

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Tuesday, 7 June 2016

(Extract from book 9)

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HANSARD¹⁵⁰



1866–2016

Following a select committee investigation, Victorian Hansard was conceived when the following amended motion was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 June 1865:

That in the opinion of this house, provision should be made to secure a more accurate report of the debates in Parliament, in the form of *Hansard*.

The sessional volume for the first sitting period of the Fifth Parliament, from 12 February to 10 April 1866, contains the following preface dated 11 April:

As a preface to the first volume of “Parliamentary Debates” (new series), it is not inappropriate to state that prior to the Fifth Parliament of Victoria the newspapers of the day virtually supplied the only records of the debates of the Legislature.

With the commencement of the Fifth Parliament, however, an independent report was furnished by a special staff of reporters, and issued in weekly parts.

This volume contains the complete reports of the proceedings of both Houses during the past session.

In 2016 the Hansard Unit of the Department of Parliamentary Services continues the work begun 150 years ago of providing an accurate and complete report of the proceedings of both houses of the Victorian Parliament.

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry (to 22 May 2016)

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

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| Cabinet Secretary | Ms M. Kairouz, MP |

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Hartland, Mr Herbert, Ms Mikakos, Mr O’Donohue, 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 — #Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

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

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

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

Port of Melbourne Select Committee — Mr Barber, Mr Drum, Mr Mulino, Mr Ondarchie, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Shing and Ms Tierney.

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 Bourman, Mr Elasmarr and Mr Melhem. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Nardella and Ms Ryall.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Council*): Ms Patten and Mr Somyurek. (*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*): 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*): Ms Bath and Mr Dalla-Riva. (*Assembly*): Ms Blandthorn, Mr J. Bull, Mr Dimopoulos, 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 — 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

Acting Presidents: Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmar, Mr Finn, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Ramsay

Leader of the Government:
The Hon. G. JENNINGS

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

Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

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

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

Leader of the Greens:
Mr G. BARBER

| Member | Region | Party | Member | Region | Party |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman | Eastern Metropolitan | LP | Mikakos, Ms Jenny | Northern Metropolitan | ALP |
| Barber, Mr Gregory John | Northern Metropolitan | Greens | Morris, Mr Joshua | Western Victoria | LP |
| 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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TUESDAY, 7 JUNE 2016

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Tuesday, 7 June 2016

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The PRESIDENT — Order! On behalf of the Victorian state Parliament I acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples, the traditional custodians of this land which has served as a significant meeting place of the first people of Victoria. I acknowledge and pay respect to the elders of the Aboriginal nations in Victoria, past and present, and welcome any elders and members of the Aboriginal communities who may visit or participate in the events or proceedings of the Parliament this week.

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent on 31 May to:

Confiscation and Other Matters Amendment Act 2016

Crimes Legislation Amendment Act 2016

Fines Reform and Infringements Acts Amendment Act 2016

Integrity and Accountability Legislation Amendment (A Stronger System) Act 2016

Land (Revocation of Reservations — Metropolitan Land) Act 2016

Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Amendment (Community Safety) Act 2016.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Membership

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am in receipt of a letter from Dr Carling-Jenkins in this place. She writes:

I wish to resign from my position on PAEC, effective immediately.

I have written to the Honourable Telmo Languiller, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, advising him of the same.

It is signed by Dr Carling-Jenkins on 7 June 2016.

Ms Wooldridge — On a point of order, President, previously when we have had a minister absent I have requested advice, and there has not yet been advice on who is representing that minister in the chamber. I have made the point of order to ask if we can have some clarity from the government about who will be

representing the minister in his absence from the chamber.

Ms Pulford — On the point of order, President, the government will not be making arrangements for Mr Jennings to be represented. Mr Jennings is not absent. Mr Jennings is in the building and available to resume his duties.

Ms Wooldridge — On the point of order, President, it is a longstanding convention of this house that if a minister is not in the chamber, another minister is appointed by the government to take questions on their behalf. It was as recently as 3 May when Mr Herbert was absent and the Leader of the Government advised he would be taking the questions. When Mr Somyurek was absent, the Leader of the Government made it very clear. This is a longstanding convention.

Minister Jennings represents the Premier; the Treasurer; energy, environment and climate change; finance; industrial relations; multicultural affairs; major projects; suburban development; and water, and it is entirely appropriate for the non-government parties to ask a question of the government in relation to them. We believe that the convention should be upheld and that a minister should be appointed to take questions in relation to those matters in the absence of Mr Jennings from this chamber.

Ms Pulford — Further on the point of order, President, the examples that the Leader of the Opposition cited related to members being absent. Mr Jennings is in the building; Mr Jennings is not absent. These matters are absolutely within the hands of the coalition and the Greens, who sought to have Mr Jennings suspended in a way that absolutely defies convention.

Ms Wooldridge — On the point of order, President, perhaps then the government could provide some advice in relation to bills that are the responsibility of Minister Jennings and in relation to who will have carriage of those bills, particularly the appropriation bill, which we are debating this week, in the absence of the government having appointed a minister to represent the minister who is absent from the chamber.

The PRESIDENT — Order! That is a separate question.

Ms Pulford — On the point of order, President, the government has indicated to all non-government parties the proposed order of business for this week. There are a number of ministers in the house who will be available and on duty during the course of this day and, if the opposition parties seek to continue supporting the

suspension of Mr Jennings, on future days. But I reiterate that the government will not be making arrangements to replace someone who is in the building and who is ready and willing to resume his duties at a moment's notice.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I say to Minister Dalidakis that some of his side comments are just so unhelpful, because they are so provocative they simply lead to exchanges in this chamber that actually diminish the chamber. They are unnecessary, and they are certainly testing me at this time when we are looking to move into the proceedings of the day. But it is also the nature of those comments; they obviously attract a response. As I said, it is not good for the house.

Mrs Peulich — On the point of order, President, the ruling that you make on this is going to be a very, very important precedent for this chamber going forward. Given that the likelihood of any single political party achieving majority numbers is unlikely, it seems to me that this is a failure of the government to reallocate the responsibilities of Mr Jennings not just for the portfolios he carries as minister but also for those ministers whom he represents in this chamber. It is a responsibility of the government. The government should not be allowed to flout the decision of this chamber, which was not that of a single political party but of a majority of the chamber. In future if a member of Parliament is to incur the wrath of this chamber, whether it is to be suspended for a brief period of time or for a longer period of time, we all know that there are ramifications. If Mr Jennings did not wish to incur the suspension, there were mechanisms by which he could have complied with the resolution of this chamber, which was not just the wish of a single political party, while still observing the confidentiality of cabinet and commercial in confidence. The government is just flouting a chamber resolution, and going forward it may well make a future parliament unworkable if indeed the President were to rule to uphold the government's decision.

The PRESIDENT — Order! This is a matter that does deserve due consideration. What I intend to do is take the proposition on notice and come back with a definite ruling, and I actually will have regard to the previous suspension applied to Mr Lenders and what prevailed in that sense. But for today I am not going to insist on the appointment of another minister. Indeed my initial response to this matter, without consideration and reference to perhaps precedent in other places as well as this place, is that it is not within my ability or power to direct the government to appoint somebody.

The minister is certainly continuing in his executive responsibility. He is appointed by the Governor on the nomination of the Premier. He is discharging his duties to that effect with the exception that this house has elected to suspend him from its proceedings. In those circumstances I do not believe I have any power to in fact direct the government to appoint a minister in his place. In regard to the appropriation bills, certainly I am of the view that they can be adequately debated and supported in the committee stage without the Leader of the Government. There are other ministers who could proceed with that if that were required.

At any rate, in terms of the questions that might be put that Mr Jennings would normally field, I have an option, and I will consider it carefully, as to whether or not I seek written responses. So the house's options in terms of having matters considered by the minister and responded to are not lost, but as I said, my initial reaction at this point — and I will give further consideration to this matter and a written ruling perhaps tomorrow — is that I do not have any power to direct the government to appoint a substitute leader, given the circumstances.

Mr Dalidakis — On a point of order, President, can I suggest for your reflection, that in fact this matter is without precedent. In reference to your mention of the previous Leader of the Government who did have some time absent from this chamber, that was only for a very small amount of time, and the action undertaken, as best as I have been able to research, is without precedent before you, President, and before not just this Parliament but any parliament using the Westminster system.

What I would suggest to you is that, given the highly provocative nature of the actions undertaken by those that progressed with such an action, you also give weight in your views to the fact that at no stage was the leader afforded any other opportunities. In fact the opposition gagged the motion, President. After those opposite had moved the expulsion from the chamber motion, they gagged debate on it in order to vote for it. So when you do look at it I just ask you to take into consideration that you are probably actually paving the way in terms of your judgement.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I can assure the minister of my earnest consideration of this matter. Can I indicate to him that whether the suspension was 1 day or 10 years, I would not have any view of the time. I also, I guess, will really be coming down more to what is convention and what is provided for under our standing orders. The standing orders are the crucial thing for me. If it comes to convention, then at any time

a convention, no matter how longstanding, can with due consideration of impacts nonetheless be abandoned. As Mr Dalidakis says, certainly we are dealing with a suspension period which is unprecedented. I am mindful of my responsibilities in this matter, and I will discharge them to the best of my ability.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. What advice has the minister received about the impact on farmers and farm service businesses if the United Firefighters Union log of claims is adopted, including the risk that Country Fire Authority volunteers may walk away en masse?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Ms Wooldridge for her question and her interest in these matters. I will take that question on notice and provide an answer but in doing so note the ongoing work by the Premier, the Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Industrial Relations on the matters to which Ms Wooldridge refers.

Supplementary question

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — As I think Ms Pulford noted, I and the coalition are interested in this issue, and obviously the government has no interest. The failure to even bother to answer a question shows that those opposite have no interest, no commitment and no passion about the volunteers and what they do in the community — in your community, President, and in all of our communities. It is unbelievable. So my question is: has the minister got no view on this issue, or has she been told that she needs to provide a response to take this on notice?

Honourable members interjecting.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Mr Leane

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Leane will withdraw for 15 minutes, thank you.

Mr Leane withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Supplementary question

Questions resumed.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Of course I have a view on the important and valuable work undertaken by both our volunteer and our career firefighters in Victoria.

Deaths in custody

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Are deaths in custody a priority to address for the government?

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Corrections) — I thank Mr O'Donohue for his question. There are many priorities for the government. I shall take his question on notice and provide a very detailed response to a very simple question.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I am alarmed that the minister is unable to say whether deaths in custody are a priority for his government. I ask by way of supplementary: how many prisoners have died in custody this financial year and at which prisons?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I will give Mr O'Donohue a chance to rephrase that. That question has got absolutely no connection with the substantive question.

Ms Wooldridge interjected.

The PRESIDENT — I have had the opportunity to look at the question. The first question was extraordinarily general and went to government attitude, if you like. The second part goes to a very specific matter in terms of statistics. I will allow the supplementary question.

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Corrections) — I thank Mr O'Donohue for his question. Of course there are undoubtedly deaths everywhere. I shall have a look at deaths in custody. I am assuming that he wants natural causes, unnatural causes et cetera. I will take that question on notice and come back with a very succinct answer.

Youth justice centres

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. I note a contract for the provision of increased security services for \$425 891 for the period 1 April 2016 to 15 May 2016 — just 45 days. Could the minister outline to the house why a 45-day contract was required at our youth justice precincts to increase security during these times?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I thank the member for her question — a member who joined with members of her party in an unprecedented act in voting out the Leader of the Government and disenfranchising his electorate of representation for six months. I will take the question on notice and provide the member with a written response.

Supplementary question

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that undertaking. My supplementary question is: can the minister confirm that during these 45 days the increased security was in addition to normal security provided, or was it replacement services for staff on WorkCover or stress leave?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I thank Ms Crozier for her supplementary question, and I will be providing her with a response in writing.

Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children, representing the Minister for Health. In the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee it was said that the Peter Mac will be relocating to the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre (VCCC) ‘at their existing capacity’. I am seeking to determine the availability of beds at the new VCCC, so I ask: the Travis report said Peter Mac’s existing capacity is 124 generally available inpatient points of care and 4.3 operating theatres. Is this the number of beds and theatres Peter Mac is currently funded to operate, and if not, what is?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I thank Ms Wooldridge for her question relating to a matter that is the responsibility of the Minister for Health. She has asked for very specific information, and I will take that question on notice and provide her with a written response.

Supplementary question

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. As I said, I am seeking to determine the availability of beds at the new VCCC, and the minister has agreed to take that on notice for the Minister for Health, so I ask as a supplementary and flowing on from that: when the VCCC opens later this month, exactly how many of the 96 inpatient beds, 110 same-day beds and chairs, 8 operating theatres and 2 procedure rooms in the VCCC will be funded and staffed?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I thank Ms Wooldridge again for her very detailed supplementary question, which relates to a matter within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Health. I will take this question on notice and provide the member with a written response.

CommunicAsia

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. I refer to the minister’s visit to Singapore last week for CommunicAsia and ask: what did that visit achieve?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank the member for his question. Obviously, as my colleagues have indicated, with Mr Jennings not being here as Leader of the Government in order to undertake his responsibilities and to undertake questions without notice, I too shall honour that practice and take this question on notice and provide a written response, in keeping with standing orders, for tomorrow — within one business day.

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, President, on relevance, is the minister indicating he is not able to answer the question because Mr Jennings is not here to supervise? Is that what he is saying?

The PRESIDENT — Order! Clearly that is not a point of order. As members who have been here a while will know, I do not like vexatious points of order or frivolous points of order.

Supplementary question

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I am surprised at the minister’s inability to outline any achievements from a trade mission just a week ago, so I therefore ask: besides accruing frequent flyer points, what were the objectives of last week’s trade mission?

The PRESIDENT — Order! Can I make the point that when I receive written responses to questions I expect them to be factual, to be apposite and to not indulge in bagging of the opposition or a member who has put that question before the minister. On a previous occasion I asked Mr Dalidakis to redo a written response because his response went to, at best you might say, commentary rather than sticking with a responsive and appropriate answer to that question.

My ability to ask a minister to recognise that position of the Chair is compromised when there is a phrase or a comment within the question that begs argument, that provokes the minister. The point about frequent flyer points makes it very difficult for me to expect the minister to give a straight bat answer. Members ought to think about that in terms of those written responses that I require.

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — As I indicated in the substantive answer, I will take this question on notice. The point I was making in the substantive answer was the fact that the Leader of the Government is being denied the opportunity to undertake his professional responsibilities, and as a result, until he is afforded the right to return to this chamber and take a question without notice, nor shall I.

Leader of the Government

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. Under standing order 8.01:

- (1) Questions may be put to —
 - (a) ministers of the Crown relating to public affairs for which the minister is directly connected ...

And I ask the minister: does he have full confidence in the Leader of the Government, Mr Jennings, to remain in his role?

Ms Mikakos — On a point of order, President, given that the member has prefaced his question by referring to a particular standing order, and having the standing order in front of me, I would suggest that is asking for an opinion and is not within the responsibility of the minister. Therefore the question should be ruled out of order.

Mr ONDARCHIE — On the point of order, President, I reflect on the role of the acting leader of the government in responding to Ms Mikakos. I indicate that in the previous question the minister went to great lengths, both in his substantive answer and in his

supplementary answer, to refer to the fact that Mr Jennings was not in the chamber, so I put to you that this question is then legitimate.

The PRESIDENT — Order! On the point of order raised by Ms Mikakos and responded to by Mr Ondarchie, I am of the view that the question is not in order. Notwithstanding the standing order that has been cited, I think that is a fairly brave interpretation of the stretch of that standing order. I am particularly mindful of the fact that, notwithstanding what Mr Dalidakis said in explaining why he was taking questions on notice rather than providing responses today, the question itself goes to a matter of whether or not the minister has confidence in the Leader of the Government to remain in his role. There is an opinion factor or a speculative factor about that, but more importantly I do not believe it is within the responsibilities of the minister's role. I will give Mr Ondarchie a chance to rephrase his question.

Mr ONDARCHIE — Apposite to the original question or — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! We cannot have a new question.

Mr ONDARCHIE — Given that the minister has not exactly remained silent on his ambition to be the Leader of the Government in this place, did he seek this position from the Premier in an acting capacity during the time that Minister Jennings will be suspended from this chamber?

Ms Pulford — On a point of order, President, as I indicated in the series of points of order immediately prior to the commencement of question time, there are no acting arrangements. Mr Jennings is here, he is available to resume his duties and we certainly look forward to that occurring at the earliest opportunity.

Mr ONDARCHIE — On the point of order and Ms Pulford's response, I did not ask if there was an acting role; I asked if the minister had sought from the Premier the opportunity to act in the role.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Finn is wearing a rather colourful jacket today which I assume has something to do with football. I do not know why — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I was going to say people need to be fairly careful because in football you occasionally see the reversal of a free kick when the umpire is put to some test. In regard to this question posed by Mr Ondarchie, I did invite him to rephrase.

This is a reasonable distance from rephrasing, but nonetheless I think that the question is a valid question to put to a minister in respect of their own behaviour. That is not to say that the minister might not deal with this in the way that he sees fit, but the question, I think, is allowable.

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank the President for the call, and I thank the member for his question. We on this side of the chamber have a Leader of the Government who is being denied his opportunity to represent his electorate and be in this chamber by the Liberal and Greens alliance. As a result of that, we will not take questions until he is returned to this chamber. If there is a substantive part to the member's question, I will take it on notice.

Supplementary question

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister very much for his open and honest answer in this place. Can I ask, in response to his answer: who directed the government not to answer questions while Mr Jennings has not returned?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — Again, as I have already answered to the members opposite previously, it is my intention absolutely, until Mr Jennings is returned to this chamber and afforded the right to undertake answering a question without notice, that I shall be taking questions on notice.

Gambling advertising

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — My question is also for Minister Dalidakis in his capacity as representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and it concerns the effect of sports betting advertising at AFL matches. The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation commissioned a report by Deakin University into the effects of sports betting advertising on children at AFL matches, titled *Child and parent recall of gambling sponsorship in Australian sport*. I note that Ms Tomazin wrote an article on this late last week identifying that children as young as eight are influenced by sports gambling ads and that this has caused concern throughout the community. So I ask: how will the government respond to the recommendation in the report to establish a clear regulatory framework to minimise children's exposure to gambling advertising?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank Dr Carling-Jenkins for her question, and I will take the question on notice on behalf of Minister Garrett and seek a fulsome answer for her in response.

Supplementary question

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for taking my question on notice. I also wonder, in taking this on notice, if he could ask Minister Garrett to let us know when the government will respond to the recommendations within the report.

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — So noted, and that will also be taken on notice.

Emergency services funding

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — I think I probably know the answer, but I will ask the question anyway. My question is also to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade in his capacity as representing the Minister for Emergency Services. Corangamite Shire Council has recently presented its draft budget showing that the funding for the State Emergency Service (SES) will be halved in the coming year and completely removed in the following year. The council does not, for instance, contribute to the Country Fire Authority (CFA), and it has asked the question as to why the SES costs cannot also be covered by a revised fire services levy. Therefore I ask the minister: will the government revise the fire services levy to become an emergency services levy that incorporates both CFA funding and SES funding?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank Mr Purcell for his question. I will endeavour to seek a response from the minister in the other place, but I do note that at this point I am not sure whether or not the minister has coverage over the fire services levy or whether in fact it is the Treasurer. However, I will endeavour to seek a response, and if it is not the minister in question, I will do what I can to refer that question on to the Treasurer, with the house's indulgence.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The Deputy Leader of the Government advises me that the Treasurer would be the minister responsible for the fire services levy. Perhaps on his supplementary question Mr Purcell might indicate to the house if he is happy for that substantive question and his supplementary to actually be referred to the Treasurer.

Supplementary question

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — I certainly do wish that question and the supplementary to be presented to the Treasurer. My supplementary question goes to the fact that if the fire services levy cannot be changed, what action will be taken to make sure that the SES does remain and is funded by government?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank Mr Purcell for his supplementary. As indicated, we will have the substantive question referred to the Treasurer, which leads me into somewhat of a conundrum with the supplementary, President, as I believe the supplementary is actually a question that Minister Garrett in her role as Minister for Emergency Services is able to acquit herself of in terms of the SES. So I look to you, President, for guidance in terms of passing the supplementary on, given that we have taken the substantive to a different member in the other place.

The PRESIDENT — Order! In regard to matters raised in the supplementary question, we take the substantive question as the direction of that question, so the supplementary question would at this point still go to the Treasurer. The Deputy Leader of the Government has indicated to me that the government will endeavour to try to find an answer across both those ministries to satisfy the question on this occasion, which is very helpful to the house.

Western distributor

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture on behalf of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. In recent weeks the City of Melbourne produced a report on the impacts of the western distributor on Melbourne. That report found that it is likely to significantly increase traffic into the north and west of Melbourne and to the north side of the Hoddle grid. The main anticipated effects of this are unwanted creation of demand for car parking and storage; reduced public amenity and safety; greater traffic noise; potentially undermining conditions for walking, cycling and public transport; and possible impacts on the public realm, including trees. My question for the minister is: how does the government intend to address the negative impacts of the new freeway on the City of Melbourne?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Ms Hartland for her question. I will seek a written response from Minister Donnellan.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I have answers to the following questions on notice: 4898, 4943, 4949–50, 5022, 5068–73, 5077, 5082, 5099–102, 5104, 5106–7, 5125, 5136, 5148–9, 5254, 5256, 5272, 5279, 5284–94, 5335, 5427.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Written responses

The PRESIDENT — Order! In regard to the matters raised today I indicate that on Ms Wooldridge's question to Ms Pulford, both the substantive and supplementary questions, the minister has undertaken to provide a written response; that is one day.

On Mr O'Donohue's question to Mr Herbert, both substantive and supplementary, the minister has indicated that he will provide a written response to that question; that is one day.

On Ms Crozier's question to Ms Mikakos, both substantive and supplementary, the minister has indicated she would be prepared to provide a written response; that is one day.

On Ms Wooldridge's question to Minister Mikakos, both the substantive and the supplementary questions involve a minister in another place; therefore that is two days.

On Mr Rich-Phillips's question, substantive and supplementary, to Mr Dalidakis in regard to the Singapore mission, Minister Dalidakis has indicated he will provide a written response; that is one day.

Dr Carling-Jenkins's question to Mr Dalidakis was again to a minister in another place, so for both the substantive and supplementary questions, two days.

Mr Purcell's substantive and supplementary questions were to ministers in another place; two days.

Ms Hartland's question to Ms Pulford, a substantive question only, was to a minister in another place; two days.

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, President, relating to a written response you asked for to a question without notice I asked the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade on 26 May, I pick up your commentary today that you expect responses to be factual, fulsome and appropriate. My question related to

the minister's key responsibilities in relation to exports of Victorian businesses. His response — perhaps we could call this his Google answer — was to ask me to look up the website to understand what his key responsibilities are. I ask that that question be reinstated.

Mr Dalidakis — On the point of order, President, the answer is absolutely factual and apposite to the question. The information is readily available, and I pointed the member in the direction where he could actually find it.

Ms Pulford — On the point of order, President, the ordinary course of events for seeking to have a question reinstated, I believe, is through a written request for your consideration.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Sorry, no. It is done simply by way of raising the matter in the house and I make a determination. In this instance I do seek a further written response to the question. The question actually was: could the minister outline to the house his key responsibilities — not the department's responsibilities, but his responsibilities. Therefore that question I would reinstate.

Mr Dalidakis — On a point of order, President, with respect, the material on the departmental website is the government position. It actually represents what we are doing as a government. It is not the department dreaming up words; it is our position as a government.

The PRESIDENT — Order! That may be so, but in this case the member has asked the minister specifically, given his experience, what his key responsibilities are in relation to exports of Victorian businesses, and I think that that is a valid question to him, so I would seek a further written response.

Mr Ondarchie — On a further point of order, President, which relates to a question without notice I asked the minister on 26 May 2016, when I asked the minister about overseas offices my supplementary went to why those offices were not open yet, and in his response the minister said:

Mr Davis may wish to cast his mind back to the short period for which he himself was a minister ...

I do not know who the minister was writing back to. It was my question, it was to him and he talked about Mr Davis in his written response to the supplementary. This is sloppy. I ask for this to be reinstated.

Mr Davis — On the point of order, President, I received a response from one of the ministers, too,

which looked very much like a response to Mr Ondarchie. It seems that the answers may have been transposed incorrectly with the questions.

The PRESIDENT — Order! On that question, I will not seek a further written response. I believe that the minister has responded. Given the fact that there is an incorrect minister in that response, I would seek that this response actually be corrected and the correct version be given to Mr Ondarchie. But I will not seek further commentary from the minister in respect of that question.

Does Mr Davis wish to take up the one that he believes was incorrect?

Mr Davis — No. I just need to go back to read it again.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Northern Victoria Region

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and it is regarding the need for the Victorian government to prioritise the Shepparton bypass as a project of importance and urgency. In the lead-up to the federal election the RACV, Victoria's peak advocacy body on motoring issues, has identified the Shepparton bypass as being one of its top five projects for this entire state. Following the 2016–17 Victorian state budget, the RACV issued a media release expressing disappointment that the bypass was not funded. An RACV spokesperson said that it is critical that a start is made on the bypass.

The position of the RACV aligns with that of all stakeholders in the Shepparton community and the Victorian coalition, which when in government promised to get the ball rolling on the project, starting with \$1 million for a planning and feasibility study. In contrast, this Labor government has so far failed to actually prioritise the project in any tangible way. My question is: will the minister prioritise the Shepparton bypass project as one of the main priority projects for Victoria, and will he work with the next federal government to commit funding to the project?

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation. According to the government's own figures, gamblers in Greater Dandenong lost \$117 million through poker machines last financial year. By May this year poker

machine losses had already reached \$99.7 million and represented a 2 per cent increase on last year's losses. Since the introduction of poker machines in 1993, the community of Greater Dandenong has lost a staggering \$2.8 billion. Voluntary precommitment clearly has had no effect in the City of Greater Dandenong. This was entirely predicted, as it indeed was predicted by all of those community groups working tirelessly to cope with the social harm caused by these massive poker machine losses. After all, poker machines are designed to be highly addictive. It is one thing for the minister to say that the government will just continue to monitor the impact of precommitment, but it is clear to everyone that it is just not working in Dandenong. Will the minister commit to providing the community of Greater Dandenong with evidence-based solutions that will work to stop the massive losses it is suffering through poker machines?

