved was not resolved by the previous Minister for Planning during his term of office, and he is seeking the resolution of the matter by the current planning minister.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! The house now stands adjourned.

House adjourned 6.18 p.m.

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied to Hansard.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 23 June 2015

RESPONSE:

I am aware of the standards expected of me as a Minister within the Government that binds Cabinet Ministers.

I believe my actions are consistent with those expectations and my resignation was not offered nor sought on May 23.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 23 June 2015

RESPONSE:

I was not instructed as such and I refer the Member to my personal statement where I outline the reasons for my absence from Parliament on the sitting days of May 26-28.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Question asked by: Mr Rich-Phillips
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 23 June 2015

RESPONSE:

The decision to make a personal statement to the Parliament and the content contained in the personal explanation was entirely mine. I advised Parliamentary colleagues and staff that I intended on making such a statement.

The decision to take these questions on notice was mine.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 23 June 2015

RESPONSE:

Mr Smith continues to be employed by the Government. His working arrangements are at the direction of the acting Minister for Small Business, Trade and Innovation.