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is addressed to the Minister for Training and Skills, Mr Herbert. The Andrews Labor government recently announced a \$960 000 funding boost for Djerriwarh Community and Education Services from the Reconnect program. The Reconnect program received \$20 million in the recent 2016–17 Victorian budget in order to support young early school leavers and the long-term unemployed. Can the minister update me on how the \$960 000 boost in funding will exactly address disadvantage, reduce youth unemployment and promote equity in Melbourne's west?

Western Victoria Region

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — My constituency question is directed to the Premier. I have over the past weeks and months had many conversations with Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers across the width and breadth of Western Victoria Region about the important work that they do. These are the volunteers who, when they are called upon, respond to preserve life and property, every day and night of the year — indeed even on Christmas Day, as we saw just last year in the devastating Wye River fire. Who was there to help the community in its hour of need? It was of course our dedicated CFA volunteers, who we can always rely upon. So I ask: with regard to the CFA enterprise bargaining agreement, will the Premier support our dedicated CFA volunteers, as they always support our community, or will he sell them out and support his union mate Peter Marshall and the United Firefighters Union?

Northern Metropolitan Region

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — My question concerns the recent riots in Coburg and is directed to the Minister for Police in the other place. On the Monday after the riots I went to the wonderfully diverse Coburg shopping precinct to talk to traders forced to close down their businesses after radicals and racists decided to spend a Saturday storming the streets with their message of hate. I believe in and strongly advocate for the right to protest, but spreading violence and harm is not a protected activity. However, I was concerned to hear the police minister suggest a ban on masks in order to better combat such protests. Such a decision could have negative flow-on effects for the very groups targeted. Mask or no mask, if you are behaving in ways that are not consistent with acceptable behaviour, police already have the power to act in such circumstances. I ask the minister to advise whether a legislatively driven ban on face masks at protests is something the government is considering.

Eastern Victoria Region

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) — The matter that I wish to raise today is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Mr Donnellan, in the other place, and I refer to the parlous state of roads in the Eastern Victoria Region and in Gippsland, which have in and of themselves contributed more than their fair share of fatalities, serious injuries and near misses in the area. In relation to this particular concern, I ask the minister for an update and information in relation to the resurfacing of the Koo Wee Rup-Longwarry Road for areas of that road which are in need of repair between Denhams Road and Osborn Road to the west of Bayles. In that regard I ask the minister to provide additional information about the repairs that will be conducted, the investigations undertaken to better understand surface conditions and the roads before repair work begins, and the time frames within which locals and road users can expect the completion of the roads as they are required to be returned to better service.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — My matter today concerns the ongoing dispute between the United Firefighters Union (UFU), with most members of the government on one side and the Minister for Emergency Services, Jane Garrett, on the other, and notably the Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers, 60 000 of them across the state. I noted that in the lower house today the Premier refused to accept a medal from a 60-year veteran of the CFA, and that was very disappointing and ungracious. Equally disappointing

was the decision of Mr Paul Edbrooke in the Assembly to comment on this and to suggest that that medal ought to have been given to somebody other than that 60-year veteran. What an outrageous suggestion. What a nasty, vicious suggestion. Here is a UFU member who had the support of the UFU at the election. Here is a man very close to the UFU — —

Ms Hartland — On a point of order, Acting President, I am wondering whether this is a constituency question.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order! I was waiting until the end of it.

Mr Melhem — On the point of order, Acting President, I think the member's time is up anyway, and I do not think there was any question. It is not a constituency question, and you should rule it out.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order! Before the point of order was raised I believe there was about 10 seconds remaining for Mr Davis to complete his question. If Mr Davis will just ask a question, I will accept that. Mr Davis has 10 seconds.

Mr DAVIS — My question therefore is for the Minister for Emergency Services, and I ask: what action will the minister take to protect volunteers from such attacks?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order! My understanding is that is not in your area or electorate, Mr Davis.

Mr DAVIS — The CFA is a statewide service but the standards and protection of people statewide and the behaviour of UFU members — —

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr DAVIS — The UFU is in my area.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order! Unfortunately, Mr Davis, according to advice and my understanding of the President's rules, I must rule it out as a general question unless it is related to your electorate. I am happy to give you another couple of seconds if you can do that.

Mr DAVIS — Acting President, my point is that many within my electorate travel to and are involved with country Victoria. Many have properties across country Victoria.

Mr Melhem — On a point of order, Acting President, Mr Davis is an experienced veteran MP and a former Leader of the Government, and this is not the

first time he has done this. How many opportunities was he given to actually ask the question relating to his constituents and yet he has not linked the question to his constituency? The question should be disallowed.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order! I believe I gave Mr Davis more than one chance. I have no option except to rule the question out.

Northern Victoria Region

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) — My constituency question today is for the Minister for Sport, the Honourable John Eren. Last week I met with the president of the Seymour Football and Netball Club, Craig Velt, and inspected the club's facilities at the Kings Park reserve, Seymour's premier community and sporting precinct. The park is managed by a committee of management consisting of user groups and community representatives under an agreement with Mitchell Shire Council. The grounds are kept immaculate by the hardworking volunteers. Unfortunately the club's facilities are not up to the required standards and the club has identified a priority list for upgrades and additions to meet the needs of its players, members and visiting teams, starting with female change rooms for its netballers and an additional netball court to cater for the training and playing needs of this growing sport. Can the minister provide me with the details and timing of the funding options within his portfolio so that I can assist Seymour Football and Netball Club to obtain the improvements it deserves.

Western Victoria Region

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My constituency question is to the member for Bellarine, the Minister for Police, Lisa Neville. Ms Neville is on the record as showing support for the United Firefighters Union's proposed enterprise bargaining agreement and the recommendations from Julius Roe, the Fair Work commissioner and former national president of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. Ms Neville also criticised the Minister for Emergency Services, Jane Garrett, for refusing to do the same — for refusing to submit to the Premier's agenda.

My question is: did the minister consult with CFA volunteers in her electorate before taking this position, including the CFA brigades at Barwon Heads, Leopold, Mannerim, Portarlinton, Queenscliff, St Leonards and Wallington?

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. During the course of this current Country Fire Authority (CFA) crisis both the government and the United Firefighters Union have denied the enterprise bargaining agreement as an attempt by the union to take over the CFA. If that is so, can the minister explain why the CFA flag has been removed from outside the Hoppers Crossing fire station and in its place flies the flag of the United Firefighters Union?

Mr Melhem — On a point of order, Acting President — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr Melhem — Have you got a problem? There is a person in charge who is presiding over the house, not you, so if you don't mind.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! Mr Melhem, on a point of order.

Mr Melhem — I did not hear Mr Finn talking about a matter relating to his electorate. It was a general question.

Mr Finn — On the point of order, Acting President, I am aware that Mr Melhem is not completely au fait with the western suburbs, but I assure him that Hoppers Crossing is in our electorate. If he would like me to present him with a map, I am happy to do that at any time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! There is no point of order.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

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 must not hand control of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to the United Firefighters Union (UFU).

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council of Victoria ensure that the Andrews government reject any EBA conditions that:

- A. allows the UFU to direct or impede CFA activities;
- B. undermines the autonomy of CFA volunteer firefighters;
- C. impacts upon the rights of CFA volunteer firefighters (including through the volunteers charter);
- D. leads to a reduction in surge capacity of the CFA to respond to major events.

By Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (64 signatures).

Laid on table.

Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria).

Christmas carols in schools

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 the government has imposed a ban on singing traditional Christmas carols in Victorian government schools.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council of Victoria ensure that the Andrews government reverses this decision and allow students attending government schools to sing traditional Christmas carols.

By Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (19 signatures).

Laid on table.

RIDESHARING BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) introduced a bill for an act to impose duties on facilitators of ridesharing, to amend the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 to exempt ridesharing from the provisions of that act relating to commercial passenger vehicles and to amend the Transport Integration Act 2010 to recognise the undertaking of rideshare journeys as a transport service and for other purposes.

Read first time.

**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Alert Digest No. 8

Mr DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) presented *Alert Digest No. 8 of 2016, including appendices.*

Laid on table.

Ordered to be published.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE
ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**

Rate capping policy

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) presented second report, including appendices, together with transcripts of evidence.

Laid on table.

Ordered that report be published.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

In doing so, I want to place briefly a number of points on the record. I want to begin by first thanking my fellow committee members and in particular the staff. Anthony Walsh carried a significant load here, and Keir Delaney also. We undertook a number of country visits and heard evidence from a wide variety of community members, concerned about rates and councils across both country and metropolitan areas.

I should also note and put on record my thanks to the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Victorian Local Governance Association and Local Government Professionals. We have had great support from those organisations in terms of their input into this inquiry as well.

This is the second in a series of reports provided pursuant to our reference on the impact of rate capping policy, and there are a number of important findings and recommendations that appear here. The process around the rate cap that is set each year is clearly a very cumbersome process, and the committee has sought that this become transparent. It is also the case that the variation process that has been sought by a number of councils or as part of the legislation is also a very cumbersome and costly process. The recent announcements made since this report was compiled but prior to its tabling by the Essential Services

Commission in terms of those councils that have been granted variations have led to further questions about that process.

It is pretty clear that councils face significant challenges. There is, I have to say, in the first instance a reduction in state government money going to councils, but there are also, parallel with that, significant increases in state government revenue being extracted from land, and we will see more of that in the forthcoming financial year.

At the same time, council costs are significant. The enterprise bargaining agreements (EBAs) were a significant point of discussion in our hearings. It is clear that the increases under the EBAs significantly exceed the government's cap, both now and with many of them into the future, and particularly when the leapfrogging or bracket creep in many council areas on top of the nominal EBA figures is added in. In many cases this is 3 per cent and 4 per cent, and sometimes a greater percentage than that — a long way distant from the 2.5 per cent cap that has been put in place.

It is also important to state that the 2.5 per cent cap bears almost no relationship whatsoever to the CPI. The government's policy — and announcement before the election — was that it would cap rate increases at the CPI. That is not what has actually occurred. Indeed rates have not been capped at the CPI. The government has set rate increases at a figure of 2.5 per cent, which related to some estimates by Treasury. These later estimates are different from that, and indeed the actual CPI that is recorded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics is significantly lower than the cap that has been set. As I said, there is concern across the sector about the state government's approach on a number of these matters and the accessibility to government and preparedness by government to discuss this matter. This report provides a further important step. As I said, I want to thank committee members, but also particularly the committee secretariat and the submitters to the inquiry.

Other matters that come forward in this report and will require further work relate to the charges for election expenses, which are much greater in this cycle than in previous cycles and certainly far exceed a CPI increase. I should also note that councils face significant administrative costs around the variation process, and we make some commentary and findings around the difficulties in the administrative arrangement. I should also note in conclusion that debt is at a significant level, and I think — and certainly a number of other committee members think — that the emergency services commission (ESC) has gone beyond its

purview with respect to debt. What is pretty clear is that the ESC has indicated to many councils that if they have a low debt, they ought to consider jacking up their debt before they apply for a variation or take other steps. That is a very concerning development, and the community, I think, will be worried about that. Equally the State Emergency Service is a significant matter, and I heard the question asked about it today in the chamber. This is a live issue and certainly significant in terms of the outcomes for country Victoria.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Crimes Act 1958 — Chief Commissioner of Police's forensic sampling authorisations pursuant to section 464Z(2) of the Act.

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 —

Minister's Order of 31 March 2016 giving approval to the granting of a licence at Footscray Park.

Minister's Order of 4 April 2016 giving approval to the granting of a licence at Sandringham Beach Park.

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

Campaspe Planning Scheme — Amendment C106.

Cardinia, Casey, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Melbourne, Monash, Stonnington and Yarra Planning Schemes — Amendment GC37.

Casey Planning Scheme — Amendment C218.

Mansfield Planning Scheme — Amendment C33.

Melbourne Planning Scheme — Amendments C287 and C292.

Mildura Planning Scheme — Amendment C79.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament —

Building Act 1993 — No. 49.

Essential Services Commission Act 2001 — No. 48.

Road Safety Act 1986 — No. 50.

Sex Work Act 1994 — No. 47.

Supreme Court Act 1986 — Nos. 51 and 52.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rule Nos. 40, 46 to 52 and 55.

Proclamation of the Governor in Council fixing an operative date in respect of the following act:

Consumer Acts and Other Acts Amendment Act 2016 — whole Act (except sections 23, 24, 30(1) and 31) — 1 June 2016 (*Gazette No. S162, Tuesday 24 May 2016*).

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

The Clerk — I have received a letter dated 6 June from the Attorney-General headed 'Production of documents — Crown Casino analysis of player gambling data':

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 4 May 2016 seeking the production of the document prepared by Crown Casino for the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation in late 2015, which outlines the finding of analysis of player data, including as an indicator for punters who may have a problem with their gambling.

The government is in the process of reviewing and assessing the document for the purpose of preparing its response to the order. The Council's deadline of 8 June 2016 does not allow sufficient time for the government to complete this process.

The government will endeavour to respond to the order as soon as possible.

Mr Davis — On a point of order, Acting President, there are some documents that are outstanding relating to sky rail that relate to a motion passed in this chamber in February. I am wondering whether a minister might like to, as a point of response, indicate why those documents have not been tabled.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! My understanding is that there is no procedure for that, so I have to rule out the point of order.

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — I move:

That the letter from the Attorney-General regarding the Council's order to produce documents relating to Crown Casino analysis of player gambling data be taken into consideration on the next day of meeting.

Motion agreed to.

REGULATION OF RIDESHARING BILL 2016

Withdrawal

Withdrawn, by leave, on motion of Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**General business**

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — By leave, I move:

That precedence be given to the following general business on Wednesday, 8 June 2016:

- (1) order of the day for the second reading of the Ridesharing Bill 2016 introduced by Ms Patten this day;
- (2) notice of motion given this day by Mr O'Donohue relating to the Country Fire Authority and the current United Firefighters Union EBA crisis;
- (3) notice of motion given this day by Ms Patten relating to e-petitions;
- (4) notice of motion 257 referring a matter to the legal and social issues committee in relation to freedom of information;
- (5) order of the day 2, resumption of debate on the Corrections Amendment (No body, no parole) Bill 2016; and
- (6) order of the day 26, consideration of minister's answers to a question without notice and supplementary question on the proposed early learning facility in Ballarat.

Motion agreed to.

**APPROPRIATION (2016–2017) BILL 2016
and BUDGET PAPERS 2016–17**

Concurrent debate

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — By leave, I move:

That this house authorises the President to permit the second-reading debate on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016 to be taken concurrently with further debate on the motion to take note of the budget papers 2016–17.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS**Residential care reform**

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I rise to inform the house about an important reform I am making to improve the care of our most vulnerable children and young people — children and young people who through no fault of their own need to live in residential care homes.

I have previously informed the house about the work of the Roadmap for Reform, which is refocusing the children's and families services system at the front end so we do more to prevent harm, neglect and abuse from occurring in the first place. The road map is also focused on reforming our out-of-home care system. Last week I was very pleased to co-chair the first meeting of my road map implementation ministerial advisory group, which will be providing expert advice and guidance as our government embarks on a once-in-a-generation reform of children's and families services.

We are already underway in co-designing this important reform direction with the community sector and have embarked on a significant step to upskill the workforce. Recently the Minister for Training and Skills and I jointly announced that our government would provide up to \$8 million for vocational training for all Victorian residential care workers. This funding is an important first step in our move towards mandatory qualifications for all residential care workers. We will support workers to gain a qualification or to update their existing qualifications. Victorian TAFE institutes will work with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare to align the training needs of residential care agencies with the growing needs of the sector.

Residential care staff will begin undertaking vocational training in the second half of 2016, drawing on their entitlements to funded places under the Victorian Training Guarantee. By the end of 2017 all residential care workers will be required to have a minimum relevant qualification.

This funding comes on top of the \$168 million 2016–17 Victorian budget investment in the Roadmap for Reform, an overhaul of the child protection system to shift the focus from crisis response to prevention and early intervention. The road map aligns with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Our budget also provides \$35.9 million over two years to transform residential care to a clinical treatment model that better supports young people who have experienced abuse, neglect and family violence. Our government is transforming residential care from a place of last resort to a program of intensive treatment, providing stability for the young people who need it most.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I want to raise the outrageous position of the Premier in relation to the volunteers of the Country Fire Authority (CFA). He has turned his back on 60 000 CFA volunteers to allow a militant union to destroy one of our greatest volunteer organisations. Thousands of CFA volunteers in their uniforms turned out at the rally on Sunday. I have got to say that the rally was widely supported by coalition MPs, but not one Labor MP was present to support the CFA — not one. That is in sharp contrast to today, with the United Firefighters Union out on the steps and Ms Shing and Mr Dimopoulos out there supporting the union but not supporting the volunteers. That is exactly what we expect from this government, which supports the union before the community and before the volunteers.

There are often situations of unions, governments and opposition parties in fights or stoushes over enterprise bargaining agreements, but here we have the volunteers, the people who are mobilised because they care about the community, saying that this is not acceptable. So much time and so much effort they put in, and this government is not backing them. The CFA volunteers in Eltham in my electorate and more broadly dedicate their time to the community. They dedicate their time for the community's safety, and Daniel Andrews is turning his back on them. These volunteers are the fabric of Victoria — our brave volunteers who keep us safe. This government must back them.

National Reconciliation Week

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) — I rise today to pay tribute to the people at Federation University who hosted an incredible reconciliation week last week and an event at Kurnai College that involved amazing dancing from Deadly Kulcha, a youth dance group based in Morwell, as well as a performance of the unbelievably emotive and evocative work *Gunnai Dreaming*, performed by the students of the Lavalla Catholic College choir. The organisers came together to showcase the best of reconciliation week activities and to make sure that a wide variety of views were heard in relation to this important work as we continue to work through issues relating to the way in which our Aboriginal communities throughout Gippsland are recognised and are front and centre in the issue of self-determination as we continue to work toward treaty progress.

Latrobe Valley economy

Ms SHING — On a separate matter, I would like to thank everyone who was involved in the first visit by Minister Wade Noonan in his portfolios of industry and employment, and resources, to the Latrobe Valley to meet with mine operators, community organisations, individuals and stakeholders. The minister held a series of proactive, good-faith roundtable conversations on transition, employment, industry and the future of the valley more generally.

The Presence of Giants

Ms SHING — Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the Baw Baw Shire Council, to Rotarians and to James Geurts on the launch in Warragul last Friday evening of the incredible artwork *The Presence of Giants*. It was a spectacular event for this twilight and night art piece.

By Compass and Quran

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Last Friday night it was my absolute pleasure to host the Melbourne premiere screening of the documentary *By Compass and Quran*, a history of Australia's Muslim cameleers, right here at the Treasury Theatre. It is a historically significant documentary that covers the 150-year history of the cameleers, including the profound relationship these men had with Indigenous Australians, the harrowing years of segregation and the discrimination of the White Australia policy and their survival and the ultimate legacy of their service in the outback.

This largely untold story highlights the long and enduring history of Islam in Australia and the significant contribution Muslims have made to culture and the development of infrastructure and multiculturalism in Australia, long before other waves of immigration. It becomes more and more important that these largely untold stories become part of our general public discourse to strengthen our social fabric and dispel the high levels of existing misinformation that feed division and disharmony in some communities. My sincerest thanks go to documentary writer and director Kuranda Seyit and producer Fadle El-Harris for their commitment to sharing this important story.

In this spirit, I say Ramadan kareem to everyone on this first day of the holy month of Islam.

Safe Schools program

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — Much like the government's ban on traditional Christmas carols in state schools, the Safe Schools program is an example of social engineering that the Labor government is attempting inside our classrooms. This interference forces parents to relinquish a crucial part of their role to teachers. It used to be that family environment helped shape and determine a child's world view and ethics. Instead the Labor government is trying to meddle in these matters. I agree that bullying has no place in the schoolyard, and we must accept people of all backgrounds and diversities, but the Safe Schools program goes far beyond teaching children to treat others as they want to be treated.

There is a clear underpinned sexual agenda that is clearly making so many parents uncomfortable. I have received hundreds of emails from constituents disturbed to see their government interfere in the natural, social and sexual development of today's youth. Children in schools need to be educated and nurtured instead of thrown into the front line of Labor's attempt at social reform. Instead of trying to shape children's beliefs and identities, we should be shaping their knowledge, their learning habits and their ability to become leaders —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! I am on my feet. Mr Ramsay to continue, without interruption.

Mr RAMSAY — in whatever field they choose, using the worldwide view they develop independent of government influence.

The Safe Schools director, Roz Ward, is outspoken about her Marxist views and has stated publicly that she sees the concept of a traditional family, the conventional ideas of male and female and heterosexual marriage as a capitalist plot to be torn apart. It is concerning to learn the extent of her extremist views — —

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! That is a second time on my feet.

Mr RAMSAY — On a point of order, Acting President, I have spoken for less than 1 minute, and through that entire time Mr Dalidakis has vocally and loudly interjected in my entire contribution, with you calling him to order at only one point.

Mr Dalidakis — On the point of order, Acting President, yes, it is true that I did argue that Mr Ramsay was a homophobe with his contribution and suggested that he was better than this.

Mr RAMSAY — I am particularly offended by those remarks by Mr Dalidakis, and I ask that he withdraw them.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr Dalidakis — No.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — I am asking the minister to withdraw.

Mr Dalidakis — No.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! In this situation, I have to ask the Deputy President to take the chair.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! We are in new territory here, and I would appreciate some silence. The Acting President asked Minister Dalidakis twice to withdraw. As Deputy President, I now also request that he withdraw that comment.

Mr Dalidakis — So withdrawn.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Thank you.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! We have dealt with the matter. Mr Ramsay, to continue.

Mr RAMSAY — The Safe Schools director, Roz Ward, is outspoken about her Marxist views and has stated publicly she sees the concept of traditional family, the conventional ideas of male and female, and heterosexual marriage as a capitalist plot to be torn apart. It is concerning to learn the extent of her extremist views, knowing her fingerprints are all over the program the government wishes to enforce on all state schools in Victoria. Finally the truth has been revealed, and we are well rid of her.

Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — Recently I joined my parliamentary colleagues on a behind-the-scenes tour of the new Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre (VCCC). This visit gave

us the opportunity to have a firsthand look at the new facility before its doors open to Victorians. This purpose-built facility provides a new home for the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and will also act as a purpose-built facility for cancer research, treatment, care and education. It is an important facility. It provides high-quality cancer treatment programs for Victorians and links the Royal Melbourne Hospital with the VCCC at its Parkville location, allowing patients to move easily between the two facilities.

Most of us have been touched by cancer in some way. Fortunately the new centre will facilitate more research into the different types of cancer, hopefully finding ways to reduce the impact of this devastating disease on our community.

Joint venture partners of this great new centre include the Royal Melbourne Hospital, part of Melbourne Health; the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre; the University of Melbourne; the Royal Women's Hospital; the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research; the Royal Children's Hospital; St Vincent's Hospital; and Western Health. It has been jointly funded by the state and federal governments.

This will no doubt be an outstanding alliance and will bring the best of the best in cancer care and research to Victorian patients. It offers 110 chemotherapy, medical and same-day beds and chairs to patients, as well as 24 clinical trial spaces, 25 000 square metres of dedicated research space and education and training facilities, including 47 seminar and meeting spaces. This centre — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Time!

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I have often spoken in this Parliament of my enormous admiration and respect for the volunteers of the Country Fire Authority (CFA). Their self-sacrifice and courage are a part of this nation's fibre. The CFA has contributed and continues to contribute to Victoria in a way that few other organisations can.

I have been stunned by the attack in recent times on our volunteer firefighters by the United Firefighters Union (UFU) and the Premier, Daniel Andrews. Who in their right mind would want to effectively close the CFA as we know it? The Premier owes Peter Marshall big time and is now endeavouring to pay that debt, but why at the expense of the CFA? CFA volunteers are being

bullied by UFU members every day, and the Premier has joined that bullying at a statewide level. The treatment of our CFA volunteers by this Premier and his union cronies is despicable. These people serve the community on a daily basis. It is not just in times of great peril by way of bushfires; the CFA is vital to the proper functioning of Victoria.

Its members deserve our eternal gratitude. They most certainly deserve so much better than the foul betrayal Premier Andrews has cruelly and unjustly delivered to them. I stand proudly — very, very proudly — with CFA volunteers.

Melbourne Regional Landfill

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — My members statement today is on behalf of Marion Martin. She wrote to me:

On Thursday, 26 May, Cleanaway turned its back on western suburbs residents by abandoning community consultation on its proposed expansion of the Ravenhall tip.

Extraordinarily, Cleanaway's facilitator resigned, citing a lack of commitment on behalf of Cleanaway to timely, open, trustworthy and transparent communications.

Over the past two years, residents of the west whose lives are impacted by the tip every day have been ignored by Cleanaway, or dismissed as troublemakers.

Odour, litter and congestion from trucks are constant issues for residents in the western suburbs. Only last month, Cleanaway breached its licence by failing to declare a serious methane gas breach to the EPA.

The community is rightly concerned about the irreparable damage the tip expansion will do to their community and the environment. To this end, residents are calling on the government to direct Cleanaway to prepare an environmental effects statement for the expansion.

It is shameful that at the time Cleanaway should be making every effort to engage the community, it has slammed the door on them.

Having experienced one Cleanaway consultation process — or what it called a consultation process — I can understand the sheer frustration of the community on this issue.

Pakenham social enterprises

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) — Last week a roundtable was held in Pakenham so the government could listen to and consult with social enterprises. The social enterprise sector is already large, diverse and very innovative in Victoria. It employs thousands of people across just about every sector of our society and economy, but we know from international experience that even more is possible.

The forum last week was attended by a range of successful social enterprises and community groups around the east in particular, including Able Bakehouse, Knoxbrooke and Knoxcare, EACH Social and Community Health, TastyAz Catering, Australian Community Logistics, Balanced Options for Adults, Interchange Outer East and Melba Support Services. Apologies if I have forgotten any. In addition, the forum was attended by peak bodies such as Social Traders and Philanthropy Australia.

I am grateful to all of the organisations who took the time to attend and contribute to a very valuable discussion. I am also grateful that the newly appointed Minister for Industry and Employment, Wade Noonan, was able to attend. This is a priority area for him. The discussion centred on the experience of organisations in running businesses with broader objectives than profit. We also examined ways in which government could play a positive role in promoting the sector. This is already an active area of policy development and implementation by this government, and more initiatives will be developed, particularly as a means of achieving strong employment outcomes for disadvantaged people.

Human Rights Law Centre

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — Last Friday I had the great pleasure of attending the Human Rights Law Centre's (HRLC) annual fundraising dinner with my colleague Ms Pennicuik. It was in the stunning Plaza Ballroom. We were extremely lucky to have the sensational and moving Stan Grant as keynote speaker. He was joined by Victoria's equal opportunity and human rights commissioner, Kristen Hilton, and the wonderful HRLC staff. The title, '10 years of impact', was apt. The HRLC's advocacy for asylum seekers, the LGBTI community, the first peoples and other vulnerable groups has had an incredible impact. I have had the privilege of working with HRLC members in the push for safe access zones. The event was celebratory, and attendees gave generously, but it was also a reminder of the work ahead. Inequality, discrimination and practices that violate human rights are still present in Australia. I congratulate and thank the HRLC on a decade of advocacy.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — Over the past week we have seen this Premier show his true colours. This Premier has fought tooth and nail to actively destroy one of the greatest volunteer organisations in the world, our Country Fire Authority (CFA). This

Premier is determined to pay back his unionist mate Peter Marshall and sell out the CFA, handing control of this great volunteer organisation to a hardline militant union.

But can I tell the Premier that he does not know what he is up against. He is actively fighting against 60 000 of the best connected community volunteers we have in this state. He is fighting against anyone who understands the importance of the work of the CFA and who knows that they give of their time and place themselves in incredible danger to keep Victoria safe. These are the people we should be applauding and thanking every day; we should not be trying to crush them to pay back a mate who supported the Premier at the last election. Because that is what this is — payback for the union thugs who stood at polling booths intimidating voters and Liberal candidates at the last election. We all knew that Daniel Andrews was going to pay the United Firefighters Union (UFU) back for its support, and it is now clear what the price of that payback is. The Premier, Daniel Andrews, wants to sell the soul of our CFA.

I note that Ms Shing was absent from the CFA rally on Sunday. However, she was on the front steps of Parliament House this morning supporting the UFU's disgraceful takeover of the CFA, because as Ms Shing well knows, just as with the imminent leadership ballot between Daniel Andrews and the Minister for Emergency Services, Jane Garrett, she will have to pick a side. Does she support Peter Marshall and the UFU, or does she support the CFA?

Maronite community

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — On Saturday evening, 28 May, it was my pleasure to attend, along with my wife, Heam, an annual fundraising event organised by the Victorian Maronite community located within my electorate. Every year the Maronite parish has a big fundraiser to raise money for the church and its parishioners. I wish to congratulate the organisers for providing a splendid and successful evening while at the same time raising much-needed financial resources to fund important programs for the benefit of the community's less privileged.

Memorial Day

Mr ELASMAR — On Sunday, 29 May, I was pleased to represent the Victorian Minister for Veterans, the Honourable John Eren, at the Memorial Day service conducted at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. This special event was hosted by the

American Ex-Servicemen's Association. It was a moving ceremony beautifully arranged and organised by the president and secretary of the association, Mr Warren Sapir and Mr Ed Bartosh respectively. Finally, it was my solemn duty on the day to lay a wreath in remembrance of American servicemen and women whose lives were lost in battles that go back to the American Civil War in the 1860s.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — The Premier, Daniel Andrews, is putting at risk the future of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the lives of Victorians by maintaining his bull-headed stance in his relentless backing of his United Firefighters Unions (UFU) mates in the CFA-UFU enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations.

Since the Premier is blatantly refusing to listen to reason from the 60 000-strong CFA volunteer firefighting community, his own MPs now need to take up the fight and support their local CFAs. The Premier has so far ignored the push by one lone Labor MP, the Minister for Emergency Services, who has had the spine to stand up to his bullying tactics. This will need to be a concentrated effort by all Labor MPs — assuming, that is, that Labor country MPs care about the future of their local fire brigades.

I call on all Labor MPs in northern Victoria to join me in supporting our CFA volunteers. I call on Steve Herbert, a member for Northern Victoria Region, to stand up for our CFAs and to give his voice to the cause in the cabinet room. I call on Jaclyn Symes, a member for Northern Victoria Region, to stand up for all CFAs across our electorate. I call on the member for Bendigo East in the Legislative Assembly, Jacinta Allan, to stand up for Bendigo and central Victoria CFAs, including using her power as a minister to support the CFAs in cabinet. I call on the member for Bendigo West in the Legislative Assembly, Maree Edwards, to stand up for the Bendigo and central Victoria CFAs. I call on the member for Macedon in the Legislative Assembly, Mary-Anne Thomas, to stand up for Macedon CFAs, and I call on the member for Yan Yean in the Legislative Assembly, Danielle Green, to stand up for the Yan Yean CFAs. I call on the Premier to reverse his position and support our 60 000-strong volunteers.

Military repatriations

Ms TIERNEY (Western Victoria) — I rise to speak on the recent repatriation of the bodies of 33 Australian

service personnel who were previously interred at the Terendak Military Cemetery in Malaysia and at the Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore. Under the arrangements in place at the time of their deaths, unless families were willing to pay £600 to have the remains repatriated, these service personnel were buried in the nearest commonwealth cemetery. As we stand here today, it is almost unfathomable that this could have been the reality, yet sadly it was.

These were young Australians who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country. These were families that lost their sons and brothers in a conflict that in many ways was beyond comprehension. It was brutal, it was messy and ultimately it was futile. To be then told that it was the financial responsibility of the family to bring the remains of their son home, which 33 families simply could not afford, was wrong — wrong in every sense of the word. Whilst the pain caused by this wrong can never be taken back, this has been an important process for the families who have suffered, and I acknowledge all those involved in making it possible.

We are now approaching Vietnam Veterans Day, chosen to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, which this year occurred 50 years ago. The passing of time should not and will not diminish our memory of the horror of what took place for so many of these young Australians as well as the impact that their deaths had on their families and friends. Lest we forget.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! Well said, Ms Tierney.

Ramadan

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Muslims around the world marked the start of the holy month of Ramadan yesterday — today in Australia. It is a time marked by intense prayer, dawn-to-dusk fasting and good deeds and charity. I encourage members of Parliament who are invited to either an iftar dinner or a meal by a Muslim family to take advantage of that opportunity so that any of the stereotypes that have been used to divide communities are dispelled.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mrs PEULICH — On the topic that is on everyone's lips, and that is the plight faced by the 60 000 Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers, I express the disappointment of the South Eastern Metropolitan Region at the silence of all the Labor MPs across the area whose constituencies are served by the CFA, including the Premier, Daniel Andrews, in

Mulgrave; the Narre Warren North MP in the Legislative Assembly, Luke Donnellan; the Narre Warren South MP in the Legislative Assembly, Judith Graley; the Cranbourne MP in the Legislative Assembly, Jude Perera; the Frankston MP in the Legislative Assembly, Paul Edbrooke; the Carrum MP in the Legislative Assembly, Sonya Kilkenny; the Mordialloc MP in the Legislative Assembly, Tim Richardson; the Clarinda MP in the Legislative Assembly, Hong Lim; the Lyndhurst MP in the Legislative Assembly, Martin Pakula; the Dandenong MP in the Legislative Assembly, Gabrielle Williams; and of course also the Leader of the Government here in the upper house, the Honourable Gavin Jennings. There has not been a word from any of them to defend the interests of our volunteers, who have been there through thick and thin and who in times of emergency have been there for the community. It is all to pay back the United Firefighters Union and Peter Marshall for the service given to the Labor Party at the last state election.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I condemn the Andrews Labor government for its outrageous attempts to ram through an enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) with the United Firefighters Union that threatens the very existence of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) as we know it and its 60 000 loyal and dedicated volunteers, who have so ably protected Victorian lives and property for more than 70 years. What sort of Premier deliberately sets out on a warpath to directly destroy the very basis of one of the most successful and largest volunteer organisations in the world whilst literally damaging the spirit of volunteerism in our great state, possibly forever? And for what? The government's own Minister for Emergency Services has been against the proposed EBA deal because of its unfairness to volunteers, and in the last few days former Labor emergency services minister André Haermeyer has also come out strongly in support of the CFA volunteers by opposing the deal.

Victorians live in one of the most dangerous, fire-prone areas in the world, and the devastating bushfires our state has previously faced, including the Black Saturday fires in 2009, the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983 and the Great Ocean Road fires last summer, stand as testament to the ferocity and destructive capacity of fire on our environment. For over 70 years Victorians have been very fortunate to have had the services of CFA volunteers, giving up their valuable time to protect lives and property, and all they have ever asked for is respect. However, by not listening to the CFA

volunteers' concerns, the Premier and his government are showing no respect at all. If the proposed EBA deal prevails and the CFA suffers the mass resignation of tens of thousands of volunteers, Victorian lives and property will be placed at great risk next summer.

The CFA board has rejected the proposed EBA deal, stating that not only is the agreement overwhelmingly unfair to CFA volunteers but some clauses are unlawful and should not be in a modern industrial agreement. The Andrews government must back down and listen to the CFA volunteers' and the greater community's concerns.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I move:

That the resolution of the Council of 25 May 2016, 'Production of documents — Suspension of the Leader of the Government', be read and rescinded pursuant to standing order 7.07 to allow debate on the Transparency in Government Bill 2015.

The Leader of the Government and Special Minister of State's bill will require the emergency response times of Ambulance Victoria, the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade to be published online every quarter. This legislation will also require all statements of priorities agreed to by Ambulance Victoria, public health services and denominational hospitals to be published online by 1 November each year.

The former Liberal government refused to release ambulance response times and hospital performance data. The Transparency in Government Bill 2015 will ensure Victorians have access to this critical information under this government and all future governments. Since coming to government we have released previously secret data about ambulance response times, but this legislation is required to ensure that governments will never again be able to keep this information secret from the community. However, this bill cannot be further considered until the Special Minister of State returns to this house. He is ready to do so at the Council's acquiescence.

The suspension of the Leader of the Government is the longest suspension of a member inflicted by any house in this Parliament's history. Until the most recent suspension from the Assembly of Geoff Shaw for 11 days in 2014, the longest period any member of the Victorian Parliament had been suspended for was 6 sitting days, or two weeks — nowhere near the six months the Liberal-Nationals coalition and the

Greens party imposed last sitting week. Suspension of government leaders by the Legislative Council in relation to documents motions in the past have been measured in hours, not in months, and the voters of South Eastern Metropolitan Region have been denied their representation in this place.

The Andrews government has responded to 12 of the 13 orders for documents made so far by the Legislative Council. We have released 523 documents in part or in full and withheld only 45 documents. The coalition's motion voted on in the last sitting week notes the government's failure to comply, to the satisfaction of the Council, with the following resolutions of the Legislative Council seeking the production of six categories of documents:

- (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;
- (d) 25 February 2015 in respect of Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project documents;
- (e) 10 June 2015 in respect of Advanced Lignite Demonstration Program documents; and
- (f) 5 August 2015 in respect of Peter Mac Private hospital documents.

The government has provided a considered and final response to each of the requests for documents listed in this motion. In only one case were no documents provided — that was in relation to the request for documents relating to the Australian Formula One Grand Prix. For each and every one of the other requests the government has provided documents to the house.

Parliament's power to order the production of government documents is not limited. That said, executive privilege was claimed only for documents or parts of documents which contained personal information, cabinet-in-confidence information, commercially sensitive information, material obtained from third parties in confidence or documents which would disclose draft or deliberative materials. The government has offered on numerous occasions to participate in constructive dialogue to resolve the divergent views on these matters held by the government, the coalition and the Greens party. This proposal was provided by the government to the coalition in writing and was put on the public record by Ms Shing in the debate in this house.

As I said, since December 2014 there have been 13 orders for documents made by the Legislative Council. For the 12 responses tabled thus far, 568 documents have been identified as relevant — 467 documents have been released in full, 56 documents have been released in part and only 45 documents have been withheld in full. By contrast, in the 57th Parliament the former coalition government provided some documents to just three of Labor's six requests for orders for documents in the upper house. No documents at all were provided in response to requests by Labor seeking orders for documents on ambulance response times, Patrick stevedores relocation and the east-west link business case for which just a glossy executive summary was released, which of course contained none of the details of this project.

To date no member of the Liberals, Nationals or Greens parties has volunteered any meaningful grounds upon which the 58th Council's 'satisfaction' could be met. The ongoing lack of clarity from the coalition and the Greens parties over the necessary conditions required has impeded the ability to achieve any meaningful resolution. The government is the only party to have placed before the Legislative Council a defined set of conditions under which documents may be withheld on the ground of executive privilege.

In April 2015 the Attorney-General provided a letter to the house, and for the record it includes reference to documents that:

reveal, directly or indirectly, the deliberative processes of cabinet;

reveal high-level confidential deliberative processes of the executive government, or otherwise genuinely jeopardise the necessary relationship of trust and confidence between a minister and public officials;

reveal information obtained by the executive government on the basis that it would be kept confidential, including because the documents are subject to statutory confidentiality provisions that apply to Parliament;

reveal confidential legal advice to the executive government;

otherwise jeopardise the public interest on an established basis, in particular where disclosure would:

prejudice national security or public safety;

prejudice law enforcement investigations;

materially damage the state's financial or commercial interests (such as ongoing tender processes, or changes in taxation policy);

prejudice intergovernmental and diplomatic relations; or

prejudice legal proceedings.

The onus is now on the other parties in the chamber to propose an alternative set of principles if the government's proposition is not agreeable. The government is prepared to consider the engagement of an independent legal arbiter to hear disputes relating to claims of executive privilege. We are supportive of the President of the Legislative Council convening a meeting of the Procedure Committee to consider this. But to date the coalition and the Greens party have provided no feedback.

I call on members to rescind the resolution of 25 May 2016 to allow the Leader of the Government to return to this place and perform his duties, including those of representing his constituents in South Eastern Metropolitan Region, and to allow debate on the Transparency in Government Bill 2015 to proceed. The case has not been made for any suspension, let alone one of such unprecedented duration. The Liberals, Nationals and Greens coalition that exists on this issue has now some work to do. In the meantime the government wishes to enable the Special Minister of State and Leader of the Government in this house to return to perform his duties. I commend the motion to the house.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — It is quite astonishing. Barely a sitting day has passed since we debated a motion in great detail and this house passed a motion criticising the Leader of the Government and the government for not providing documents. The consequence of the repeated requests of this house and the repeated failure of the government to comprehensively provide those documents was that a suspension was put in place. The fact is that nothing has changed since this motion was passed just a day and a half of sitting ago. Given that, the coalition will not be supporting this motion. The government should not be surprised at that, because the fact is that absolutely nothing has changed.

The Deputy Leader of the Government — who has actually walked out of the chamber and is not staying to support this motion after delivering her speech, which she read word by word — knows full well that this is actually just a stunt in relation to the government. It was actually Mr Jennings who foreshadowed that this was exactly what was going to happen. Last sitting week, on the Tuesday, in some commentary Minister Jennings said in relation to debating this bill:

In the weeks to come, depending upon my availability ... there may be opportunities to enhance the transparency regime ...

He went on to say:

... there is a piece of legislation on the notice paper to address these issues. Unfortunately, through the combined actions of the previous administration and the Greens, they have decided they do not want me in the Parliament to deal with that piece of legislation.

Now, there is absolutely no need for there to be a connection between Minister Jennings's presence in the chamber and that legislation being dealt with. But this is what Minister Jennings said. In fact he went on on the Tuesday to say, in response to a question from Ms Hartland, that he would deal with this legislation on 'the next sitting week that I am in the chamber'. On a number of occasions, both on the Thursday and on the Tuesday, Mr Jennings foreshadowed that he would not be bringing forward this legislation, firstly using it as a threat and then using it as a tit-for-tat in relation to dealing with this legislation if the suspension motion came back.

Ms Shing — If he's not here, he can't deal with it.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — Ms Shing makes an interjection, saying, 'If he's not here, he can't deal with it'. This is one of the fundamental flaws of this government's argument. Basically what Ms Shing and in fact this whole motion are saying is that there is no-one competent in this chamber on the government side to actually handle this bill — no-one competent of all these people to manage what is actually a reasonably straightforward bill through this house. It highlights that fact.

We have Ms Mikakos, who has been in the Parliament for 17 years — 8 years as a parliamentary secretary and 18 months as a minister. She is not competent to actually take what is largely a health bill, a portfolio which she represents in this house, through this chamber. Mr Herbert has been in this Parliament for 14 years — not competent to carry the Transparency in Government Bill 2015 through the house. The Deputy Leader of the Government in this chamber, who declined to stay and support the motion she has moved, is not competent in the view of her own government to be able to take carriage of a relatively straightforward bill through this chamber.

Mr Dalidakis could do it. We on the coalition side know that he could do it. He could take this bill through this chamber, but I will tell him that his colleagues do not want him to. His colleagues do not want him to take this bill through this chamber, and that is what this motion clearly manages to highlight. There is no-one competent. Ms Shing came down to the table and assisted Mr Herbert with a motion just last sitting week.

Even Ms Shing could take this bill through the chamber, but clearly what the government believes is that no-one is competent to take this bill through the chamber if Mr Jennings is not here. This chamber would not function without him!

No-one has the competence, we saw today, to actually try to answer a question unless there is the watchful eye of Mr Jennings to make sure that those questions are answered in the right way. The government took everything on notice. It is actually quite disturbing that the government does not believe that there is capability in this chamber from its ministers or its frontbenchers or even its backbench to be able to do something as basic as take a bill, which is non-controversial and which actually seeks to legislate for something that happens already, through this chamber.

Ms Pulford obviously argued the case in relation to the motion, and I do think it is important to go through that and put this on the record. Sixteen months ago was the start — the first documents motions from the Greens in relation to documents requested by this chamber. They were absolutely supported. From February 2015 through to August 2015 came a series of documents motions, some of which were responded to in part and some of which have not been responded to. There was a second motion in August that said, ‘No, this chamber is serious. This chamber has the right to request these documents, and this chamber has the right, if those documents are not provided, to have consequences as a result of that’.

What is very clear from this government is that it reacts to pressure. It is only when the pressure is on that this government actually then seeks to undertake any action, and the Advanced Lignite Demonstration Program is a fantastic example of that — an example where the government provided some documents but said that the rest of the documents were not able to be provided because of executive privilege and all sorts of other claims. Subsequently, then — in the last few weeks — the government has had a change of heart. It has said, ‘Actually we made a mistake. We believe there are more documents that could be provided on the Advanced Lignite Demonstration Program. Therefore they will be released’. That is just an example of how, when under pressure, this government says, ‘Actually we need to respect the wishes of the Parliament, and actually we need to make sure that we can give some further information’.

It has not gone far enough. Let me give you another example: a motion on the Peter Mac Private hospital, an absolutely atrocious decision in relation to the Premier deciding to can private beds. Ten thousand patients per

year are going to miss out on treatment at the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre. There was the motion requesting documents and the second motion saying, ‘Come on, give us this information or there’ll be consequences’; it was not until the motion to suspend the Leader of the Government was actually on the notice paper that this government then provided some of those documents. So it is clear that consequences being put in place is what actually drives action from this government, and we have seen that again and again.

What we have seen in so many cases is the claim of executive privilege. That is where the issue is. Regularly there is a claim of executive privilege in relation to each of the documents. Let me give you an example from the Peter Mac Private documents — documents withheld on the basis of executive privilege. There is a list. There are 12 documents: report, executive privilege claimed; report, executive privilege claimed; cabinet committee briefing; email and attachment. Even at the first hurdle, the standing orders are quite clear that there is a mechanism to deal with claims of executive privilege in this house. Standing order 11.03, under ‘Documents claiming executive privilege’, says:

- (1) Where a document is claimed to be covered by executive privilege —
 - (a) a return is to be prepared showing the date of creation of the document, a description of the document, the author of the document and reasons for the claim of executive privilege ...

Even at the first hurdle, in very clear writing in our standing orders, what we get is actually not the detailed description of the document or the creation date of the document or even the author of the document; we get ‘report’, we get ‘briefing’, we get ‘briefing note’, we get ‘letter’ and then we get a claim of executive privilege. So we are not even in the first instance being able to assess the government’s claim of executive privilege and if it is reasonable from the summary that is provided.

The standing orders go on to say that there is the capacity to appoint an independent legal arbiter to the process — and that is laid out — who can assess these documents. The government has consistently refused to undertake the process that was unanimously agreed in 2014 by all parties and that actually sits printed here in our standing orders. We have had just refusal from the government from day one and a refusal to engage in the process that is clearly laid out in our standing orders and that can resolve this.

What we have said is that we do not dispute that executive privilege can be claimed on documents. It is absolutely fair enough, and we uphold that, which interestingly is different to what we are seeing happening in the Legislative Assembly — but that is an aside. The issue is that we do not trust and believe this government when its members have claimed executive privilege that it actually is executive privilege that is fairly applied in these instances. That is why we need the independent legal arbiter. That is exactly the reason why the standing orders allow for a process to test the claim of executive privilege.

I have to say that the government's claim on the Advanced Lignite Demonstration Program exactly goes to this point. There was a claim of executive privilege; under pressure the government then provided more documents. What we clearly know is that members of this government are prepared to change their assessment in relation to executive privilege under pressure. We think all the claims of executive privilege should go — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order! Minister Dalidakis!

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Mr Ondarchie — He should be booted for that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order! If only the Acting President had those powers. Ms Wooldridge, to continue, and members will note that Ms Wooldridge has the right to be heard in silence.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — Thank you, Acting President. Sometimes there is a very easy — —

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order!

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, Acting President, the minister continues to flout your ruling, speaks over the top of you while you are standing and disrespects the Chair and the integrity of this place. My proposal to you is that you call the President so that appropriate action can be taken.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order! I thank Mr Ondarchie. I will in fact allow the minister to show the house that he can allow Ms Wooldridge to make her contribution in the way she should be able to: in silence. That does not discount that I may in fact call the President in the future, but I have given the minister

warning and I hope that he takes that with the seriousness with which it was issued.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — I can understand why those opposite are very upset at their own government's incapacity to follow the standing orders that they agreed to unanimously in 2014 and that when those points are highlighted they are frustrated in relation to the non-performance of the government.

What we are very clearly saying is that we do support claims of executive privilege but that we believe that the independent arbiter process laid out in the standing orders should enable that to happen in a way that the whole house can have confidence in. This is a process that is used effectively in New South Wales and in other parliaments, where there are ways to have these issues resolved in a way that is very clear. In subsequent correspondence between Mr Jennings and me we very clearly said that we support cabinet in confidence and executive privilege, that we support an independent arbiter process, that we would support the decisions that were made by an independent arbiter and that, if those claims of executive privilege are found not to be valid, those documents should be provided.

There is a very clear pathway for this issue to be resolved and a very clear pathway for Minister Jennings to return to this chamber. What we need from the government, whose members have clearly outlined that they have concerns with the process, is an articulation of what process it would be satisfied with so that we can consider that in relation to this. We do not have that process, certainly not in relation to the independent arbiter, laid out in any detail at all.

What we did was we came to 23 February, three and a half months ago, when we laid out very clearly what the motion was — that there was a need for those documents to be provided and that the house had a right to call for those documents. It has been debated at length. Minister Dalidakis, who cannot resist contributing today, had over 2 hours to contribute exactly on this motion. I certainly hope that he will contribute on this motion today in the same way that he contributed on the motion some time away. We also had Mr Mulino contribute much more comprehensively, I have to say, for about the same time, or a little bit longer — he had a few extra minutes in relation to Mr Dalidakis. But overall we had about 12 hours of debate with about 15 speakers. We had a huge amount of time.

We want the documents. We actually want the documents or a fair process to assess the documents in relation to the motion. So for three and a half months

we laid out a process that was going to happen. Week after week we debated it, and in the interests of being able to potentially resolve it and get the documents, at the point where we had clearly said a vote would be taken, we were even prepared to take that off the table and go another three weeks until that vote was taken. We got no progress from the government in terms of resolving this issue in a satisfactory measure.

The thing that was interesting was that at the final hour — and it literally was the 11th hour — when the vote was to be held at 11.45, something we had clearly told everyone and clearly telegraphed through a motion in this house, we got a bit of paper. It had no letterhead, no signature and no date. It was a bunch of bullet points. Apparently this constitutes a commitment from the government in terms of the way forward. Actually what it is is a commitment to have a meeting to talk further about it so we can try and resolve the situation. After three months of debating this, of clearly laying out our timetable and of being prepared to negotiate and extend that timetable, getting this at 11 o'clock before an 11.45 vote was just too little too late. So the vote was taken. This chamber took the vote, and a decision was made in relation to the motion.

There has been correspondence since. What we do want is to make progress because all along what we have said is that this is about openness and transparency. We heard from Labor — before it was the government — about openness and transparency. Martin Pakula, now the Attorney-General, made some strong statements:

Under Labor, ministers will no longer be able to hide under stuffy rules, waste time grandstanding ...

I do not know what the 12 hours debating this motion was if it was not grandstanding. He also said that:

Labor will end this secret state and open our doors to the public, because we ... deserve to know the details that affect our lives.

All we are seeking to do is hold the government to account on the commitments its members made in opposition but have failed to do in government. It is very clear that there is a pathway forward. There is a way to resolve this if the government chooses to engage, and we are very keen to engage in that correspondence. As I have said, we want the government to do what it is meant to do and, if it does not want to provide the documents, to use the independent process and then release the documents based on the assessment in that independent process or not, whichever the case may be.

The fact is that the government has had plenty of time. Between Wednesday of the last sitting week and today

nothing has changed. There has been some correspondence which seeks to progress this issue, with the offer that further discussions will be had, but nothing has changed. That is the fundamental point. For some reason the government seeks to pass a motion that the only person who can take a bill through the house is Minister Jennings. That is absolutely laughable because what it says is that the government has no confidence in the capacity of any of its other ministers to be able to take a reasonably straightforward bill through this house. We see that this week any bill that had Minister Jennings involved in relation to it is not up for debate, but next week it will need to be because the appropriation bill will need to come through, and I assume the government will want to pass that before the end of the financial year.

So the coalition will not be supporting this motion because, firstly, nothing has changed since we voted in favour of the motion to suspend the Leader of the Government just a sitting day ago and, secondly, we think that there are people who can quite comfortably handle this bill. In fact Ms Pulford, the Deputy Leader of the Government, in speaking earlier about what was going to happen with the acting arrangements, said that a number of ministers in the house are available and will be on duty in relation to bills. The same could happen in relation to the Transparency in Government Bill.

The fact is that government members want to use this as a political tool to attempt to make a point, which in fact only highlights that they do not believe that there is the competence to be able to manage the government once Mr Jennings is removed from this chamber. The coalition will not be supporting this motion, and I encourage the house to not support the motion and to make sure that we can have the openness and transparency that the government promised but has not yet delivered and that we utilise processes that are laid out to make sure that documents are regularly provided by this house into the future.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I will just address a few of the points that Ms Pulford made in arguing for her motion. Ms Pulford suggested that the length of suspension of six months is outrageous and unprecedented, but the length of the suspension is in the hands of the government. It needs to provide the documents that the house has requested.

She also suggested that the voters of the South Eastern Metropolitan Region would be disenfranchised as a result of not having Mr Jennings in this chamber. South Eastern Metropolitan Region voters, or at least the ones who have been writing to me lately, are quite keen to

find out how it is that a previous proposal to put the Dandenong–Cranbourne line underground was canned when this government came in and replaced it with a proposal, sometimes called sky rail, where it is to be constructed above ground. However, I would have to say that the piece of information I am most interested in in relation to that is how it is that Metro got to pitch for the original job and, when it was rejected, still managed to get a great chunk of the new job anyway. That is the exact reason why we have requested this particular set of documents be tabled. The Labor Party rejected an unsolicited proposal from Metro to rebuild that line and replaced it with its own new proposal, and we know very little about the business case or indeed the environmental effects of either.

And so it goes on as we go down through the line. The government has told us that the grants to try to find new uses for brown coal in the Latrobe Valley — very polluting uses are proposed — are some sort of big secret. The government calls it commercial in confidence. This is apparently a principle. One of the constructs of executive privilege is commercial in confidence. I do not know where this arose from and I do not know what the source of this stream of power is, but suffice to say it means little more than the fact that the government and the company may have put their heads together and said, ‘This is all a bit awkward. We don’t really want to talk about this, so we’re not going to give them the documents’.

They gave us some of the documents. They gave us a boilerplate contract. Then in a bit of a drip-feed as we got closer to this day they gave us a bit about the milestones that the company has to achieve in order to get these grants. Then we in fact find out — and it has been 12 months since we first asked for the documents — that the company is about to fail its milestones and therefore the money should be withdrawn, but the one bit that the government will not give us contains the conditions in the contract under which the government could break the contract.

Government members have been saying since they arrived, ‘We can’t break these contracts. These grants for new uses for brown coal were signed by the previous government, and we can’t break them’. But conveniently they cannot show us — much as they would like to — the bit of the contracts that says when they can or cannot break them. You would have to be a childlike innocent to believe that explanation from the government in relation to that particular document.

In relation to the grand prix contract, this is where they come back to their concept of statutory secrecy — that when Parliament passed a law requiring someone else

to keep something secret, that meant the Parliament was passing a law on itself to say it can never see the information. That is a pretty interesting concept when you realise that the Auditor-General in fact has got the power to look at any document he wants, including cabinet documents, but apparently Parliament does not have that power. The stream can rise above that source. The Auditor-General, who got his power from Parliament, has actually got more power than Parliament now, we are told.

In regard to the deliberations of cabinet, some of the deliberations of cabinet probably would attract an R rating if we were to have those exposed in the chamber, but in any case the government has never proven that these documents expose the deliberations of cabinet. In fact it has not told us anything about these documents at all really except we cannot have them. We have not received from the government a detailed description of each document and what claim it is making in relation to that document. We just simply get a letter from the Attorney-General that says, ‘It’s commercial in confidence, all the stuff you asked for. We’re not going to tell you what we’ve got, but we are going to tell you you can’t have it’. Sometimes we get one with the lot. It is commercial in confidence, it is cabinet in confidence, it is statutory secrecy — it is the whole lot. It is pretty hard to respond to such an open-ended claim, if a response is what the government wants.

The government said there has been no constructive dialogue; in fact there has. I took the initiative to talk to the Attorney-General, who is the guy signing these letters to the Parliament, and I said, ‘There’s got to be some discussion here that we can have’. But in fact there has been no movement because those opposite want to demonstrate to us that taking this measure of suspending the responsible member in this chamber is not going to get us what we want. They have backed themselves into a corner. But I am willing at any time to sit down with the Attorney-General and talk about the contents of particular documents.

In relation to the coal documents, he was able to provide a bit more information to the house, without prejudice to his original argument, that says he does not have to give it to us, but he said he will give it to us, but he does not have to, but he will. In that vein he should continue, I think. We have had nothing on the multibillion-dollar Cranbourne-Pakenham rail major project, except for a few documents that were passed around during public consultation — the flyer that went around the neighbourhood and the rest of it — but nothing in terms of the unsolicited proposal and why it was rejected.

We have not seen the key most important part of the coal documents, which is the conditions under which the government could withdraw that grant. I certainly urge that the government should withdraw that grant.

We have seen nothing on the West Gate distributor, despite the fact that the government just intends to sort of roll through on that one. It is all very convenient for government members to argue about this while they get on with approving, funding and constructing these projects, but these are still current matters that members — right from inner city Melbourne out through the western suburbs — want to know more about.

Just today we got a letter from the Attorney-General in relation to another request for a document — a report that the gambling regulator requested from Crown Casino in relation to the situation of problem gamblers at Crown Casino. All we got from the Attorney-General today was that he had not had time yet to consider our request, although this is not an expansive request. We have not asked for thousands of documents; we have asked for a specific document. The existence of that document is known, and yet again government members are playing the delaying game.

In relation to this matter earlier today I noticed one of the government's other speakers say that nothing like this suspension had ever happened in the history of Westminster and that he had looked. I have done a little bit of research of my own, because in fact I took the last government to the Supreme Court over its failure to provide a document to this house. In the process we certainly looked at other Westminster parliaments across the whole commonwealth universe. The member who made that statement is simply being deliberately obtuse. He should know exactly what happened in New South Wales. It was that the suspension of the Leader of the House precipitated in that case a court case that resolved the issue of the powers of the Legislative Council. The courts are only going to ever determine that a power exists, not the occasion or manner of its exercise, so it will always be the case that it is up to the wisdom of the members of the Legislative Council to decide what documents are required.

These public interest considerations that government members throw around are not for them to determine; they are for the house to determine. It is open to the government, as the previous government did, to write to this house saying, 'Yes, you do have the power to request this document, but we expect that you do not press your claim because the information that is contained in it is for some reason of potential risk to the public interest', and then the house itself will judge the

balancing of that public interest versus the broader public interest — the public's need to know about these multibillion-dollar projects that are still very much live controversies in Victoria.

If the member wanted to look further than New South Wales, he could look at the Parliament of Canada, where in a controversy over some documents that related to the conduct of the Canadian military forces in Afghanistan and whether in fact they had handed over prisoners to other agents who then subjected them to torture, it was simply a matter that the Speaker of the house stood up and made a ruling that the house had the power to request those documents. That is the mechanism by which they resolved the controversy.

Going back to the beginning of what Ms Pulford said, this house's powers, privileges and immunities arise out of those of the House of Commons in 1855. I do not know if she has gone back and read some of the debates of the House of Commons in 1855 in making her claim that the house routinely simply rolled over when the Crown said no — she is mistaken about that — but there are mechanisms by which we can resolve that if we want.

Alternatively I would ask all members who have not read it to simply read the legal advice that was obtained by the house back in 2007 by Bret Walker, SC. His advice was quite definitive. He ought to know; he is the guy who ran the successful case on behalf of the New South Wales Parliament when it was challenged by the New South Wales government in that state's Supreme Court and eventually in the High Court. The constitutional principles are not particularly complex to understand. The mechanism for resolving them I think is the current one — the house has determined to suspend the leader until such time as he hands over the documents — but if the government would like to talk to us about how we could get some permanent ongoing legal clarity about that, I am sure we could have a talk about that too.

That is a rather short version of speeches I have given many, many times in this chamber over the last 10 years. This question has gone back and forth for many a year. I hope that we get a resolution of this issue this time, but the attitude from the government is almost one of denial. In fact what we have learnt so far this afternoon is that basically government members have gone on strike in relation to their own legislative agenda. The last thing we did in Parliament in the last sitting week was have the Leader of the Government stand up and pass a motion saying that the house at its rising would return at 2 o'clock today, so that is what we did. We all turned up here today because the

government wanted us to be here. When we got here government members said, ‘Stuff you. We’re on strike. We’re not going to debate our legislation’ — so okay, it is their legislation — ‘and just to really show you we’re angry, we’re going to send you home early as well’.

We are not exactly quaking in our boots over here. This government needs to get on with the business of governing. That is why its members were elected — if they want Parliament to sit, it is because they have a legislative agenda that they want to move forward — and the whole spectacle is a bit embarrassing for them, I would have thought. It has been embarrassing for a long time, because they have already been on strike in relation to providing meaningful information through this documents process. Then last week they went on strike in terms of answering questions at question time. Well, they just take them on notice now, which is a lot more efficient actually, because with the exception of Mr Herbert most ministers just stand up and read from a likely looking section from their briefing folder while they run down the clock, so we do not get any answers that way, but if ministers want to stand up and say, ‘I’ll take it on notice’, all the better to move the process along even faster.

And who knows what other plans they have while they are here to basically down tools and say, ‘Well, if you chuck out the Leader of the Government, we will just stop governing, and somehow that’s going to show us all up’. Well, they are already struggling on the questions of transparency.

The issues relating to this set of documents — the ones that led to the suspension of Mr Jennings — are very serious issues. They are multibillion-dollar projects, and some of them relate to incredibly polluting coal projects or they go to the integrity of major events and what we are paying for those.

As I mentioned, we have now got a Crown Casino document in relation to problem gambling at Crown Casino that government members have failed to provide within the time requested — without, I think, reasonable excuse. They just seem to suggest they are too busy or whatever. The house is now going to have to determine what it does about that particular document. It was the Greens who first requested that document, and I think that is an important document that the house ought to consider before we find ourselves dealing with more legislation in this place about problem gambling or Crown Casino. We ought to understand exactly what the situation is down there in relation to gambling-related harm.

Perhaps the government will just settle down, return to some sort of normality and get on with the business that the people elected it to do, but nevertheless, transparency is going to become an ongoing thorn in its side if it cannot reach a compromise in relation to the class or content of these documents. As far as the rest of the commentary goes, the speech I just gave is the same speech that the Greens members have given in relation to all documents under the governments of Mr Bracks, Mr Brumby, Mr Baillieu, Dr Naphthine and now Mr Andrews. We believe we have got a strong backing from the procedures of other Westminster parliaments around the world, and no-one would particularly expect us to change that view.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to speak very briefly to Ms Pulford’s motion this afternoon, and I wish to speak in support of the motion. The dispute regarding documents which began this course of action certainly needs to be adjudicated, but I believe the suspension of the Leader of the Government has gone a step too far. Ms Pulford’s suggestions during her contribution about engaging an independent arbitrator or taking this matter to the Procedure Committee are welcome suggestions, in my opinion. What is not so welcome is the deliberate taking on notice of all questions. This is an example of the step too far. I am sure that the public would not find this a productive use of our time. The DLP certainly does not find it a productive use of our time, so I am voting for the political game playing to stop and to bring the Leader of the Government back to address the legislative agenda before the house.

We are a house of review, and I am concerned that if Minister Jennings’s suspension continues, this house will find it increasingly difficult to do its job. I am not interested in the tit for tat, as Ms Wooldridge aptly describes the chamber procedures becoming. As I said, this is a very brief contribution. I just wanted to state for the record why I will be voting the way I will be voting. As a conservative crossbencher, I am determined to do the job that I was elected to do, and therefore I will be voting in support of this motion.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak Ms Pulford’s motion:

That the resolution of the Council of 25 May 2016, ‘Production of Documents — Suspension of the Leader of the Government’, be read and rescinded pursuant to standing order 7.07 to allow debate on the Transparency in Government Bill 2015.

Something has become fairly evident in here today. There has been no new evidence, there has been no additional argument and there has been no complaint

about the duration, despite Mr Melhem's contribution during the debate about challenging how long Mr Jennings should be out for, but what has become evident in this place today, with Mr Jennings not at the table and not here for question time, is: no Gavin, no skill.

It has become very obvious today there is no leadership capability on the other side, which I find quite insulting to some of my parliamentary colleagues across the other side. Today in question time, consistent with the stamping of their feet and the dummy spit on the last day of the last sitting week, there will be no answers provided immediately. They will take it on notice. This is a strike. This is industrial action at its finest by the Australian Labor Party in the Parliament of Victoria, and that is what they have brought it down to.

The key to this motion is this: 'We need Mr Jennings back', says the government, 'so we can debate the Transparency in Government Bill 2015' — a bill of 2015, when we are now midway through 2016. Is the government so far behind in its legislative program that we are still dealing with a bill from 2015? And the answer is, according to this motion, 'We can't do it unless Mr Jennings is in the chamber'. Maybe it is Mr Jennings who has determined that they cannot do this bill in the chamber without him here. Maybe he lacks complete confidence in his colleagues on the government side of the chamber and says, 'You guys can't do this without me' — and what an interesting statement that is. What he is saying, when we look across the government benches, is that there is nobody who can do this, bar him.

Mr Leane has got great experience in this place and in my view is absolutely capable of high office, but Mr Jennings is saying Mr Leane is not capable of doing this. Ms Shing is a lawyer who second chaired a committee stage with Mr Herbert last week and, as I am sure Mr Herbert would agree, did a marvellous job in second chairing with him, but Mr Jennings is saying Ms Shing is not capable of prosecuting this bill. Mr Mulino, from Eastern Victoria Region, is quite an articulate man who I had the pleasure of joining on the port of Melbourne inquiry — we spent many hours together, and I have a high respect for his intellect and capability — but Mr Jennings is saying Mr Mulino is not capable of prosecuting the Transparency in Government Bill. He is saying Ms Mikakos is a minister in her own right and a member for my own electorate of Northern Metropolitan Region, but Mr Jennings has so little faith in this minister that he is saying she cannot prosecute that bill without him in the house.

Mr Elasmarr, my friend who has been in this Parliament for a great deal of time and, I have to say, is one of the true gentlemen of the Parliament, is highly intelligent with lots of experience in this place, but Mr Jennings is saying Mr Elasmarr cannot prosecute this bill. He has to do it himself. Mr Herbert, late of the seat of Eltham in the Assembly, which he abandoned to take a role in the upper house, with some suspicion that he was going to pull the pin shortly after that — that did not quite work out — is now looking after higher skills and is a minister in his own right here in the Parliament today, but Mr Jennings is saying this minister does not have the capacity to deal with the Transparency in Government Bill. Ms Symes, the Government Whip, is a lawyer in her own right and infinitely capable, but it is being said by Mr Jennings and this motion that this cannot be done by Ms Symes. It has to be done by Mr Jennings.

When it comes to the other minister at the table, the boy king himself — Mr Dalidakis, the self-proclaimed expert in this chamber, who even in his first few weeks here decided to guide the President on how rulings should be made — he is not the acting leader in the house and is not capable of dealing with the Transparency in Government Bill, because the motion says it has to be Mr Jennings. Mr Somyurek, a former minister and a member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region, who was knifed by his own people — I know Mrs Peulich knows all about what happened out there — has had ministerial experience in the chamber and been here for some time, but he cannot run this Transparency in Government Bill, because this motion says it can only be done by Mr Jennings.

Mr Melhem, from Western Metropolitan Region, the numbers man of the ALP, tells us in the Parliament that he was the leader in his own right with the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, but the clear message from this motion is that he does not have the capacity to deal with this bill. Respected businessman Mr Eideh, from Western Metropolitan Region, is a nice man who has lots of business experience and has been in this Parliament for some time, but this motion says he cannot deal with the Transparency in Government Bill, because it has to be done only by Mr Jennings. The Deputy President, Ms Tierney, from Western Victoria Region, also has been in this Parliament for some time, but the message from the government, through Mr Jennings, is, 'We suspect that she doesn't have the capacity to deal with this bill'.

Perhaps the most insulting part of this whole thing is that regarding the Deputy Leader of the Government in this place, Ms Pulford, who came to the Parliament in 2006 and who has significant regional experience and

now is a minister — the deputy leader herself — this motion says she cannot deal with this, because Mr Jennings has decided that only he can deal with the Transparency in Government Bill.

What an insult to his own members on that side of the house — members who have a range of intellects and a range of experiences, including a range of ministerial experiences. This motion says, ‘Nothing can be done, unless it’s done by Gavin’. Well, one of two things is possible here: either Mr Jennings has an over-inflated view of his own capacity, or he is blocking the capacity and capability of ministers and members on the other side to deal with these things in his absence. There is a complete lack of confidence in his own team, so one could be excused, if you are standing on this side of the chamber, for saying, ‘Well, if Mr Jennings isn’t here, they fall away pretty quickly’. This motion itself says no-one can do it but Mr Jennings.

The President said during question time today that there should be other ministers in this house who can cover for Mr Jennings’s absence. Well, this motion says, ‘Sorry, President, you’re wrong; no, they can’t’, because it says, based on the previous motion about production of documents, that there is no new information coming from the government, there is no new evidence and there is no new production of documents. The key reason for this motion is this: ‘We need to deal with the Transparency in Government Bill 2015, and only Mr Jennings can do it’.

I would say that despite the expertise in this room — and I use the example of Ms Shing second chairing a committee stage the other day — the message is that apart from Mr Jennings, no-one else is capable. Well, what an insult. For a government that professes equality and professes that everybody is at the same level to say to this chamber, to say to Mr Jennings’s own members of Parliament, ‘You don’t have the capability to deal with this’, is quite an insult.

There are a number of bills on the notice paper today that have Mr Jennings’s name against them. There is the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016, the Appropriation (Parliament 2016–2017) Bill 2016, the Parliamentary Budget Officer Bill 2016, the State Taxation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2016, the Statute Law Repeals Bill 2014, which still sits on the notice paper, and this one — the Transparency in Government Bill 2015. I and the opposition will oppose this motion for two reasons and for two reasons only: one, there has been no new evidence; and two, what an insult! What an insult it is to Mr Jennings’s side of the house that there is no-one capable of doing this but him. We will oppose this motion.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will be brief in reply. These matters are all too well known and understood by all members in this place. I thank those who have contributed to this debate. Needless to say I am disappointed that having provided an opportunity for the Liberals or the Greens to further outline in any way what they mean by ‘to the satisfaction of the house’, not one argument — not one shred of detail — has been forthcoming.

I thank Dr Carling-Jenkins for her indicated support for this motion and Mr Ondarchie for his character assessment. I think the highlight of that contribution was when he described Mr Elasmarr as a true gentleman of this place; I am not sure it added a great deal to the debate. I note Mr Barber asked the government to outline the public interest grounds. I just respond by saying that is precisely what we did in the letter from the Attorney-General to the house in April that I outlined in my initial contribution.

Also, again just briefly responding to Ms Wooldridge, I note that Ms Wooldridge did acknowledge the need for and validity of cabinet-in-confidence protection of some classes of documents, and that is of course a welcome admission. Ms Wooldridge, however, did also say on the other hand that she would prefer the arbiter model. Obviously there are some inherent contradictions here, and having a pure application of both at the same time is impractical, to say the least, if not impossible.

I do invite the members of the Liberal Party and the members of the Greens, as we have done before, to articulate exactly what they mean when they say ‘to the satisfaction of the house’. We have provided them with ample opportunity to do so during this debate today. We stand willing to engage in constructive dialogue on this matter, but to date neither the coalition nor the Greens have provided feedback. We have had a great opportunity for this to be expressed in some detail by either Ms Wooldridge or Mr Barber during the course of today’s debate. Of course it is a matter of some regret that they have declined to take up that invitation.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 18

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bourman, Mr | Mulino, Mr |
| Carling-Jenkins, Dr | Patten, Ms |
| Dalidakis, Mr | Pulford, Ms |
| Eideh, Mr | Purcell, Mr |
| Elasmarr, Mr | Shing, Ms |
| Herbert, Mr | Somyurek, Mr (<i>Teller</i>) |
| Leane, Mr | Symes, Ms |
| Melhem, Mr | Tierney, Ms |
| Mikakos, Ms | Young, Mr (<i>Teller</i>) |

Noes, 20

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Atkinson, Mr | Lovell, Ms |
| Barber, Mr | Morris, Mr (<i>Teller</i>) |
| Bath, Ms | O'Donohue, Mr |
| Crozier, Ms | Ondarchie, Mr |
| Dalla-Riva, Mr | Pennicuik, Ms |
| Davis, Mr | Peulich, Mrs |
| Dunn, Ms | Ramsay, Mr |
| Finn, Mr | Rich-Phillips, Mr |
| Fitzherbert, Ms | Springle, Ms (<i>Teller</i>) |
| Hartland, Ms | Wooldridge, Ms |

Motion negatived.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Before I ask members to resume their places I wish to make a very short statement on this matter. Obviously the debate has concluded, but it is a matter of considerable importance. As members will know, last time we had a vote on this I indicated that the Chair was in an invidious position in this entire matter. I just want to clarify to the house the position of my vote, because it is significant, particularly in the context of today's vote. My position is that I need to uphold the motions or the directions of the house and I also need to be guided by the standing orders in terms of the approach that I take as the Chair of proceedings. In this matter the house made a request, and the house debated the issue of a penalty, if you like, in respect of the failure, as perceived by a majority of members, that the government has not sufficiently disclosed or met its obligations under a motion posed by this house.

I am not making a judgement on that per se, but I simply say that that was the house's majority position and given that the information has not been provided and, more importantly, given that the government has not used provisions that are in our standing orders for an arbiter, I feel that I need to stick with the suspension motion at this time as Chair. I did not vote with the opposition and I did not vote with the Greens party; I voted in the context of the Chair upholding the position of those standing orders.

I am happy to report to the house that the Leader of the Government has provided me with a copy of a letter that has also been provided to other members which I think provides some very constructive proposals in terms of defining this issue further, not just to resolve this matter but indeed to provide a context going forward and an opportunity for us to perhaps address through those standing orders some modifications and some changes that might well be agreeable to all members of the house. There is clearly quite a bit of discussion that will need to occur with that. I will not be specifically part of that discussion as the Chair. It will need to be between the respective parties. But I do acknowledge and welcome this very constructive step

that has been taken that I hope will resolve this matter fairly soon. I thank members for their patience in this matter.

APPROPRIATION (2016–2017) BILL 2016 and BUDGET PAPERS 2016–17

Second reading

Debate resumed from 26 May; motion of Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) and motion of Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan):

That the Council take note of the budget papers 2016–17.

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — In making my contribution to the debate today around the appropriation bill I will limit my speech largely to the areas of family violence prevention and children and families. Of course the Greens welcome the emphasis on family violence in this budget: 119 of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence are to be implemented within 12 months of the report's publication, according to time lines the commission itself set. So we can expect that the government has budgeted for at least those 119 recommendations that are to be implemented within the first 12 months.

Not all of the recommendations have obvious and direct budgetary implications, of course. The Greens welcome the government's intention to implement all 227 of the commission's recommendations, and the Greens will support the government's implementation efforts, but we also take very seriously the task of holding the government to account. I am sure the government would expect nothing less in our democratic Westminster system. We in the Greens are dedicated to ensuring that each and every one of those 227 recommendations is implemented in full and in the spirit of the commission's intentions.

That was the government's promise.

The devil is generally, as they say, in the detail, and there are a few devils in the budget papers this year. The budget papers allocate an amount of \$4.6 million for family violence legal assistance. The budget papers make it very clear that this money is for both Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) and community legal centres (CLCs). The way that things work most often in practice, as I understand it, is that VLA represents perpetrators of family violence while CLCs represent victims and survivors. I understand that in the past decade the number of family violence cases where CLCs have provided assistance has increased nearly fivefold, but

the vast majority of victims and survivors who seek intervention orders never receive any independent legal advice.

It is vital that victims of family violence get legal assistance. It improves their understanding of the system, it improves their agency by clarifying their options and it actually makes people safer by reducing the likelihood of intervention order breaches. It is very clear that existing duty lawyer needs on behalf of family violence victims and survivors cannot be met with present funding, let alone the ongoing casework that CLCs do.

The commonwealth government is due to make a 30 per cent cut to the amount of funds for CLCs across Australia. So come the middle of next year CLCs in Victoria can expect even less funding while their case loads continue to grow, especially in the area of family violence support. When the \$4.6 million in the budget papers is broken down, as it was by the Attorney-General in estimates, we learned that \$2.1 million will go to VLA and only \$1.2 million will go to the CLCs for duty lawyers. There will also be an additional \$1.3 million for family violence-related grants.

The Federation of Community Legal Centres says that it needs \$4 million just to keep up with its current family violence case load, and that is not even taking into account duty lawyer work. I accept what the Attorney-General said in the inquiry into budget estimates 2016–17 — that there is still \$1 million from last year's CLC fund that has not been spent — but that fund was not specifically for family violence and the growth in demand for family violence-related services is huge.

So to put all this together, what we know is that the Victorian government has allocated \$572 million towards the prevention of family violence — which, as an aside, is almost as much as it spent on myki last year — and out of that \$572 million, \$2.5 million is going to go to community legal centres to help them to help victims and survivors of family violence. This could have been doubled to allow CLCs to keep doing the work they are doing, but an additional \$2.5 million apparently could not be found in the budget, even though the anticipated surplus is 1000 times that figure. I have got to say, I do not really understand that.

I know there are all sorts of interest groups out there vying for bigger slices of the budget pie. We know that the government cannot placate every demand for funding. But in the year in which we are supposed to be getting serious about the prevention of family violence

the Andrews government could not cut its surplus by one one-thousandth to tide the CLC sector over so that victims and survivors of family violence could be assured of getting specialised, independent advice about their legal options.

There are also some small but concerning gaps between some of the royal commission's recommendations and their implementation by the government. Recommendation 104, for instance, calls on the government to:

... increase investment in programs to ensure that people who have been affected by family violence have timely access to group-based or individual counselling for as long as they need.

Then we find in the budget papers that there is \$25.4 million over two years for therapeutic support that 'will provide up to 40 weeks of intensive support through counsellors to support victim recovery'. Now that is fantastic that counselling services get that money and it is fantastic that people will be funded for up to 40 weeks — there is no doubt about that — but 40 weeks is not quite the same as 'for as long as they need'. It may be, and let us hope that does not apply to very many people, but it is almost certain to apply to some people due to the fact that some survivors need more than 40 weeks of intensive support through individual or group counselling. The royal commission would not have added the words 'for as long as they need' if it did not intend its recommendation to carry that implication, so it is hard to understand why the government is limiting its funding of therapeutic counselling services for victims of family violence to 40 weeks when it gave a rock-solid promise that it would implement the royal commission's recommendations in full.

There are also some other recommendations of the royal commission which are due to be implemented in the first 12 months and about which the budget papers are silent. I am talking about, in particular, recommendations 98, 146 and 184. I look forward to learning more about how the government will implement these recommendations and all the others.

There is of course a significant crossover between the family violence prevention portfolio and the children and families portfolio. Where there is violence in a household with children, there are obviously protective concerns which can trigger the involvement of child protection. It is pleasing to see that the 2016–17 budget contains a package specifically for vulnerable children.

The Greens are pleased to see that there is \$5.7 million for integrated family services as part of this package.

As a proportion of the total spending on family violence that is a small amount. Indeed the vast bulk of the spending on vulnerable children is directed at out-of-home care — in other words, after a child has already been removed.

But integrated family services is one of the areas where true preventive intervention is a possibility. Family services are offered by organisations like Berry Street, Mackillop, Launch Housing, Hope Street, Good Shepherd and a range of other organisations as a way of working with families with children to address potential protective concerns before child protection possibly becomes involved more formally. When a family service organisation becomes involved with a family there is a remarkable opportunity for early intervention. A trained social worker, financial counsellor or family counsellor forms a relationship with the family and often comes into the family's home. There is also an opportunity to observe telltale signs of family violence if that is occurring, signs which are often hidden from public view, and to work constructively with families to address problematic patterns of behaviour.

We know that family violence manifests itself in a whole range of different ways and that there are varying degrees of violence. Victims and survivors often need varying degrees of help in protecting themselves and their children from different forms of violence, and the integrated family services approach provides opportunities to meet families where they are at. In the most extreme cases family services workers may need to get the police involved. In other cases, perhaps where the violence is not physical or where the victim does not want to leave, family services workers may be able to work with the family unit in a way that reduces the risk of violence. So it is very pleasing that integrated family services get some additional funding in this budget.

But there are some other gaps in the budgeted outputs for the Department of Health and Human Services. The current year's budgeted target for the daily average number of children in out-of-home care, for instance, is 500 fewer than the actual result for last year. This year's target makes little sense, and we cannot see that the budget papers take into account either population growth or the so-called permanency reforms to the child protection system that came into effect in March, the effects of which are still unknown but seem likely to increase demand in the system. For instance, even though the expected result in terms of the daily average number of children in out-of-home care for this year is nearly 1000 more than the target, the number next year is actually predicted to decrease again.

It is a similar story when we look at the targets for Child FIRST assessments. Bizarrely, this year's target for the number of Child FIRST assessments was nearly 2000 fewer than last year's actual result. Predictably, the expected result this year is nearly 3000 more than the target, which really should not be any surprise. Even more bizarrely, the target for next year has been revised down yet again. All this means is that the child protection system — from Child FIRST intake and assessment workers to integrated family services and through to the actual child protection workers on the ground — will again be underfunded when compared to the actual level of demand.

As it is, Child FIRST intake and assessment workers are working around the clock to respond to a spike in demand that they are just not funded to cope with. We know that workers are incredibly stressed across the entire spectrum of the child protection system because they are just not funded to cope with the sheer number of cases they need to deal with, and it seems the minister is basically asking them to do it all over again next year.

There is a similar story in the figures for the number of family services provided to Aboriginal families. Next year's budget expects the same number of cases as this year. That does not take into account population growth, let alone any of the other factors.

I can keep going. The number of children receiving an intensive support service is expected to stay the same as it was this year. Population growth alone would surely suggest that this number should increase. There will actually be fewer children as a proportion of the total number of children in out-of-home care who will receive intensive support services next year.

In conclusion, the Greens have questions about this budget in the areas of child protection and family violence prevention. Although there are some significant positives, we will be looking to the government to provide answers and responses to those gaps that we see in the current budget papers.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am very pleased to be able to speak on the appropriation bill. In starting I take the opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer, Tim Pallas, for the work he has done in delivering this budget. It is a budget that I think will be very beneficial to all Victorians, whether they are in metropolitan or regional areas. I think there is a lot of good news in this budget.

These debates go from side to side. One side of the chamber says it is a fantastic budget and the other side,

when it is their turn, says that it is not a fantastic budget at all. But in our last term in opposition I disciplined myself to make sure I made good comments about certain parts of the budget, particularly parts of the budget that the previous government had delivered that were beneficial to the Eastern Metropolitan Region, the region I represent. You cannot have a budget of the magnitude of this budget in dollar terms and say that you see nothing beneficial to the people you represent. I said that in the last term in opposition on the four occasions when I spoke on the budget bills, and I challenge members on the other side to have a go at that and see how they go.

Obviously there are important financial aspects to the budget. This budget delivers a surplus of \$2.9 billion. It is a surplus that of course makes sure that the state keeps its AAA rating from Moody's and Standard & Poor's. It also ensures average revenue growth of 3.4 per cent, greater than the average expenditure growth of 3.3 per cent. It makes a huge investment in infrastructure of \$7.4 billion, and to me that means jobs. Infrastructure and capital works provide very important projects for the state in generating employment and also stimulating the economy, and this budget will definitely do that.

Some local projects for the Eastern Metropolitan Region that I am very pleased about include funding towards a Maroondah breast cancer centre. This is a \$10 million injection into a project which is very important to all of the east of Melbourne, not just the Eastern Metropolitan Region. BreastScreen Victoria is currently working across the road from the main Maroondah Hospital in two or three premises that used to be houses, which have been fitted out to accommodate breast screening and other breast services, but it is just not appropriate for them to be there. This is something that BreastScreen Victoria and Maroondah Hospital have been pushing for for years — purpose-built state-of-the-art premises for these services. From my discussions with them recently I know they are very pleased that construction on a new centre will start soon due to the \$10 million injection into this new facility.

As far as education goes, there is record investment into funding education capital works in this particular budget. I know Melba College has been lobbying for a long time to consolidate its two campuses into one campus and to pretty much build a new school to be able to accommodate that. I was down at the college recently to discuss with some students, teachers, the principal and also the parents association the \$17 million-plus injection of funding which was announced in this budget. That will fund the new

school for Melba College. It is a college with growing enrolments. It is a great college, and everyone down there is very pleased with that injection of funds.

The announcement of over half a billion dollars of funding towards family violence prevention is very important. I recently spoke to a number of non-government organisations and councils that work together on family violence at a forum, I think about a month ago. I was pretty privileged to be there to discuss with them what this funding, and also the funding ahead, will mean for implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. This is a tough area to work in, and it is a challenging area to work in. I have nothing but admiration and praise for people that have been dealing with this issue for a number of years. They are very pleased that the Andrews government has been prepared to put its money where its mouth is in doing its best to deal with this issue.

As the Premier said a couple of years ago when he was in opposition and announcing the royal commission commitment, this was an issue that got away from us. We did not know all the answers, and the royal commission has assisted us with that. As I said, it is good to see the Andrews government putting its money where its mouth is as far as the issue goes, and I look forward to more announcements in the future about funding all the recommendations of the royal commission.

I am very pleased with the public transport announcements. I am very, very pleased by the good work of the Treasurer insofar as his budget has enabled the Melbourne Metro tunnel to be funded in full by the Andrews government. The Andrews government will not have to wait around for any decisions by a federal government as to whether it supports or does not support this particular project. This funding announcement in the budget means that the work can start. The physical work of scratching the ground for the Melbourne Metro has already started, with some testing of ground quality and so forth, and towards the end of the year there will be men and women in red jackets and hard hats actually digging up the ground, particularly at the Kensington end, and getting the project started.

As I have said from the outset, the Melbourne Metro project is about jobs as well. This 10-year project will have thousands and thousands of men and women working on it. The project contract will include a prescribed 10 per cent of apprentices on the project. There will be hundreds and hundreds of young men and women with the opportunity to be trained on this

project. If my maths are correct, over the 10-year period there is the opportunity to train three or four sets of tradespeople through that particular project, as well as train up road workers in other skills that do not necessarily prescribe an apprenticeship. The project will give people the opportunity for a long-term career in an area where we hope in this state there is always going to be this type of work improving infrastructure and our roads.

I would like to touch on the support to the emergency services. I see that there is funding of \$596 million, including for more police officers and special state-of-the-art equipment to upgrade police stations. I think this is a very important area. As someone who is related to a member of the police force, I think it is a great thing that the police force gets extra support. Many of us would have family members and friends that work for Victoria Police. I do not think we would want to use that relationship against each other at any time, but I think we would enjoy having conversations with them about what that funding means.

As far as emergency services goes, I am pleased that, unlike the previous government, there is more support for firefighting services. Unfortunately the previous government cut some \$41 million from the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and cut, I think, 600-odd positions from the CFA. As a group the coalition is trying to portray that it is the champion of the CFA. Well, it is just not true. I think the important thing in the debate is that we all should acknowledge that we support all firefighters in their endeavours, and we support all — —

Mr Morris — That's what you need to do. Everyone knows we support them.

Mr LEANE — That is not true, Mr Morris, because you think it is okay to attack firefighters, people who put out house fires and save people's lives, just because they make a living out of it.

Mr Morris interjected.

Mr LEANE — No, you have been on the record for the last few weeks, and your side of the chamber thinks it is all right to attack people who put out fires and save people's lives, because they might have a union card in their wallet or purse. You have actually shown that and you have proved it to us in the last three weeks.

The only people who have been attacking firefighters in this chamber are the Liberal and National party members; they are the only people who have been attacking them. Mr Morris could not find any statement where any member of the government has been

anything but supportive of any firefighter — whether they be volunteers or whether they actually make a living out of it.

It is a shame. I actually feel for this group of people. I feel for them. I have not seen any group of workers be attacked to this extent for asking for a pay rise before. I have not seen a political campaign like this.

Mr Morris interjected.

Mr LEANE — It is appalling. You should be ashamed of yourselves. You should be ashamed of yourselves for attacking the 3000-plus firefighters in this state just because they make a living out of it. It is a disgrace; it is an absolute disgrace.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ramsay) — Order! I ask Mr Leane to speak through the Chair.

Mr LEANE — It is a disgrace. They should be ashamed of themselves. I have never seen a group of workers, especially people who put out fires and save lives, have a political attack on them to this degree. It is a disgrace, and those opposite should be ashamed of themselves. This is grubby, divisive politics that the conservative parties do time and time again — the same old politics of division, the same old politics of attack. They attack people; why? Why is it okay?

Mr Morris interjected.

Mr LEANE — When you get to your contribution you tell us: why is it okay for you to attack firefighters just because they make a living out of it? We are at a loss. We actually feel for the firefighters that those opposite are besmirching and putting a slur on and being divisive about. We are not going to buy into it. If they want to carry on in that disgusting way, we will leave that to them. This government supports all firefighters — volunteers and paid firefighters. All firefighters we support.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ramsay) — Order! I did want to acknowledge the federal member for Mallee, Andrew Broad, who was in the gallery a few minutes ago. He seems to have slipped out, but I will put that on the record.

APPROPRIATION (2016–2017) BILL 2016 and BUDGET PAPERS 2016–17

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — Today as I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016 I note that members on the other side of the house just commented that there is \$2.9 billion in surplus. Now, that is a tremendous amount of money, and there is a good reason to spend it in my electorate.

My electorate covers 45 000 kilometres in area. From an East Gippsland perspective, the budget is largely disappointing. There were two highly anticipated funding initiatives that are lacking in this budget. The Stratford rail bridge over the Avon River has missed out. Planning and costings for the bridge project were completed two years ago by the Liberal-Nationals government, and it was very disappointing that this government has not put that into the budget. Eighteen months later, into the second budget, it is very disappointing that there is no mention of replacing this bridge. As far as rail bridges go in Victoria, this would have to be one of the most important to be upgraded.

In our term the Liberal-Nationals government improved the public transport services from Bairnsdale to Melbourne by increasing them to five services. There are three direct rail services and two bus services from Bairnsdale to Traralgon, which is where you catch the Sprinter. The Andrews Labor government's *Connecting Regional Victoria — Victoria's Regional Network Development Plan* has spruiked a more reliable public transport system and better facilities — a grand plan for the next 20 years — including five rail services to Melbourne from Bairnsdale per day. How can this occur when the major lifeline at the Stratford rail bridge is not even being looked at for the next financial year? At present as they cross over the rail bridge there the trains normally have to slow to between 20 to 40 kilometres an hour. There is also no indication in this budget about a train duplicated line.

Hopefully some funding will come as a result of the \$700 million regional transport fund, which The Nationals and the Liberals in this house argued for 10 per cent of the sale of the port of Melbourne lease to go to. Under the original Labor proposition there was a paltry \$200 million on the table.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms BATH — Two hundred million dollars. The Stratford rail bridge I hope is included in that. Another

project in East Gippsland happens to be the Bairnsdale Secondary College. Both Labor and the coalition committed to building this school in the lead-up to the 2010 election. We offered the money and built half of it, but the rest of the building and construction of the Bairnsdale Secondary College is in the wings and it needs to be finished. The rhetoric of the government that we are the education state maybe does not extend as far as Bairnsdale.

I am pleased to see that the \$20 million for the MID, the Macalister irrigation district, is in the budget, in phase 2. However, it has been tied to the sale of the port. During our term of government and towards the end, when we were producing our forward planning, we were not going to link that at all to any sale; it had merit on its own. The MID project is going to both be a saving for the environment and also enable farmers to produce better quality and enhanced production in terms of dairying and vegetable crops.

In terms of the Latrobe Valley, again there is some disappointment there. There is a \$2.9 billion surplus in revenue. However, through taxation we are effectively going to see a tripling of brown coal royalties for some of Latrobe Valley's largest employers. For the coal community, the coal production companies, another impact of that will be on the small to medium enterprises that will be severely affected by this increase in royalties. This will then potentially increase the power prices within our valley and also push up the cost of living for people and communities.

The \$252 million tax on Gippsland power stations hurts not only the Latrobe Valley but the surrounding areas of Gippsland as well. The \$252 million is a significant amount of money, and where is it going to? I just fear that the overall impact of this particular tax will be on rural communities and those who cannot afford to have this tax eat into their budget again and again. AGL Loy Yang has said that the increase in royalties would add \$35 million in annual operating costs and that this type of increase will have a flow-on to wholesale electricity and ultimately to customers.

The government mentions also the Latrobe Valley transition period, but without detail I can only hope that it is prepared to address employment within the region in the forthcoming time. Before the election Daniel Andrews promised to create 100 000 full-time jobs in two years. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' recent figures for the Latrobe Valley show that almost 12 000 full-time jobs have been lost in Gippsland during Daniel Andrews's term of office. Since March 2016, 2500 full-time jobs have been lost under the Labor government. Labor has also cut a great initiative

of the previous coalition government called the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund, which leveraged close to \$100 million worth of investment within the community, made jobs and created employment for people in that region. There is no economic plan to grow regional Victoria. There are no jobs planned.

Again, fat on rhetoric, the *Connecting Regional Victoria — Victoria's Regional Network Development Plan* brochure is lean on funding in terms of infrastructure. The Murray Basin rail project does not count because funding was already there from the sale of the Rural Finance Corporation. There has already been for the last two years \$220 million waiting for that big infrastructure program to be undertaken. Thankfully the Morwell Park Primary School did receive some funding as part of the regeneration project, to which the coalition government had also committed, along with the amalgamation of three primary schools into one site in Morwell. There was some bipartisan support. Unfortunately the Morwell Park Primary School did not receive any funding last year, but after a nervous wait it thankfully has received some now.

What is disappointing is that there are some other community organisations that desperately need funding that have been left off the program: the Gippsland Carers Association, supporting families who care for disabled people; and Barrier Breakers, a mental health advocacy group. I have contacted and talked to both of those groups, and I understand that the coalition had funded those two groups over four years. Sadly, they were left off the program for this budget. Also missing out is the Latrobe Special Development School, which is in need of an upgrade, and again the Traralgon pool was left off the mark, even for any future planning.

In terms of South Gippsland, other windfalls have included \$4 million to rebuild Yarram Primary School. This shows that between the advocacy of Mr Danny O'Brien in the Legislative Assembly and that of the school community of Yarram, they can achieve for their rural community.

In terms of the northern towns project, there is \$30 million for Korumburra, Loch, Nyora and Poowong, a project that we in the coalition had pledged money for. Also there is the Poowong, Loch and Nyora sewerage system, which we funded and is going into operation as we speak. This was a Liberal-Nationals initiative, and it is great to see that the people of those towns will have their health improved and good environmental outcomes for their location.

Despite this \$2.9 billion surplus, Labor has neglected key initiatives in the South Gippsland region. No funding for stage 2 of the — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! If Mr Ramsay has a comment, he can go back to his place. I also ask Ms Shing to desist with her interjections.

Ms BATH — Thank you, Deputy President. I appreciate that. Despite the \$2.9 billion budget surplus, we have a number of worthwhile programs that are still off this budget — no funding for stage 2 of Korumburra Secondary College, no funding to complete the rebuild of Leongatha Secondary College, no funding for new fire stations at Mirboo North, Foster and Yarram, no funding for the Black Spur realignment in South Gippsland — —

Ms Shing — On it.

Ms BATH — 'On it' does not count in a budget. It is a notorious patch of road right near my house. There are no new services or rolling stock for the Gippsland train line beyond Traralgon, and there are no more residential beds for drug — including ice — rehabilitation in Gippsland. There is a cut to road maintenance funding compared to the coalition government. There is no reinstatement of the country roads and bridges program, which had been so valued. We have heard across the board in terms of our rate capping inquiry how well received that was in all rural councils.

In general, despite stamp duty, payroll tax, land tax and the share of the GST revenue, this budget still introduces big taxes. Those increases include a 15 per cent increase in the fire services levy. That means that everyone who owns a property in Victoria and pays the fire services levy to help fund our fire services is going to pay an extra 15 per cent over the next two years. While the Treasurer claims to have cut the fire services levy program, in truth Labor has increased revenue, raking in over \$160 million in just two years.

In terms of police, we know that under the coalition Victoria Police numbers increased by 1900. Under our initiative we hired 950 Victoria Police protective services officers, who have been making a difference in keeping people safe on train stations. However, under Labor we see that there are stations being closed. Boolarra police station does not have full police presence, and it is closed. There are reduced services in Lakes Entrance. The Lakes Entrance police station has been closed for long periods of time in peak holiday

periods. East Gippsland now has lower levels of staffing than at the end of 2014.

Finally, I would like to finish on the TAFE situation. ‘We’re growing TAFE’ — I am not sure where that comes from because in reality it is not evident. In terms of higher education, before the state election Labor promised to grow student numbers in TAFE. The annual reports for TAFEs — and I will be speaking on that tomorrow — show that the government has cut funding to government-subsidised training and has cut funding to TAFE. Enrolments in Victorian TAFEs have plummeted. Last year there were 91 000 fewer government-subsidised enrolments in training in Victoria, there were 800 000 fewer government-subsidised module enrolments and there were 27 million fewer government-subsidised student contact hours. The number of apprentices and trainees commencing in Victoria’s training system was down by almost 5000. There are fewer than 65 000 students enrolled in government-subsidised courses. As for young people, there was a 4.8 per cent decline in the participation of 15 to 24-year-olds in government-subsidised training and a 1.3 per cent decline in the participation rate of 25 to 64-year-olds in government-subsidised training.

This is a government whose members are content to waste money. They were content to hand over \$1.1 billion for not building something. In the past they have a track record of myki, of the desalination plant and of \$240 million on ultranet down the tube. There are so many ways that we could have used this in my electorate, and it is a great disappointment to me and many people in my electorate.

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I also rise to speak on the 2016–17 budget, taking note of the budget papers. What a great budget this is again. It is the second budget of the Daniel Andrews Labor government, and it is building on the 2015–16 budget, which put to shame the previous four budgets by the previous Liberal government, which basically only talked about what it was going to do but never actually got to do anything for four years. This budget, however, is building on the previous budget to continue to deliver on the projects that we said we would do when we came to office in November 2014.

We are delivering on our commitments for good hospitals and schools, for reliable roads and public transport and for secure jobs in growing industries in Melbourne and across regional Victoria. Since we came to office Victoria’s economy is growing, and it is actually in safe hands. With this budget our AAA credit rating will be maintained, 3 per cent growth is forecast

for that period, unemployment is falling and infrastructure investment will rise to an average of \$7.4 billion a year. The budget confirms an operating surplus of \$2.9 billion as well.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr MELHEM — If Mr Ramsay wants to contribute to the debate or maybe interject, he can go and sit in his seat, Deputy President. He has been interjecting for the last half an hour, and he is not in his seat.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order!
Mr Melhem to continue, without assistance, and Mr Ramsay is not in his place.

Mr MELHEM — As I said earlier, under the previous Liberal government four years went by without any meaningful investment in the infrastructure projects our state needs. It had only a single project. It woke up after four years and said, ‘We’re going to do the east–west link’, and Victorians rejected that. Bar that, there was not a single project.

However, since we came to government we have been implementing project after project. We are implementing what we said we would do. This budget provides for the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel, for example. We said that we were going to do that, and that is going to happen. We have committed to do that, and the work has commenced, with the procurement process underway.

The budget also provides \$1.9 billion to grow our metropolitan public transport system and \$1.3 billion for better regional public transport. The budget provides \$588 million to fully fund and deliver the Mernda rail project, \$140 million to duplicate the notorious single-track bottleneck on the Hurstbridge line between Heidelberg and Rosanna, and \$518 million to duplicate the Ballarat line to Melton, which is in my electorate and goes to the Western District, which is Mr Morris’s electorate. It is great news that we are duplicating that line. We are actually doing it. We are not talking about it; it is going to happen. Hopefully the next job will be to electrify that service to Melton. We are actually committing to do things, and we are implementing them. I will come to railway crossings in a minute.

The budget also provides \$7 billion for road projects, including duplicating Yan Yean Road and Thompsons Road, building the western distributor, upgrading the Monash Freeway and streamlining Hoddle Street, and for other projects to improve road safety.

I will talk about how the budget will deliver for my own electorate and will go alphabetically district by district through how the budget will affect Western Metropolitan Region. Talking about the Altona district, for example, there are investments already in place in relation to education. There is an initiative for Point Cook Senior Secondary College, with land acquisition already happening. Also in Altona, under the environment fund, we will invest \$10.4 million in construction in the Werribee irrigation district. In relation to health, the Western Health urgent infrastructure works will actually commence. There is an investment of \$61 million, which will go to the Western Health hospitals, including Werribee Mercy Hospital, and is a very welcome investment in health in my electorate. Also, in relation to roads in the Altona district, there is an investment of \$50 million as part of the outer suburban roads construction package, and basically we are talking about Dohertys Road.

Going to the Essendon district, there is also further investment in excess of \$110 million in the district. I note a few of the investments in relation to health. For the implementation of the Leukaemia Foundation patient accommodation there is \$500 000. Also, for the National Centre for Proton Beam Therapy planning and development project there is a \$50 million investment, which is to support progress of proton beam therapy as part of ongoing investment in that sector. There is also the \$61 million which I talked about for Western Health. That includes Footscray and Sunshine hospitals, which fit into the Essendon district. There is also \$10 million in the housing, disability and ageing sector to upgrade rooming houses in Ascot Vale, Flemington and St Kilda to improve safety and welfare for residents.

There are investments in the Footscray district. The around \$61 million for upgrades in Western Health includes Footscray. There is also \$2.5 million for the Sunshine Special Developmental School upgrade and modernisation, and for the Sunshine College upgrade and modernisation there is \$9.9 million, and the list goes on.

In the Kororoit district there is a fair amount of work in relation to education, with further acquisition of land for future school needs. It is already happening, and it has been committed to in the current budget. The list goes on, including in relation to public transport, which I have already talked about. The Caroline Springs station is ready to go. The duplication of the line to Ballarat will impact on the Kororoit district by improving services. There is further investment in that district.

In the Niddrie district there is further investment of \$1 million for the Aberfeldie Primary School upgrade and modernisation. Another benefit will flow to that district from the investment in Western Health hospitals.

In the St Albans district there is an investment of \$500 000 in the Furlong Park School for Deaf Children upgrade. Also, University Park Primary School will get a further investment.

Turning to railway crossings in the St Albans district, the Main Road West and Furlong Road project is already underway and completion is only months away. Finally we are going to see the end of the most dangerous railway crossing in the state. Seventeen people have lost their lives over a period of time, but that is going to be history. That is going to be yesterday's news. This railway crossing will be finally eliminated, and hopefully we will not see any more people getting killed on railway crossings into the future. I will not go through the further investments in the St Albans district. In the interests of time I will move onto Sunbury.

In the district of Sunbury there is an investment in the upgrade and modernisation of Kismet Park Primary School of \$700 000. The Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School will get an upgrade investment of \$4 million, and Sunbury College will also get \$4.8 million for its upgrade and modernisation project.

The district of Sydenham gets some much-needed investment in education, and I want to pay tribute to the campaign run by the member for Sydenham in relation to getting the government's commitment to construct the Taylors Hill Secondary College. There is \$12 million for that in the budget, with a further commitment to acquire more land to continue expansion of the Taylors Hill area.

Tarneit is another district in my electorate which has also got attention and investment from this government. Tarneit Senior College will get \$11.6 million in this budget, and \$30 million has been allocated to construct the new Tarneit West primary school. Obviously the investment we are making in the Werribee nursing hospital will have flow-on benefits for my constituents in that part of the world. They will be able to receive enhanced medical treatment should they need it. Tarneit will also obviously benefit from major public transport improvements, and there will be further improvements there.

In the Werribee district there is further investment in education. The Manor Lakes College stage 5 construction will commence, with \$10.9 million committed in this budget towards that. Land acquisition for the Warringa Park School will now go ahead because the money has been allocated in this budget, with further investment to allow further land acquisition for the school to continue its expansion. The Werribee irrigation district construction will benefit from the \$10.4 million allocated in the budget.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr MELHEM — I know I am repeating that, but we are talking about the district of Werribee. That is a project in Werribee, and it is a great project. Still talking about Werribee, obviously the benefits will continue with the regional rail project. As part of that \$21.3 million package, there will be an additional three services from Wyndham Vale every weekday. Roads and road safety investment is also included in the 2016–17 budget.

Williamstown is the last district I want to mention today. My electorate will get further investment as well. The Newport Lakes Primary School upgrade will continue, with a \$3 million investment. Upgrading the infrastructure, for example, of the Werribee and Footscray hospitals will obviously give more benefit to constituents in that part of the world, and our investment in roads and road safety includes \$12 million for the Westgate Punt.

As we can see, there are clear examples of the Andrews government's investment in the western suburbs of Melbourne. The western suburbs of Melbourne under the Andrews Labor government are finally getting a fair share of entitlement. We can look at the 2015–16 budget, going back even to the previous Labor government, and we see there has been a lot of investment in this part of the world by Labor. The regional rail network, which we invested in in our previous term, is now paying dividends for the west of Melbourne. The West Gate distributor will be a major investment and will boost jobs for my constituents in the western suburbs. The investment in health and education will further enhance the living standards of constituents in Western Metropolitan Region.

I am proud of what this government has done in providing for my constituents in Western Metropolitan Region. The residents of the western suburbs of Melbourne are no longer treated as second class, and they do not deserve to be second class. They deserve to be treated as first class, and we are working toward

making sure that they are treated as such, as first-class citizens. I commend the budget to the house.

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — I rise to make my contribution to the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. I am sorry that Mr Leane is not in the house. I was looking forward to having him here. I want to begin my contribution by outlining how utterly disappointing this budget is for western Victoria. We know how critically important infrastructure is for all of our community; however, western Victoria, and Ballarat in particular, has certainly been left behind so far as this budget goes.

One of the most important pieces of infrastructure in any community is the hospital. One would have thought that if a previous government had the foresight to build extra wings in a hospital, perhaps the incoming government might see fit to fit them out and put beds in to ensure that patients can be treated there and that additional operating procedures can occur. Prior to the budget we were promised by the Minister for Health that there was going to be a reduction in the elective surgery waiting list in Ballarat, and I was very hopeful when I heard that. I thought, 'I know the only way to reduce elective surgery waiting lists in Ballarat is to ensure that there are new operating theatres fitted out because the current operating theatres are operating at capacity'. There is no scope for more procedures to occur in those operating theatres, so by logical deduction one concludes that there must be a ghost wing that exists in the Ballarat hospital that needs to be fitted out.

We have a building that is going to be completed very soon. Where is the funding to fit it out? It sounds like the episode of *Yes Minister* where they had a hospital that was working at maximum efficiency, except there were not any patients being treated there, so the Ballarat hospital has been left. Prior to the election the coalition government committed to fully funding those additional operating theatres to ensure that the growing needs of the Ballarat community were going to be met.

This government also came in talking up its credentials as far as education goes. It was going to build the education state or some such thing. There is a little suburb in Ballarat called Lucas — I know that Mr Ramsay knows Lucas — and it is one of the fastest growing suburbs in Victoria. The Catholic Education Office has foresight, because it recognises that there are young families in Lucas who need to send their children to school.

Mr Ramsay — Young Catholic families.

Mr MORRIS — They have a lot of kids, Mr Ramsay, and they need to send their kids to school. However, again this government has not seen fit to ensure that there is an appropriate allocation for a school in one of the fastest growing suburbs in Victoria.

The principal of Alfredton Primary School came out after the budget to say how utterly disappointing it was to see that there was no funding allocation for a school in Lucas, because her school is absolutely bursting at the seams. There are families moving to Alfredton and Lucas every day, and yet there is no provision — absolutely no provision there whatsoever — for a primary school. Of course prior to the election the coalition made the commitment to a primary school in Lucas. We recognise the importance of education in Lucas; this government does not.

I am pleased that Minister Mikakos is in the chamber as well, because kindergartens are also a critical part of education. This was not just an election commitment; this was budgeted for. There was money there to build a kindergarten in Ballarat East at Canadian Lead Primary School. I read in yesterday's *Courier* that Mr Geoff Howard, the member for Buninyong in the Assembly, is advocating for — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MORRIS — Yes, Wake Up Geoff. Mr Howard is advocating for the cutting of a kindergarten in his own electorate. Mr Howard said that he wanted the kindergarten to be cut in his own electorate.

Ms Mikakos interjected.

Mr MORRIS — Ms Mikakos, I have spoken to the council. What we found was that there was a slimy manoeuvre in which the government said it was going to be too hard to hand over the land to council, which was just an excuse not to build it. I wonder if Minister Mikakos has spoken to anyone at the school, because they are utterly rotable about her cut. They cannot believe her cut. It was committed to. Ms Lovell appropriately went to council prior to the election last year and made a commitment to building a kindergarten in a growth area, and Minister Mikakos has seen fit to cut it. She is now the minister for cutting kindergartens — utterly unbelievable. The school is absolutely — —

Ms Mikakos — You are actually misleading the house.

Mr MORRIS — You didn't cut the kindergarten? There was a commitment; you cut it.

Ms Mikakos — You are misleading the house.

Mr MORRIS — It was committed to; you cut it.

Ms Mikakos — The council says it does not want to do the project.

Mr MORRIS — No. There is someone misleading the house, Ms Mikakos, but it is not me. Now let us move on to jobs and what this government is doing for jobs. Let us talk about another commitment.

Actually, let us go back. There was a jobs forum held in March 2015 in Ballarat. I thought, 'Fantastic. This Labor government is going to come along and will hear from groups like the Committee for Ballarat and Commerce Ballarat and other groups and understand the importance of a government service relocation to Ballarat'. I know Mr Ramsay was a huge supporter of the VicRoads relocation to Ballarat, as was I in a former role, and it was something that was embraced by the Ballarat community. And what has this Labor government come in and said? 'We're going to think about it'. How long is it going to think about it? The Treasurer said the government will think about it for about 12 months or so, so it is just sitting on its hands and refusing to make a decision. But we in the coalition remain committed to bringing 600 jobs and \$60 million dollars of annual economic activity to the City of Ballarat. We care about regional Victoria, unlike those opposite.

Mount Clear College is a fabulous school that is doing amazing things in international education. Their links into China are phenomenal. The work being done at its Chinese language school is phenomenal. The principal, Ms Lynita Taylor, is doing a great job, as is Ms Jenny Bromley, an assistant principal at Mount Clear College.

Mr Melhem interjected.

Mr MORRIS — Mr Melhem, prior to the election we committed \$13 million to this school because we recognise the importance of education. As a former teacher I can recognise the importance of education. So what happened here? The member for Buninyong managed to get a few crumbs off the edge of the table hopefully to placate Mount Clear College — maybe to placate the college — but I can assure every member of the Mount Clear College community that we in the coalition remain committed to ensuring their school gets the appropriate funding it needs to rebuild the school, because work needs to be done. It is actually unsafe. For those people who have not been there, quite a number of classrooms need significant work.

That brings me to V/Line. This is one of my favourite parts: V/Line. We know the disaster that has been V/Line since this government came to power. We know that since Jacinta Allan launched her timetable the V/Line service has been in absolute disarray. We also know that the Premier came to Ballarat to apologise for his minister and say that he had put a rocket up everyone at V/Line, from himself down. What did we see after that? We saw the chaos on the V/Line service just increase. What happened after that? Well, after that we had Minister Allan come to Ballarat and promise that there was going to be a new timetable for Ballarat, and that was going to happen in January. Again, another broken promise. And what happened after that? The Deputy Premier came to Ballarat and said that the worst had happened and it was going to improve from there on. The following day we saw an increase in services being cancelled. That is the experience of commuters in Ballarat.

And what happened? This Labor government was shamed into investing in V/Line in this last budget, but just a reminder to all those commuters who expect that this is going to be fixed: by the time this investment is completed, by the time the V/Line project under this Labor government is finished, there are children who are not yet born who will be in kindergarten. So I remind members there are children who are not even born, not even here, not even thought of yet, who are going to be in kindergarten by the time this upgrade is finished. Those V/Line commuters who are expecting their service to improve in the near future are going to be sorely disappointed, which brings me back to education, one of my favourite fields.

As a former teacher I certainly know the importance of education and the importance of investment in education. A great Ballarat institution is Ballarat High School. It is a fabulous Ballarat institution. It is a school that is doing remarkable things, and it is servicing those growing suburbs of Alfredton and Lucas. What has it received from this government? Absolutely nothing. No, sorry; it received a visit from the Minister for Education, and that was all. They said, 'Do you realise how fast we are growing?', and there was absolutely no funding commitment there whatsoever.

Let us move on to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) Fiskville. We know how important Fiskville is in terms of the employment that it provides to the Ballan area, and I would certainly like to congratulate Mr Ian Ireland, the captain of the Ballan brigade, who has been advocating for the need for the replacement facility for CFA Fiskville to be in Ballan. We know how important it is. We already know how important it is that those jobs are not lost from that community, but what have

we seen? We have seen in the budget an announcement that the new training facility is going to be somewhere in the central highlands. Previously the Minister for Emergency Services said it was going to be in Ballan, and she was going to compulsorily acquire land if she needed to. However, she has moved past that and said it is going to be somewhere in the central highlands rather than Ballan.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr MORRIS — Absolutely, I think she has been overruled again. The Ballan community expects the minister to keep her promise that the replacement facility for Fiskville will be in Ballan. However, I am doubtful that is going to be the case.

That moves me on to the CFA, and I think it is incredibly important that we do pay homage to the work that our volunteers in the CFA do. Mr Leane in his contribution tried to put words in my mouth. I just wanted to say that the importance of the CFA cannot be understated, but what is also incredibly important is that our volunteers are respected. What we have seen from this government is that it is trying to allow Peter Marshall and the United Firefighters Union (UFU) to take over the CFA. I hear members opposite saying that is not true. Why is the board saying this would destroy the CFA? Why is their own minister not agreeing to it? It is because she knows what will happen. The UFU's tentacles will go through the CFA, and it will destroy one of the greatest volunteer organisations in the world — not just in Victoria, but in the world.

We note that Peter Marshall has said that these clauses in the EBA 'really do not do very much' so he is unsure as to why the CFA is so upset about them. Well, Mr Marshall, if they do not mean that much, take them out — take the clauses that are in dispute out. This could be done, but the reason he will not, of course, is because this has been a tactic of the UFU for decades to try to take over the CFA and ensure — —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr MORRIS — And the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, to ensure that the UFU power base is increased and it has control over these great community volunteer organisations. It is those volunteers who are out there day after day supporting our communities and ensuring our communities stay safe, yet Mr Marshall does not care. He does not care about that. All he cares about is this power grab to ensure that his union can control one of the greatest volunteer organisations in the world.

In terms of the overall budget for Western Victoria Region, it has been left behind. This government came to power saying it was going to be about jobs and it was going to be about education. At the jobs forum in March 2015, which was hosted by the government, Minister Pulford and other local members did turn up for a change. They said this forum decided that there needed to be 1000 jobs created each year in Ballarat to ensure that Ballarat as a city could progress in the way it needs to.

There is a very clear and simple way that the government could create 600 jobs in Ballarat like that, and that is just to commit to the relocation of VicRoads to Ballarat. The coalition recognised prior to this government how important it was. Every community organisation I have spoken to certainly recognises it. The Committee for Ballarat recognises it, Commerce Ballarat recognises it and the City of Ballarat recognises the importance of the relocation of VicRoads to Ballarat, and that is why the government needs to move on and ensure that these jobs do move to where they should be.

Sitting suspended 6.28 p.m. until 8.04 p.m.

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — It is my absolute pleasure to be able to speak on what we affectionately call, of course, the budget bill.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — We affectionately call it the budget bill because we are getting a whole lot of money out of it — and money for our portfolios, as in my case. I can happily say that the Treasurer has been very supportive of the portfolio areas of small business, innovation and trade. Let me begin by acknowledging the very strong support for the budget measures within the business community, especially from the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry under the leadership of Mark Stone, who recognised that the budget was obviously a very strong driver for economic growth and also an opportunity for us to deliver.

One of the areas the Treasurer delivered was payroll tax relief. I see Mr Morris sitting on the opposite side of the chamber, and while Mr Morris has not had the pleasure of operating his own small business, I know he is very supportive of small business tax relief. He and I have had many conversations about the strong support of the small business sector, and I happily acknowledge in a bipartisan way Mr Morris's strong desire to see small businesses grow in his home town of Ballarat but also across Victoria. It is a desire I share equally, not just for

Ballarat but for every rural and regional community across Victoria, big and small, from the great people of Geelong to those people who live in Bendoc in the far north-east of Victoria. Bendoc is a small town that sits just near the border with New South Wales. Its population does not really number very many, but the number it has work in the timber industry, of which I am a strong supporter. I notice Mr Barber is walking back into the chamber; he too is a strong supporter of the timber industry. I acknowledge his strong bipartisan support for seeing the timber industry grow and seeing significant job creation.

In terms of the portfolio and the payroll tax, which I mentioned, we will see the threshold for payroll tax extend from \$550 000 to \$650 000 over the four years.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I am going to take up the interjection from Mr Ramsay. What a silly interjection it was. For four long years those opposite — I will tell you what they contributed to payroll tax relief: doughnuts. Absolute doughnuts. For the sake of *Hansard*, because people will not be able to see what hand signal I am making, it is the big zero. That is exactly the amount of dollars that the Napthine-Shaw-Baillieu governments in the 57th Parliament contributed to payroll tax relief. But this government, a government led by the Premier, Daniel Andrews, under the strong and safe stewardship in the Treasury portfolio of the Honourable Tim Pallas, has delivered in payroll tax over the forward estimates a \$100 000 extension, which will provide relief to, I believe, approximately 36 000 businesses — small businesses — across the great state of Victoria.

When we talk about payroll tax relief, when we talk about economic drivers and when we talk about contributions to this state there is this idea, this understanding that we have, that the small business community deserves our strong support, which we on this side of the chamber are happy to have delivered in payroll tax relief.

It was not just Mark Stone who endorsed and supported the budget of Treasurer Tim Pallas. In fact it was also Tim Piper at the AIG, the Australian Industry Group, acknowledging that the work undertaken by Treasurer Pallas and Premier Andrews was work undertaken to ensure we have an economy that continues to be really the envy of not just other jurisdictions across the country but jurisdictions across the world.

Let us put that into perspective. When we took over government at the end of November 2014, unemployment was at nearly 7 per cent. The former government took over an economy in which unemployment was at 4.9 per cent. After one of the worst periods of global economic recession in modern times, Victoria had an unemployment rate of 4.9 per cent. Unfortunately that increased under the stewardship of the former government — and I use the term ‘stewardship’ very, very loosely, because you would have thought that the captain was the captain of the *Titanic*, such was the former government’s control or lack thereof of the economy, which saw unemployment increase from 4.9 per cent, skyrocketing to nearly 7 per cent in four years.

I am happy to report that this budget has not only delivered great confidence within the business community and the sector but it has also delivered to our business community a stimulus package that has seen confidence grow, so much so that unemployment is now down. It is now down to approximately 5.6 per cent, which is the national average. In less than 18 months we have seen unemployment drop from nearly 7 per cent to approximately 5.6 per cent. That is a significant reduction in a short period of time.

Let us acknowledge the tremendous work done by our business community. To be able to do that work, the business community needs to have confidence in the market it operates in and it needs to have confidence in the regulatory barriers, regimes and borders it operates within. What we have seen is a dedicated, ambitious but also methodical rollout.

In my own portfolio area members of the small business community are winners, but we have also seen \$90 million allocated within the trade portfolio and \$66 million allocated to Victoria’s international network of trade and investment offices. That is secondary only to Austrade in terms of this country’s trade and investment network globally. What this trade and investment network does is it helps to facilitate our export programs overseas and it helps to facilitate investment back into Victoria, because both Victoria and Australia have always been built on the back of foreign investment in our country. Our trade and investment network currently has 18 offices globally. We will be expanding that to 21 offices over the rest of this term, as was our election commitment. As a government we have allocated \$66 million to that pursuit.

We have also allocated \$24 million to our trade mission program, which will enable Victorian businesses to pursue new contracts, boost their exports and create

jobs, and it will assist businesses to showcase their products — —

Mr Morris — Acting President, I would like to draw your attention to the state of the house. I think what Minister Dalidakis is saying is very important, and I think that members should hear his contribution.

Quorum formed.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I was considering serenading Mr Ramsay once I had a quorum present. Somehow, with only 4.5 minutes remaining, I am not sure that would be a wise use of my time.

I was discussing the \$90 million that has been allocated to our trade and investment network. That consists of \$66 million that will go to our offices directly and \$24 million for our trade and investment program. That trade and investment program is for both inward-bound and outward-bound missions.

Just to put into perspective how important it is to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time — to have an outward-bound trade mission program as well as an inward-bound one — for our most recent inward-bound trade mission I took a group of buyers, a group of delegates, from greater China up to the Nagambie Lakes region, a beautiful area of Victoria. I took them to Tahbilk Winery. Within the food industry we talk about paddock to plate, but within the wine industry I talk about grape to glass. That was a wonderful opportunity, taking that group of buyers to Nagambie Lakes so that they could see firsthand how wine is made. The \$24 million we have allocated under the budget for our inward and outward-bound trade missions assists with just that.

Just last week I had the great pleasure of accompanying a group of Victorian companies to CommunicAsia in Singapore. CommunicAsia is now in its 11th year. We have had 11 years — 11 successful years, I might add — of taking exhibitors to CommunicAsia. It is the largest communications expo in South-East Asia, and in Asia it is really only rivalled by one other, which is in Taiwan. Our trips to CommunicAsia have had some wonderful outcomes across both sides of government. On 1 June we made an announcement about the companies that have already seen orders, sales and opportunities arise from exhibiting in Singapore. That is just the most recent example of our outward-bound trade missions.

As I said earlier, that is not just about boosting exports and supporting businesses that participate, but it is also about job creation. Job creation goes to the heart of many of this government’s economic policies, as I

indicated in relation to the payroll tax. This is a policy under Treasurer Pallas that is going to help businesses pay less payroll tax and leave them with more money to invest in their own businesses, to potentially employ more people and to have an opportunity to flourish.

It did not just stop there, I am happy to report. But wait, there is still more — and in fact there was more. We saw in the budget that the Treasurer provided an additional \$4 million to an Asian gateway. What we like to say and what we like to see here in Victoria is that because we are one of the most multicultural, diverse and linguistically experienced populations really of anywhere around the globe — certainly leading the way here in Australia — we are putting \$4 million into an Asian gateway to assist our businesses in moving up through South-East Asia into North Asia and taking those opportunities that come with them.

This is a very specific project and a very specific opportunity proposed by the Victorian government under both the Premier, Daniel Andrews, and the Treasurer, Tim Pallas, because as I said, everything that we do — everything at the heart of the economic policies — is all about job creation. We on this side of the house acknowledge that there is no greater opportunity in terms of our society than to be able to provide somebody with a job, and that is why this budget is an exceptional budget, and I recommend this legislation to the house.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — It is indeed a delightful surprise to be called to address the house. It is amazing what happens when you are not paying attention sometimes. I was interested, I have to say, to hear Mr Dalidakis rejoicing in this budget, because he said that lots and lots of money was coming his way. That seems to be the Labor Party attitude to a lot of things — ‘Lots and lots of money is coming my way’.

What he did not mention, and what very few Labor people mention, is that that money is not his. That money is taxpayers money; that is Victorians’ money — people have worked for that money and have had it taken out of their pay or have had to hand it over to the government at some stage. So I think it would be a fair and reasonable thing for Mr Dalidakis to at least acknowledge the taxpayers of Victoria who made this budget possible. Without the taxpayers of Victoria indeed there would be no budget because there would not be lots and lots of money for Mr Dalidakis to fly around with and go to conferences overseas. What was he doing?

Mr Ondarchie — StartCon was coming.

Mr FINN — Well, I think there are a lot of cons going on here at the minute, to tell you the truth. Was it not Mr Dalidakis who told us that he was getting a conference to Melbourne, and it was in Sydney? Yes, that was good. You know, I thought I had trouble with my GPS; his is obviously, well, not all that flash at all.

I hope that at some stage the Labor Party will come to the realisation that it is only here by virtue of the Victorian taxpayer and that the people who are working — everybody here, everybody down there, those out in the suburbs and out in the country areas, farmers, milkmen and everybody — all work hard and pay their taxes to ensure that Mr Dalidakis can get lots and lots of money to get him overseas. Of course there are many, many taxpayers who wish he would stay overseas. There are a good number indeed.

I come to debate this budget with extensive notes. I have to reflect on the impacts of recent budgets on the western suburbs of Melbourne, because it is interesting that the only decent budget — the only budget that has actually given the western suburbs of Melbourne any sort of fair go at all — was the budget that was brought down by Michael O’Brien, and that is a simple fact of the matter. It is quite extraordinary that it was, in fact, a Liberal Treasurer who brought down a Liberal budget that provided the western suburbs residents with the sort of support and the sort of assistance that they had longed for.

We never, ever get that sort of go from the Labor Party, because we know and everybody in the western suburbs knows that the Labor Party takes the west for granted. Everybody knows that the Labor Party uses and abuses the western suburbs. That is a fact of the matter. I have to say it is encouraging, from my point of view as I travel around talking to many different people, that people are actually starting to realise this and they are starting to realise that until such time as we have some marginal seats out in the western suburbs we are still going to be treated abysmally by the Labor Party — forgotten indeed.

The Labor Party attitude is, ‘They’re going to vote for us anyway, so why would we give them anything?’. That is why Labor does not give us anything, and that is a simple fact of the matter.

The greatest outrage, I think, in recent history of course was the scrapping of the east–west link, the \$1.1 billion of taxpayers money that went down the S-bend courtesy of Dodgy Dan and his so-called election pledge, that we might recall he told us would not cost a cent. He was right there: it did not cost a cent — it cost \$1.1 billion. As a result of that the people of the west

are stuck in the traffic every morning, every night and quite often during the day as well.

I remember last year on the grand final holiday — Mr Dalidakis's eyes lit up when I spoke about the grand final holiday. He is obviously not running a small business, or that would change very, very quickly. The great thing about Mr Dalidakis is that he does not really like small business. He wishes he had something maybe like tourism that would allow him to get on a plane a bit more often and fly around, as is his wont. I recall it was a public holiday on the day before the grand final last year and I was going to the grand final lunch in Williamstown, as I said, the day before the grand final. It is a big day too, I have to say. It was a very, very entertaining afternoon. I suggest to anybody who is keen on a big afternoon that they might like to head down to Williamstown later this year on grand final eve, because it is a ripper.

I was travelling on the Western Ring Road, and well before the interchange the traffic was banked back. We just came to a complete standstill. This was at 11.30 in the morning. We are not talking about peak-hour on a work day; we are talking about 11.30 in the morning on a public holiday. The ring-road was a complete disaster, and much of the West Gate Freeway was as well. But this is what we have come to expect in the western suburbs. The people in the west were actually very excited about the prospect that we might be getting some assistance with the east–west link. There was a great deal of excitement about that. But no. Our Premier decided for reasons that are probably best known to him, but one suspects have more to do with the preferences with the Greens in the inner suburbs than anything to do with traffic — —

Mr Barber — They were losing seats to the Greens.

Mr FINN — Yes. Mr Barber's eyes lit up then, because he knows that the Greens are moving in on Labor at a pretty rapid rate. I think probably Mr Feeney this time next month will be out of a job as a result of that and possibly others as well.

As a result of this absolute preoccupation with inner Melbourne the Premier, Daniel Andrews, said to the outer west — and to the outer east for that matter — 'You can all go to hell'. He said, 'You can all get stuffed, the lot of you', and quite frankly, they did.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — I am not sure if it is a parliamentary term, but that is what he said. I wish he had not, but he did.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — He did say, 'Go forth'. I have to say it was a very dark day indeed in Victoria's history when we had a Premier treat the people of Victoria in that way. As a result we have people travelling in from Werribee, Point Cook, Laverton and even from Altona and Williamstown who are stuck on the West Gate sometimes for hours. Sometimes when it is particularly bad people just turn around and go home, if indeed they can turn around. If they get the opportunity to turn around, they will turn around and they will go home. That is how bad the traffic is in the western suburbs of Melbourne. But does the Premier care about that? Not on your nelly! Does this Labor government care about what the people of the western suburbs have to put up with on their roads every day? Not even slightly does the Labor Party care about the people of the west.

I say to the people of the west, 'If the Labor Party doesn't care about you, don't you care about the Labor Party. You give it the same treatment. You turn your back on the Labor Party in the same way that the Labor Party turns its back on you'. That, I think, would be of huge benefit to the people of the western suburbs.

I am just staggered that we have seen the scrapping of the east–west link and the government has presented us apparently —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — Has there been a deal done? Is something signed? Has there been a nod and a wink? Has there been some sort of elbow in the ribs? What is going on with Transurban and the western distributor? From what I can see the western distributor is a real woofler. It is a dog of a project. It is a shocker. It will do nothing for anybody except Transurban. If I had shares in Transurban, I would be one of the most enthusiastic western distributor supporters imaginable, because I know money is coming — big, big money, as Mr Dalidakis was talking about earlier. More money than Mr Dalidakis could ever hope for in any budget would come my way if I was running Transurban or indeed if I was a shareholder in Transurban.

This project will do nothing to help the people of the western suburbs. This project will indeed provide for the western side of Melbourne what Hoddle Street and the Eastern Freeway provide for the other side of Melbourne. We know what that is like. Why the hell would any government want to go ahead and push that onto the people of the west? Unless of course they did not care, and that is something that we must always keep in mind. The treatment of the people of

Melbourne's west by the Labor Party is historically atrocious, and nothing has changed. As I say, that is a tragic fact of life.

Out my way, in the Sunbury electorate, we have seen — —

Mr Morris interjected.

Mr FINN — 'No Bull' — that is the slogan for the next election. 'No Bull in Sunbury'. We saw the Labor Party betray the people of Sunbury by reneging on its promise, breaking its promise and lying in fact to the people of Sunbury about giving them their own municipality, the city of Sunbury, after it had said before the election that it would go ahead. After the election it was a very, very different matter. That is something that the people of Sunbury are not happy about at all.

Something else that they are not happy about is that we saw earlier this year the Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, try to rip V/Line services out of Sunbury, and that did not go down well with Sunbury people at all. Such was the outcry that that decision had to be almost entirely reversed — not quite all, but almost entirely reversed. But I understand that will be reviewed after the federal election, as indeed a number of things will be reviewed after the federal election, including Dodgy Dan's leadership, as I hear it. There are numbers being counted as we speak, with the knowledge that the federal election is less than a month away.

I hope that those in the government will take their responsibilities seriously. I understand they are under a lot of pressure at the moment. I understand there is going to be a lot of fun and games coming up over the next few weeks, but I sincerely hope they will take their jobs very, very seriously. They have an enormous responsibility. They have a job to discharge, and this government owes the people of Victoria.

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. I am going to cover two areas in my contribution: the first is around public transport in the metropolitan area, and secondly, the Leadbeater's possum will feature heavily as part of my contribution tonight. Public transport in Melbourne has long been a low priority in budget commitments over the past two decades. Crowded trains, aged trams and incoherent bus services have plagued commuters. Funding commitments were deferred when the demand for fast and frequent transportation services grew.

The 2016 state budget does throw a lot of money at two headline projects: the Melbourne Metro tunnel and the elevated rail project on the Cranbourne-Pakenham line, although I do note with the Melbourne Metro tunnel a lost opportunity in that South Yarra station is not integrated as an interchange station as part of that project. The station is the busiest train station outside of the city loop and has the most passengers going through it, so it is a lost opportunity for Melbourne and its commuters.

This budget does not represent a long-term plan for public transport infrastructure. Most of the funds are being spent on one train corridor, and there is no plan to improve services for the millions of people who live outside the Sunbury and Cranbourne-Pakenham corridors. If you are a commuter who lives on the Belgrave or Lilydale lines, the Hurstbridge line, the Craigieburn line, the Frankston line, the Upfield line or the Werribee line — they are not all the lines, but they are a lot of our lines in metropolitan Melbourne — you are not getting high-capacity signalling; you are getting same old, same old.

There is no commitment to continue feasibility studies, corridor preservation or initial design work for the Rowville or Doncaster heavy rail lines. The east, I note as a member for Eastern Metropolitan Region, loses out again. When we consider the development that is going to be encompassed in the Doncaster Hill area, putting even more people in that region, it is a travesty that we do not see any forward planning on Doncaster rail. Then when we look to the Rowville line, we see that 30 000 students a week go to Monash University, and they are either stuck on the bus or in their cars. They are not the only people who are stuck, because those people from Rowville and Doncaster are stuck in congestion on the Monash Freeway or the Eastern Freeway, which are only getting worse, not better. It does not matter how many lanes you add to the Monash Freeway; you will only get more and more congestion. So the budget is very disappointing for commuters, particularly in those regions of Doncaster and Rowville. There are no options for them in terms of heavy rail transport in this budget.

There is insufficient funding and no hard plan for a rollout of 21st century high-capacity signalling technology. Melbourne will be stuck with fixed block signalling developed in the 19th century for all lines except the Sunbury and Cranbourne-Pakenham corridors, something that was confirmed at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings. What we did hear as part of that was that the trial for high-capacity signalling was in fact abandoned on the Sandringham line. Last year apparently we needed to

trial it on that line as a separate line, whereas this year we hear we do not need that trial on that line, and it is in fact now transferred to the South Morang line as a limited deployment. But we know in terms of trialling high-capacity signalling that your trial can only be as fast as the slowest point in your line, so to have a limited deployment on the South Morang line is really not doing justice to a high-capacity signalling service.

The Greens note that there is no funding commitment to the Melbourne Airport link. There is no commitment to augment the tram network. Of note for me is the lack of a tram extension to Knox City — a reservation to put on a tram that would link Vermont South to Knox City, a major activity centre within the Knox municipality, linking thousands of commuters with that central area. However, we do not see any mention of augmenting the tram network in this budget. The typical experience of bus passengers will continue to be nasty, brutish and interminably long, and this is just from the deficit in capital expenditure.

The less eye-catching but critical maintenance deficit builds up year on year. I quote from the editorial in the *Age* of 25 May:

... any new stretch of track is only as good as the one it connects with, and Victoria is now paying the price for years of chronic underinvestment in rail maintenance ... a staggering 13 000 faults needed repair or renewal in Melbourne's rail infrastructure. The government currently allocates about \$250 million a year to fix the faults in the rail network. Metro estimates three-quarters of that is spent on broken signals, tracks and power wires alone. The scale of the problem has forced the company to adopt a patchwork system of urgent and targeted repairs.

The lack of a plan is simply not good enough in a city that prides itself on being one of the most livable in the world. It is simply not good enough in a society that wants to provide a fair go for all. It is simply not good enough for an economy that needs to remain competitive in the face of unprecedented technological change. If Melbourne's public transport system is to cope with burgeoning demand, the state government must develop a long-term plan for investing in a network-wide rollout of high-capacity signalling.

We saw in our Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings that it was confirmed there is no plan for a rollout of high-capacity signalling across the network. There is no plan for wider deployment and no budget allocation within the next four years.

We see there is no plan for investing in Doncaster and Rowville heavy rail lines such that they will be in operation by 2026–30 and taking advantage of the capacity benefits of the Melbourne Metro tunnel. There

is no long-term plan for investing in tram network augmentation, adopting our plan to fill 17 missing links in the tram network with 56 kilometres of new tram routes. There is no plan for more SmartBuses and a redesign of bus services so they operate across a better span of hours with greater frequency and so they better connect with other public services. How long do we need to wait? I look locally at the experience on the SmartBuses operating out of the Doncaster park and ride, where commuters cannot even get on the buses in order to get them to the city. They have to wait for bus after bus. It is a very poor response to what is a growing demand for public transport in our suburbs.

I am going to turn for just a moment to cycle funding. It was staggering to hear that the minister in the other place at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing could not identify any separate and distinct standalone projects for bicycle paths — not one in this budget; they are all included in road projects or rail projects. Such is the priority given to cycle funding and dedicated cycle infrastructure in this budget.

I turn now to what the budget says about our forests and the species that live in these important and special places. I note in this budget there is more provision for consumers of nature-based tourism in the form of a new facility for penguin watchers down at Phillip Island. Look, I congratulate the government for recognising that nature-based tourism is an incredibly important element of Victoria's economy. However, this budget is a lost opportunity, because there is no such provision in relation to our forests and our threatened species.

That said, I acknowledge and congratulate the government for maintaining the pathway to creating the nature reserve in Yellingbo to help and preserve the helmeted honeyeater, not only a state emblem but also critically endangered. This funding will also possibly assist the genetic line of the lowland Leadbeater's possum. Likewise I acknowledge ongoing funding to zoos for breeding programs between this genetic line and the last two alpine Leadbeater's possums. I am pleased to introduce to the house three different sets of Leadbeater's possums — being the highland, lowland and alpine — for members. But with only 57 lowland Leadbeater's possums and just 2 alpine animals left, while worthy, these endeavours are by no means anywhere close to sufficient to give the species its best chance of survival.

I also acknowledge that there is some money in the budget to help volunteer groups with weeding and restoration programs that will provide habitat for species associated with the lowland and farming areas of the Leadbeater's possum. But again, this will do

nothing to protect the mountain forests and the species for which I will continue to be a tireless advocate: our state faunal emblem, the Leadbeater's possum. The very best chance to ensure the survival of the Leadbeater's possum is to invest in the populations of our montane ash forests, and on this matter the budget earns a massive: fail.

Here we are with the second budget of the Andrews Labor government, and the neglect of these animals' needs represents another year along the path to leaving a legacy of being the last government that could have actually done something meaningful to stop extinction. I hear from this government about building nesting boxes and trying to artificially cut hollows into trees, and I realise that this is a government that is more interested in taking a punt, in having a gamble with taxpayers money on speculative endeavours to protect a species rather than prudently acting to guarantee the best possible chance for species survival.

It is incontrovertible that the best possible course of action to save this species is to stop the destruction of all current habitat of this animal and to invest in rehabilitating the landscape that has been destroyed by decades of government-auspiced clearfell logging. This practice continues at the behest of the forestry division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) to support a relatively small number of jobs in a very small number of businesses that have had plenty of time to transition but are legally required to take timber and pulp from a threatened ecology.

That great irrationalism in the legal framework seems deliberately designed to doom our ash forests, the ancient temperate rainforest gullies and faunal species — not only the endangered Leadbeater's possum but many other faunal species as well, including greater gliders, yellow-bellied gliders, quolls, brush-tailed phascogales, powerful owls, sooty owls and masked owls. Then there is the barred galaxias. In the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires tens of thousands of dollars were spent by the museum to protect one of the very last populations of this species, and now we watch that money go up in smoke as each logged coupe along the Yea Link Road in Toolangi makes it more likely that the creeks in which this endangered species lives run dry.

Where is the money in this budget to make a difference to the future for these forests and species? If this government is interested in jobs for the future, as the Greens are, then where is the vision, where are the mechanisms to roll timber and paper milling jobs into jobs that rely on sustainable inputs?

The Greens would be very happy to see transition provisions in the budget to help the industry move on and thereby allow the forestry division of the CFMEU to maintain its membership base, but it has to be 100 per cent tied to the complete exit of logging in native forests. There should be no more effective gifting of precious resources that are a great treasure belonging to all the people of Victoria to benefit such a small number of interests which are vested in an entitlement that should be held commonly.

For 18 months this government has stalled on meaningful actions to protect what is left. I am looking forward to the report of the Forest Industry Taskforce, not so much from a belief that the inevitable compromise position will be satisfactory but simply from relief that this government will no longer be able to use the task force as a shield to deflect the legitimate accusation that this government is doing way too little in protecting our forests and our endangered species and is doing too little, too slowly.

There is no long-term plan to ease commuter overcrowding and make public transport a viable choice, particularly for those in the suburbs. There is no long-term plan for our state emblem, the Leadbeater's possum. This budget fails to secure a future plan for Victoria that values action on public transport or on protecting our forests.

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) — It is a pleasure to rise to make a contribution on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016 and budget papers cognate debate this evening. With my heart, my family and their businesses and livelihoods firmly entrenched in northern Victoria, every Victorian budget is of interest to many people I know and of course my constituents, and this budget has been hotly anticipated for how it might help them and help my community and improve their lot.

Sadly recent years have proved to be a source of abject disappointment in regard to the previous government of the day meeting the needs of those thousands of people for whom a regional or rural town is their home and their life. In fact most locals cannot understand why so many things that could have been done by the coalition in the four years it was in government were not done but made their way onto a list of promises for if it was re-elected. It is a strange strategy, as I think most people like to judge their governments and elected officials on what they do and not on what they say they will do. Since the election of the Andrews Labor government I am proud to say that the tide is turning and many parts of my magnificent electorate are reaping the benefits of the government's attention.

I will start, off the back of Ms Shing's contribution today, by saying that this is the biggest investment in regional Victoria that any previous state budget has ever seen. In particular the budget has a focus on jobs, including a record investment in infrastructure and other projects to create new jobs in the regions and help workers gain a foothold in the fast-growing sectors that will define Victoria's economic future. We on this side understand that solid long-term employment in regional centres is at the heart of sustainable and vibrant communities, thriving with the presence of local families and growing with the arrival of many newly attracted residents.

We see that many areas in northern Victoria are experiencing healthy growth at the moment. The 2016–17 budget includes measures to drive economic activity and improve the lives of residents across northern Victoria, for which I am immensely proud. There has been \$325 million invested in jobs initiatives for infrastructure and services, including upgrades to irrigation, improvements to water security, removing mobile black spots, streetscaping and important planning work for local projects across the region. This will help alleviate current impediments to economic growth, create new jobs, establish new industries, support existing industries and improve the amenity and environment of many of our regional towns. A payroll tax cut for approximately 36 000 businesses across Victoria, with the payroll tax-free threshold lifted to \$650 000 over the next four years, will make life much easier for small businesses, enhancing their potential for local employment and taking the pressures off their bottom lines.

In relation to rail, we have listened and we have acted, with investment of \$1.6 billion in regional transport to improve public transport and roads. The investment will make regional rail services more frequent and reliable and position the whole system for the longer term expansion that, as I have indicated, many of our growing regions currently need or will need in the future. The budget also provides \$15 million towards refurbishing and converting some train sets on the north-east line. In addition, they will receive a revamp to fix the air conditioning, clean the seats and make them better and more comfortable for people who use them every day. This will in turn improve reliability and is a short-term fix while we get on with determining what the next generation of trains is going to look like. I particularly welcome the investment for feasibility inquiries into what the next generation of trains on that line will look like, and I know the community is really looking forward to retirement of a very old train set.

More than 170 extra off-peak services will be added across the regional network, building on the 342 services added last year, to help deliver the frequent services that regional Victorians have come to rely on. Many Victorians who live in the country rely on commuter services so that they can work in Melbourne, so this is very much welcome for them. Included in this is the much-needed additional service for the Shepparton line, and \$5 million will help plan the development of new rail tracks between Upfield and Somerton. This is really important because new tracks here will mean that services using the north-eastern Seymour and Shepparton lines will have an alternative route into Melbourne, which creates the possibility for additional services for V/Line passengers in the future. A range of critical major maintenance, minor works and car park upgrades that will be delivered across regional Victoria are very much welcomed by my constituents.

V/Line, we know, suffered from savage funding cuts under the former Liberal-Nationals government. It is great that we have managed to bolster it with \$198 million to rebuild the capacity of the regional operator and deliver the services its passengers tell me every time I am in country Victoria that they expect and of course deserve. These initiatives will support the *Regional Network Development Plan*, which was released recently and which I had the privilege of working on.

The Labor government will also partner with GrainCorp and invest \$8.5 million to upgrade and build new train loading infrastructure and sidings facilities along Victoria's rail freight network. This will mean an additional 500 000 tonnes of grain per year can be transported by rail, taking trucks off our roads and delivering lower transport costs to farmers. Improving on the cost of doing business for our farmers is something that cannot be ignored. The public has shown the way in recent weeks with its overwhelming support of our dairy industry, and we need to lead the way in helping our farmers, who are without a doubt not only critical to our health and wellbeing as individuals through their product offering but also fundamental to the economic fundamentals of this state and country.

Country roads are unfortunately notorious. There would not be a kid who grew up in country Victoria who has not experienced the loss of someone they know or had someone they know be seriously injured in an accident. The recent budget is saying that this government has had enough of this. We have an ambitious plan to reduce the road toll to below 200 by 2020, and reducing deaths on country roads is paramount to achieving that

goal. It is a fact that Victorians are four times more likely to be killed on country roads, so what we are going to see is much-needed investment in this space to introduce safety barriers, installing them on some of the state's busiest country roads as part of a \$1 billion Victorian government investment.

There will be a \$340 million investment to address known crash black spots, with more than 2500 kilometres of country roads across the state included. Twenty high-risk rural roads with significant crash histories have been prioritised under the road safety package, including the Hume Freeway between Thomastown and Wodonga. The government has announced 330 kilometres of flexible road barriers on high-volume 100-kilometre-per-hour speed limit roads, which is expected to reduce run-offs and head-on collisions on these roads by up to 85 per cent. Additional protection will also be added to make barriers safer for motorcyclists on popular motorcycle routes, as we are very conscious that this is an issue of concern to those road users.

This budget provides \$260 million to repair unsafe and deteriorating road surfaces across regional Victoria. It also funds safety upgrades for smaller local roads that people rely on every day. We are looking at an investment of \$51.6 million to build overtaking lanes on other major highways across the state, and that includes \$8.5 million for overtaking lanes between Cobram and Yarrawonga. As a driver frequently on that road, I know that that will be very much welcomed by that community. The Midland Highway at Lake Nillahcootie is another spot, and so are roads across alpine areas, such as the Great Alpine Road, Bright-Tawonga Road, Mount Buffalo Road and Bogong High Plains Road. There are also additional funds for the advancement of the Yarrawonga-Mulwala bridge. I know many people in that community are looking for that project to begin, and that investment is a step closer.

I am extremely proud that we as a government believe at our very core that the quality of your educational experience should not be determined by your postcode. It is a great source of pride that the recent budget has committed to modernise, regenerate or upgrade many, many schools across northern Victoria. In particular, \$4 million from the Victorian budget is going towards an upgrade to Broadford Secondary College, which I was there to tell the community about on budget day and which was very welcome. My old school, Benalla College, will also be set to start its stage 1 redevelopment after receiving money in this year's budget.

Echuca residents are really happy that they finally get to begin their regeneration project: \$11 million is going to that community to ensure that the students have the modern spaces that they need to learn. That is going to involve the merging of Echuca South Primary School, Echuca West Primary School and Echuca Special School onto a new site. This has been on the agenda for a decade, so I have got to say it is disappointing that students were let down by National Party members who had the opportunity to help them in the four years they were in government but pretty much let them linger. It has taken a Labor government to get on, not follow that lead and actually invest in the worthy cause of the Echuca regeneration project.

On to health, the budget invests \$2.9 billion in the health system so families in rural and regional Victoria will have hospitals and services that they can rely on. This includes a \$200 million bucket for the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund to help some of the hospitals most in need of capital investment. I was in Wangaratta last week and met with the management of Northeast Health Wangaratta. I think it was highly publicised that this hospital was let down by the federal government with the so-called promise that was reneged upon with the former federal member for Indi not being re-elected. This community is still hoping that its calls for investment will be heard. I am very happy to be supporting its forthcoming application under the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund for the state government to restore some of the hope and trust in government of that community after it had the \$10 million which was apparently promised taken away from it.

Of course many, many people across northern Victoria, not just those in Shepparton, will be affected. The nature of health systems is that effects spread far beyond the towns that large hospitals are located in, and \$169 million to redevelop the Goulburn Valley Health services is probably one of the most welcome budget initiatives that northern Victoria had the pleasure of receiving under the latest state budget — very pleasing. About half of my electorate comprises the reach of Shepparton hospital, so I am very much looking forward to the sod turn on some of those developments.

The health budget also involves record investment in elective surgery. You talk about figures, but when it comes to health I think it is outcomes that people are more interested in. Effectively this investment will mean waiting lists for surgeries will be reduced. The people waiting the longest for the most complex surgery will be prioritised, and it will mean that they now get the surgery they need sooner. The funding is effectively equivalent to around 3100 coronary artery

bypass grafts, 6700 more hip replacements, 6800 more knee replacements and around 22 000 more sinus and ear operations, so there are many people waiting for those services who will be very happy that the Victorian state budget is looking after them.

Just in closing, we are members of a government that wants to leave a legacy across Victoria of vibrant, thriving and growing communities, where getting a good education from the get-go leads people to a great job or business opportunity that creates for them a life of comfort and success in their home town. That is what we are all about: investing our time in helping country Victorians to make this happen. This budget is but a step on the way in our partnership of bringing all of this to fruition. I look forward to watching the benefits to our towns over the coming year of the significant investment that has been provided in this budget and to working with my communities and constituents to better understand and deliver on their needs and their hopes.

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to be able to speak on the bill. Instead of focusing in little detail on a wide range of issues, I want to go into some detail on one item in particular. It is taken from the state capital program, budget paper 4, and the details are on page 36. It is an issue that I have spoken on a number of times in this place, and it is the proposed South Melbourne Park Primary School in Albert Park. This was to be on a site that was earmarked by the then opposition for a new school in South Melbourne, an area which currently has no public primary school and has an abundance of families who have young children who very much need access to a new school. This is agreed by everyone.

The government has at its disposal, of course, the Ferrars Street site, which was purchased by the previous government. It has been only very, very recently that it has turned its attention to that site. It has done so, in my view, because it had so many problems on its preferred site, which was the one at South Melbourne Park. So while work on that Ferrars Street site could have commenced a year ago — if money had been put in the previous budget — that work has only just begun. What that means in fact is that families will wait longer to have access to those extra school places. Considering the lengths that local schools need to go to to accommodate the children they must take because they are legally entitled to attend their local school, this is an appalling neglect and something that the government should be ashamed of.

It is quite clear, from previous examinations that we have had in this place of what is going on with South

Melbourne Park Primary School, that it is a chaotic process, that nobody is running it — as Mr Jennings confirmed in the committee stage of the land reservations bill — and that as a result the different departments, different people and different budgets that need to feed into creating this new school simply are not being pulled together in the way that they should be.

I was interested, though, to see that there has been a budget allocation for the school. When in opposition, government members said that they would put money into building this school in their first budget. The government failed to do so. It allocated a relatively small amount of money; it did not allocate any capital funds. This time around we see that a total of \$8.4 million has been allocated. There is a notation here that says:

... begin construction of a new primary school, including relocation costs for Orchestra Victoria and Parks Victoria (Albert Park).

We do know some of what this will cost, because Mr Jennings was generous enough to share this with us through the committee stage that I referred to earlier. He volunteered that it will take \$5 million to rehouse Parks Victoria from the building where it has been decided a school will be instead. This decision was made I think without reference to Parks Victoria or without anticipating where it may go. The time since the election of the government has been spent looking for somewhere for it to go. Parks Victoria, we know through FOI documents, has made it clear that it would not start planning to leave until it had money to do so, because it was going to cost money to undertake that sort of planning work and to find somewhere that was suitable for its very, very specific needs. It needs to accommodate people but also equipment and a range of vehicles as well, and this needs to be somewhere within Albert Park. It has been agreed that it will stay within Albert Park. Obviously there are limited places where that can be.

There are also practical concerns regarding the grand prix. Because of the timetable of the race and the preparation for the race, it effectively locks up parts of the park for consistent periods of time. This means that it is not appropriate to be undertaking major work within the park and it is not possible to use some of the grand prix facilities to assist with temporary housing for Parks Victoria, which we know was considered by Parks Victoria, again through FOI documents which have been made public. So that is the problem for Parks Victoria. I believe there is yet to be any sort of announcement as to where it will be going within the park and when precisely this will start.

We have been told that Parks Victoria and Orchestra Victoria will be leaving their current premises by November or maybe December of this year, and I believe that is the third time a date has been chosen for the move. The first two have fallen through, so I think members of this house will forgive my cynicism as to whether that third moving date will actually come to pass.

Then there is the position of Orchestra Victoria, which on my most recent information does not have a new home to go to either. Again a lot of time has been spent looking for new premises for Orchestra Victoria since the election of the government. Prior to the election we were told by the member for Albert Park in the Legislative Assembly and by the then Leader of the Opposition, now the Premier, that Orchestra Victoria would be co-located with this new school and that the school would have a musical curriculum. The musical curriculum has suddenly dropped off the radar; no-one is talking about that anymore. The reason for that is that it would appear nobody ever asked Orchestra Victoria whether it wanted to be co-located with the school and be contributing to that school's curriculum. Had anyone bothered to do so, Orchestra Victoria no doubt would have said, 'No. We don't want to do that', because that is exactly what it said after the election. It gave a range of reasons and made it very, very clear. Its basic reason is that that is not its reason for being. It is there to provide musical accompaniment to Opera Victoria and perform similar roles; it is not there to have an educational role.

As I said earlier, my latest information is that Orchestra Victoria still has no home to go to and, like Parks Victoria, it has very specific building needs in terms of, for example, height and reasonable support in the structures that are going to bear the load and the weight of instruments and so on. It has access issues as well: its members need to be able to access the facilities at various hours of the day and night so they can rehearse and perform.

So the school that was supposed to start very, very shortly after the election of the Andrews government is still waiting a long time later. I mentioned earlier that we know from Mr Jennings kindly telling us a few months ago that it will take \$5 million to rehouse Parks Victoria. I do find it extraordinary that that is going to come out of the education budget. I would have thought that really should have been spent on building a school rather than finding accommodation for a separate organisation from a separate department, but I suppose that is something that really should have been considered when making a decision about whether to locate a school on this site.

As to Orchestra Victoria, there was an item in the *Herald Sun*, I think it was, which was part of a pre-budget leak from the government giving what it wanted to be known as good news about the education funding that it was going to be unleashing in this latest budget. That indicated that it was thought that about \$1.6 million, from memory, would need to be spent on relocating Orchestra Victoria. That is of course without knowing even now where it might be relocated to.

Mr Jennings made it clear to us that final decisions had not been made on Orchestra Victoria and that it was agreed that the education department would find its moving costs. Again it is surprising that an organisation from a completely separate department to that of education is going to be funded by education department funds instead of that money going towards building a school. But be that as it may, Mr Jennings made it clear that not only would the moving costs be provided but there may be additional money provided as well depending on the outcomes of where that accommodation may be. I think he considered whether it may be necessary to pay rent or make some other kind of provision for the ongoing accommodation of Orchestra Victoria in addition to its moving costs.

I should note also that it is very likely that both Parks Victoria and Orchestra Victoria will need two moves rather than one, because no-one has gone through the work of actually identifying and making a decision on where their final homes will be. So what is being actively anticipated, and has been actively anticipated, since the election is that both organisations will have two homes, a temporary home and a permanent home, and they will need to move twice, which will be a major dislocation for both organisations and again an additional cost.

The other issue with the site — and we know this from knowing the area but also from Mr Jennings's kind and generous words some months ago when asked about it — is that it has contamination like, I believe, almost all of the City of Port Phillip area because of historical use. We do know that this building, which is heritage listed, also has asbestos. There is money within this allocation to deal with those issues, but again it has been confirmed that the extent of the asbestos contamination is not known and will not be known until work starts on the building. That has not happened. There are still tenants in that building, so that work has not begun.

Now we are in a situation of watching the clock ticking until we get to November or December — third time lucky — to see whether these organisations will actually have homes to go to and be able to move. We

are now in June so that is only five months away. I think what we are looking at now for both organisations are temporary homes rather than permanent homes, and who knows whether we will make that deadline or whether closer to the release of next year's budget those organisations will still be there. In the meantime, as I said earlier, because of the inherent problems with the site, many of which were obvious from the outset but were not acknowledged or were put aside by those who are making decisions, work could have been happening on another site, and the families that are so in need of extra school places for their children would have been that much closer to finding some sort of relief in the form of extra places for their children and for those children who are continuing to be born around the Albert Park area. This is a very problematic site. It has been the victim of very poor planning and very poor execution. Mr Jennings agreed, if my recollection of *Hansard* is right, that no-one was actually coordinating this particular project.

The final point I want to make is this: it would appear that there is actually no money for building within the budget allocation. We have money to move Orchestra Victoria, we have money to move Parks Victoria, we have money for soil remediation and we have money for asbestos removal. We also have a bit of planning money to maybe start the work on drawing the designs and getting ready to build something, but there is no money in this budget that I can see to actually start building the school. I fail to see how any of that work can start to happen before the current tenants move out, possibly at the end of this year but maybe not, because they have missed the deadlines before, and I suspect they will do so again. There is form for this after all.

So I look forward to the budget next year when maybe we will see some funding for this school. I note also that what was promised for the school was \$11.5 million. The opposition when in government made the obvious point that this was simply not enough money to build a school, and to promise that a school would be delivered for this amount was simply not being honest with the local people who were being asked to vote on this policy. We have seen already that we have got some \$6.5 million which is going to go on getting the current tenants out. I assume that we are going to add that on to the \$11.5 million and the \$1 million or so that has already been paid for early planning work on the school. I think that what we are looking at already, before anyone has even started to properly put together plans for the school or any physical work has been done, is a considerable budget blowout on the site and one that I think could have been predicted from the outset. I will conclude my comments there and say that I look forward to the next instalment

in the next budget, because surely that is what will be needed.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I am delighted to rise to make a contribution in relation to this year's budget. Like others have said, this is an important budget, and there are some very important elements that I want to make reference to. When the Treasurer handed down his budget there was great fanfare. There were some measures in the budget that were very welcome — I will acknowledge that — but certainly there were many gaps as well.

One of the things that I think is quite concerning and which has probably not been made clear to the Victorian public to the extent that it should have been is the increase in taxes. Public sector wages have also increased by around 15 per cent, or \$2.8 billion, and there is an increase in taxes of 20.7 per cent. These are significant increases that will be passed on to consumers. Already Victorian households are finding it very tough in many circumstances and situations, so there are concerns in relation to those various elements.

I would also like to make a comment in relation to what Daniel Andrews has said about pay equity. In actual fact he is turning his back on those community sector workers, who are mainly women, with cuts to their pay equity funding base. That is something that has not had enough analysis or attention paid to it and I think is something that needs to be addressed.

One of the areas that I have responsibility for is family violence, and whilst there has been a significant amount of spending — \$572 million in this year's budget over three years — dedicated to family violence following the royal commission that was undertaken and which handed down its findings in March of this year, that was partly in response to 65 of the 227 recommendations, all of which the government has undertaken to implement. An enormous amount of work will be required. There is no real understanding of the true cost of those 227 recommendations. I am very concerned about committing to do something like that without understanding the full cost of doing so.

Although the royal commission has undertaken a very important inquiry and handed down its recommendations, that is not to say that this might be the best way to go. Now that the government and the Premier have committed to the recommendations, I have some reservations about how that will be undertaken, whether it will be actually undertaken and how it will be funded and paid for in future years. I will be very interested to understand how this will be

undertaken by the Premier and his minister over the coming months and years.

I did get a commitment from the minister, during the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings I might add, that in a year's time, by next March, there will be some detail as to how some of this will be funded and whether or not a new tax or levy will pay for it. I know that in other jurisdictions there are taxes and levies, but we have a surplus. That was one of the things that the Treasurer spruiked. I do not think he can claim credit for all the work in obtaining the surplus, as clearly there were some windfalls. The government has been the beneficiary of the port sale, it had some windfalls in an increase in GST returns and there was also the pokie tax licence repayments of around \$560 million, so significant money has been put into the Treasurer's coffers, which I am sure he is delighted about. Yet we still have this burgeoning expenditure, no more clearly demonstrated than in some of the paybacks that are going to the unions, and I will come to that in a minute. We have seen a clear demonstration of this on the front steps of the Parliament today.

One of the areas I have spoken about is family violence. Whilst money has been put aside for that, one of the things that we need to understand is how that needs to be responded to. Other members have mentioned that we have seen a significant reduction in police capability, because there has not been enough funding to deal with the many challenges they face on a daily basis, as well as the number of police stations closing.

I might add that that was highlighted by the member for Burwood just recently, who happened to be out in Burwood with the opposition leader, Matthew Guy, demonstrating this very fact when a woman quite coincidentally arrived to put in a request at the police station. Apparently when she had wanted to find the nearest location she plugged in the GPS and it told her to go to Burwood, but the Burwood police station was closed. That is clearly evidence of what this government is doing. It is real and it is happening.

We have to deal with factors like the increase in the number of family violence reports. Last year there were over 70 000 throughout the state, and in the Glen Eira area in Southern Metropolitan Region there was a significant increase in family violence incidents, up by 11.2 per cent in the year to 31 December 2015 from the previous year.

In growth corridors there are extensive challenges and pressures for families. Family violence is prevalent in many of these areas, as is the need for understanding the growing population of our state. There are issues

around police resourcing and having frontline police deal with the issues at hand. We also have an increase in the number of crimes being committed right across our city. In recent months we have seen the Moomba riots with the Apex gang and an increase in the number of home invasions, carjackings and serious assaults being committed right across the south-eastern suburbs and in other parts of Melbourne. In many instances the police have their hands tied. Government members need to understand this situation and to take it seriously. They talk a lot — they do a lot of the talking; they talk very much in actual fact — but they need to deliver on what they are articulating. I think that has been demonstrated time and time again by the Premier.

I return to one of those points that I made about the public sector wage increases that are blowing out and demonstrations on the front steps today by the United Firefighters Union (UFU). We had Peter Marshall up there spruiking his stuff, accusing the coalition of politicising the very disgraceful issue that is going on in terms of the government — —

Mr Ramsay — A hypocrite.

Ms CROZIER — A total hypocrite, Mr Ramsay; you are absolutely right. Out there were the Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers who have protected lives, property and communities for decades in this state. How the government has handled this situation is absolutely disgraceful. Government members have turned their back on the volunteers who are out there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, whether in the heightened bushfire season right across our state or attending road accidents on country and rural roads on a regular basis, as they do. CFA volunteers assist in that very, very important emergency service response, and they are extraordinary. This was absolutely evident when the Prime Minister attended the rally on Sunday and, along with Matthew Guy, spoke about the heroism of these people. They spoke about the many incidents that CFA volunteers turn out to time and time again to do the work on behalf of Victoria and Victorian communities. CFA volunteers are one of the state's greatest assets.

I do not know what this Premier promised Peter Marshall, but I do know that some of those UFU members are seriously disappointed with the lack of response, so I suspect it has got something to do with that. Why do I say that? I say that because I spent a lot of time with the UFU members on the Bentleigh pre-poll in the lead-up to the 2014 election. UFU members were very critical of the Napthine government. As we all know, they had the fake

uniforms and the fake trucks zooming around with slogans and messaging ‘Naphthine slashes. You burn’.

It was really despicable, dreadful and unnecessary messaging, but we saw that on a whole lot of public vehicles; we saw that on ambulances with the paramedics union too. The paramedics have had their payback, but the union firefighters have not had theirs. We are not disputing their entire wage claim; what we are discussing is the enormous log of claims that they want, which has really not been costed properly. Goodness knows where it will end up. It is an outrageous log of claims. They want to take over control of the CFA — this is what it is about — and unionise that volunteer organisation. That should not happen and will not happen. It will be a very sad moment if the Premier caves in and does not listen to his Minister for Emergency Services; the CEO of the CFA, Lucinda Nolan; or the tens of thousands of volunteers who clearly do not want this union takeover.

Where does it stop? Once that happens, what is next? Which emergency service or organisation is going to want this same thing? This is something that future treasurers will have to manage in future budgets. It is completely irresponsible of this government to be behaving in the way it has been. There are many instances of irresponsible management by this government; that is just one. We have seen of course the ripping up of the east–west link contract, costing Victorian taxpayers over \$1.1 billion — an extraordinary decision. We have seen other decisions being made without very much consultation with communities — or with a complete lack of consultation, such as sky rail. The government is steamrolling ahead. It does not care about those local communities. It does not care about local amenity — —

Mr Davis interjected.

Ms CROZIER — They are diesels, not steamers, Mr Davis — quite right — but nevertheless the government is steamrolling the community. That is not a good thing. It needs to understand that it should govern for all Victorians and not just noisy little minority groups. It is completely disappointing that that is where we are in the state of Victoria at the moment. I do hope that the Premier listens to the concerns of all those community groups and the very, very marvellous volunteers that we have in the CFA.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

TRANSPORT (COMPLIANCE AND MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SAFETY) BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

Received from Assembly.

Read first time on motion of Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture).

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT 2016–2017) BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 26 May; motion of Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture).

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise this evening to speak on the Appropriation (Parliament 2016–2017) Bill 2016. This bill is one of the curiosities of this place: it is the one element of spending that is appropriated from the Consolidated Fund under a different type of bill to the one we have just been discussing, the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016.

It is a historic construction that we have a bill which sets out appropriations for the Parliament and for Parliament-related purposes, such as the Auditor-General, in recognition of the independence of Parliament from the executive. Indeed the second-reading speech that accompanies this bill, which is the second-reading speech that I have noticed is used consistently on an annual basis, says that the bill has been prepared having regard to or in accordance with the wishes of the Presiding Officers.

So we have a bill which appropriates funds to the departments of the Legislative Council, the Legislative Assembly, the parliamentary investigatory committees — which are the joint committees — the Department of Parliamentary Services, the office of the Auditor-General and a new line item for the Parliamentary Budget Office, being the functions of the Parliament. I note this does not cover members’ entitlements and salaries, which are covered by special appropriation. This is an appropriation purely for the running of the institution of Parliament, the provision of staffing and the provision of this building and the electorate offices et cetera, and it exists as a standalone bill in recognition of the independent nature of Parliament from the government.

I would like to, at the outset, take this opportunity to use the debate on this bill to thank the parliamentary

staff, being the chamber staff — our Legislative Council staff — and the staff of the Department of Parliamentary Services and the joint committees, for the contribution that they make to democracy in this state on an ongoing basis. Many of the staff we have in this place have served the Legislative Council for an extended period of time in many different roles and do a fantastic job of supporting members in their roles. Likewise those comments can be carried through to, no doubt, not only the staff in the Assembly but also the staff in the joint committees, the staff in the Department of Parliamentary Services and of course, as covered by this bill, the office of the Auditor-General, which plays an important role in terms of providing advice through audits to members of Parliament and to the Victorian community more generally. It is incumbent upon us all with this legislation to acknowledge the contribution that those staff have made over a long period of time and continue to make.

I would like to turn to some of the specific elements of this legislation and raise some matters that I indicate to the government we intend to consider through committee consideration of this bill in due course, which I understand will be carried forward to another sitting week. This apparently is one of the bills that has fallen into the vacuum created by the absence of the Leader of the Government, but nonetheless we look forward to exploring some matters at that appropriate time.

The primary issue I would like to touch upon is the funding provided for the Legislative Council. As schedule 1 to the bill before us this evening shows, the Legislative Council will receive an appropriation estimated at \$3.7 million. It is worth putting that level of funding into context. The New South Wales Legislative Council, which is only slightly larger than this one — it has 42 members rather than 40 — receives appropriation funding of \$5.7 million, which is \$2 million more than this Council receives, to support only two additional members. Of that \$5.7 million allocation to the New South Wales Legislative Council, I am advised that a full \$2 million is contributed to Council committees. The New South Wales Parliament takes very seriously the role of Legislative Council committees, the role they play in the legislative process in considering legislation outside the chamber as well as the role they play in considering policy issues, obviously outside the chamber environment.

What we see for the Legislative Council in Victoria, however, with the \$3.7 million appropriation — which is, as I said, \$2 million less than New South Wales — is only limited recognition of the Council committee structure which is now in place. It is a structure which

has been put in place by the last two Councils and a structure which has become very active, be it through select committees, such as the select committee on the lease of the port of Melbourne which operated last year, or be it through the standing committees which are established under our standing orders — the committees on legal and social issues, economy and infrastructure, and planning and environment.

We saw earlier in this Parliament the policy committees being folded together with the legislation committees for a more streamlined structure. Those three standing committees have been undertaking a substantial body of work. In fact over the last year our Legislative Council committees, standing and select, have received more than 4500 submissions in relation to inquiries they are undertaking. That is a full 1000 submissions more than the joint committees of this Parliament have received. That highlights the level of activity incumbent on our Council committees.

It is worth noting that while the Council committees are funded within our \$3.7 million appropriation for the Council, the joint committees, of which there are only nine, receive a separate appropriation of \$7.7 million. They are funded at a vastly greater level than the Council committees, notwithstanding the fact that we have seen over the last year that the level of activity, certainly in terms of engagement with stakeholders through submissions, is vastly lower across the joint committees. That has created challenges for the Department of the Legislative Council.

Members will have noticed for the first time today when the house commenced to sit an email from the table office indicating that a papers list would not be printed and distributed. An email was sent out with the list of papers that were tabled in the house today, but there was no hard copy papers list tabled because the Legislative Council is not in a position to fund the printing of some documents. In this final month of the financial year it has needed to constrain its expenditure in whatever ways it can, so we did not have today — and I assume we will not have tomorrow — a printed papers list. We have committees which over the course of this month will no doubt be tabling reports on the inquiries that have been underway and are coming to a conclusion, and it will be interesting to see whether the Council department has the capacity and the resources to even print those reports when they are tabled.

What we have now is a situation where through the work of the committees there is intense pressure on the Department of Legislative Council budget. Earlier this financial year, by agreement between the Council and the Assembly, a transfer under section 31 of the

Financial Management Act 1994 took place which saw \$500 000 of funds from the joint committees made available to the Legislative Council. Such an agreement does not exist for the 2016–17 financial year. What we do see is a line item allocation of some \$400 000 as a new initiative in this budget, but of course that is less than what was received by the Council by way of that section 31 in the current financial year. If the Council is only to receive what is appropriated in the appropriation bill before the house now, it will actually have fewer resources for Council committee work in the new financial year than it has had in the current year, and that is simply an unsustainable proposition.

The reality is that the committees of the Council do work on behalf of all sides of the chamber. In fact the legal and social issues committee has for the last 18 months been undertaking a reference in relation to end-of-life choices. This was a reference that went to that committee with the support of the government and with the support of members of the crossbench — indeed with the support of some members of the opposition. That committee is also about to undertake an inquiry into retirement housing options, which again was a reference given to it with the support of the government. So these committees are not simply undertaking work on behalf of the opposition or on behalf of the crossbench. They are undertaking references which are given to them by the government or with the support of the government, and therefore the government should be ensuring that there is an appropriate level of funding provided to those committees.

As I said, we have a situation where our joint committees, all nine of them, are collectively funded to \$7.7 million, and, yes, that does include additional funding of some \$400 000, which is shown as a one-off for the 2016–17 financial year, being for a performance audit of the Auditor-General. But even with that netted out, members can see that the funding for our joint committees is substantially greater than that provided for Council committees, notwithstanding the substantially greater volume of work that has been handled by the Council committees, certainly in terms of stakeholder engagement, over the last 12 months.

Resourcing the Council department and the Council committees goes to the very issue of our democracy. It goes to the very issue of accountability of the executive. This house performs a function which does not occur in the other place. By definition the lower house is the house of government. It is where the government has a majority. It is where scrutiny of the government is limited. Certainly insofar as there are Assembly committees, the government controls them, and the

government controls the form of scrutiny that legislation or indeed other executive actions receive in that chamber. It is in this house that there is genuine independent scrutiny of government actions, be it through the operations of the chamber, be it through consideration of legislation, be it through the operation of those standing committees or indeed through the select committee which was in place last year. It is important that that role is recognised and that that role is resourced.

Earlier this year we saw the Treasurer reject a request for a Treasurer's advance. A Treasurer's advance was sought for the Legislative Council to fund its ongoing activities and particularly its committee activities, in the absence of an additional transfer of funding being agreed from the Assembly. That request for a Treasurer's advance was rejected. The government rejected a request for the house of review to have additional resources to undertake its review functions. So we now have a situation where it is evident that Council resources for the current financial year have been exhausted. The parliamentary budget bill before the house now allocates fewer resources for the new financial year than are in place for the current financial year.

Interestingly we see, as I said at the outset, a new line in the appropriation bill, being for the Parliamentary Budget Office. This is an organisation, an entity, that has not yet been established. In fact that is another piece of legislation which has disappeared into the vacuum created by the absence of the Leader of the Government. The bill was second read in this place last week and is still subject to consideration of amendments. It has not passed this place, yet the bill we are considering tonight actually seeks to appropriate \$4.4 million for that entity, an entity that is yet to prove its value to the Parliament, an entity by which it is not yet clear that those resources are going to be employed. Frankly, if the government is in a position to make that level of resource available to what is at this stage an untested, not-yet-established Parliamentary Budget Office, that certainly indicates there is capacity for additional resources to be made available to the Legislative Council both to address the matters for which the Treasurer's advance was sought earlier in the current financial year and indeed to address the fact that there will be reduced funding for the Council in the new financial year on the estimates laid down in this appropriation bill.

So the coalition is not going to oppose the parliamentary appropriation bill, but it does have concerns about the level of resourcing being provided for the Legislative Council and its committees. We

believe that this is something the government needs to be much more cognisant of in the way in which it funds Parliament. It is something we will seek to explore in some detail when this bill reaches committee-of-the-whole consideration. We believe the Legislative Council committees have demonstrated their value over the last 18 months — have demonstrated the level of work they are undertaking versus the much better funded joint committees — and that that level of activity should be recognised and funded appropriately by the government.

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) — Before I make some comments of a technical nature on the bill, I will start by echoing Mr Rich-Phillips's statements around the amazing work that the staff at Parliament undertake across all of Parliament and in the Council in particular. That includes the people who work in this chamber and the people who work on committees. I think it is important that everybody in this chamber acknowledge that significant contribution.

I will not go through the Appropriation (Parliament 2016–2017) Bill 2016 in great detail, but I will just say that, as Mr Rich-Phillips himself said, there are two appropriation bills. This is an appropriation bill with a very specific allocation. It provides appropriation authority for payments from the Consolidated Fund to the Parliament in respect of the 2016–17 financial year, including ongoing liabilities incurred by the Parliament, such as employee entitlements, that may be realised in the future. In terms of a couple of other aspects of the bill, other funds are appropriated for parliamentary purposes by way of special appropriations contained in other legislation, and it is also worth noting that in addition unapplied appropriations under the Appropriation (Parliament 2015–2016) Act 2015 have been estimated and included in the budget papers.

The total appropriation authority sought in the bill is \$128 888 000, which is in clause 3. In respect of the 2016–17 financial year I think it is worth noting a couple of aspects. One is that there will be additional funding for Legislative Council committees to meet the increasing reporting requirements of those committees. This is an appropriate response to a growing workload trend. There is also an addition to members of Parliament funding to reflect changes in the state voter count. There is a funding increase to establish the Parliamentary Budget Office. I think it is more than a little ironic that Mr Rich-Phillips would complain about that legislation being held up when, as has been alluded to a number of times today already, it would have in all likelihood been passed already were it not for what can only be described as an unprecedented stunt that is

having a deleterious effect on the functioning of this chamber.

I firmly believe the Parliamentary Budget Office will be a very significant governance reform. I believe it will benefit primarily the opposition and even more so the crossbenches — the Greens, but in particular the minor parties and Independents. It will be a significant and long-lasting reform that will improve the quality of debate in this state. I believe that the passage of that bill, once the Leader of the Government returns, will be to the great benefit of the state. Of course it is appropriate to make the appropriation for that office given that it is only reasonable to expect the passage of that bill soon. There is also funding for the performance audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

I think it is also worth noting that the 2016–17 budget includes \$45.5 million for new office accommodation to be constructed behind Parliament House for members of Parliament and support staff — a much-needed investment.

In short, this is a very targeted appropriation bill compared to the budget papers, which others have been speaking on tonight, but there are a number of important measures in it, including increased funding for committees and funding for the Parliamentary Budget Office. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — Mr Rich-Phillips and Mr Mulino have covered quite expansively what I had intended to spend only a minute or two on. It is very important that the Legislative Council, and particularly its committee system, is adequately resourced. When this house deals with legislation or another matter before it, it needs to be able to do the best job it can on behalf of the Victorian people, and that generally means running some kind of inquiry or inquisition, big or small. The house needs to be able to work, and I am sure there are some new members in this place who now wholeheartedly embrace this philosophy. Our parliamentary committees need to be able to work quickly, they need to be able to work effectively and they need basic resources.

So much work has been done so far this year by these committees that in fact they have very quickly exhausted the small amount of funding that was made available to them. We are not talking about spa pools for Parliament House here. We are talking about the basic money that is required in order for MPs to do their job and for this chamber to do its job, which is to get to the bottom of matters, issues and sometimes legislation and make the best possible outcome. This

chamber is not simply a widget factory that can be run for maximum financial efficiency. The job is done when the job is done, and it costs what it costs to run a parliamentary committee system.

I have been here 10 years. I have seen how long it has taken to build the system up to the level it is at, and I have seen the incredible work that it is now doing. It is now starting to hold its head up with the Senate and other parliaments that have been doing this kind of work for a very long time. We would not want to see that choked off right now, and that is why it is very important that there is adequate funding and flexibility provided within the Parliament's budget, and within that the budget of the Legislative Council, particularly for the committees.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Ordered to be committed next day.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Power-assisted bicycles

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. It relates to a particular issue that was brought to my attention by a constituent of mine, and that is power-assisted bicycles. A power-assisted bicycle is a vehicle that can be pedalled as well as being powered by an electric engine or the like.

My constituent found himself in a difficult position when the police pulled him over while he was riding a power-assisted bicycle. My constituent was riding this vehicle, which is electrically powered. This vehicle can also be pedalled; however, the gentleman was not pedalling the bicycle at the time. He was told by the police that had he been pedalling, the vehicle would have been classified as a bicycle and he would not have been pulled over, but as he was not pedalling, the vehicle was not classified as a bicycle, so he was pulled over and fined.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Mr MORRIS — I am not sure what you would call it.

Ms Crozier — A penny-farthing.

Mr MORRIS — Maybe a penny-farthing, indeed. This particular constituent of mine was also told by the police that he should have sought to register this vehicle with VicRoads. As members can understand, this was quite a confusing scenario for my constituent and, I would imagine, for any Victorian who might like to ride a power-assisted bicycle, whether they are pedalling it or not at a particular moment.

The action I seek is that the minister clarify what is allowed with power-assisted bicycles, whether or not a person is pedalling at a particular point in time.

Rail high-capacity signalling

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport. The action I call for is that the minister give priority to funding a rollout of high-capacity signalling for the entire metro rail network. The Melbourne rail network uses fixed-block rail signalling that has its roots in 19th century rail technology. Long ago we replaced the steam engine with electric sets, so it is time to upgrade our signalling to the 21st century.

The benefits of high-capacity signalling are clear. It allows more trains to run per hour. It would take us from the current maximum of 15 trains per hour to over 30 trains per hour. This would increase the capacity of our rail lines, even with the existing condition of our rolling stock and rail lines.

It is safer, as the awareness of the location, velocity and acceleration or deceleration of every train in the network is calculated and communicated many times each second so that stopping distances can be more accurately calculated. It provides greater network durability, as we will avoid signal faults due to ailing existing infrastructure. And it is a horror to all commuters out there when they hear their trains are delayed due to a signalling fault.

The Andrews government has squibbed high-capacity signalling to date. In the 2015 budget the government committed to trialling high-capacity signalling on the Sandringham line. This pilot was supposed to trial high-capacity signalling on a line isolated from the rest of the city loop and from V/Line and freight routes. From questions asked of the Minister for Public Transport in May, we now know that the work on the Sandringham line kept the existing conventional fixed-block technology, so there will be no relief for passengers on the Sandringham line. They will continue to face jam-packed trains on their morning commute.

The Andrews government has now directed the funding to a trial to take place on a proportion of a single line, the South Morang line, between South Morang and Lalor stations, a total of a mere three stations at the end of a line. You get a fraction of the benefit by putting high-capacity signalling on one section of a line instead of the whole length: a line's capacity is only as strong as its weakest section. So there will be no relief for passengers on the South Morang line. They will continue to face jam-packed trains on their morning commute.

I urge the minister to take action on behalf of those commuters jammed into their trains on a daily basis.

Local government reform

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Local Government and is regarding the future of local government in Victoria. Local government, though it is the lowest tier of government, serves an important role in Victoria and indeed is a vital part of my community. The action I seek is that the minister update me on the Local Government Act 1989 review. When will the directions paper be released so that my constituents can submit their thoughts on the government's reforms? This is an important piece of legislative reform, and I commend the minister on reviewing an outdated piece of legislation.

Publication funding guidelines

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — My matter for the adjournment tonight is for the attention of the Premier, and it relates to an academic journal called *The Conversation*, which claims 'academic rigour' and 'journalistic flair'. It relates specifically to an article headed 'The "sky rail" saga: can big new transport projects ever run smoothly?'. This is an article that appears in this particular journal. John Stone and Ian Woodcock are the authors. They disclose in the disclosure statement:

John Stone has received research funding from Level Crossing Removal Authority, Australian Research Council —

and there is a long list of others.

The disclosure statement continues:

Ian Woodcock has received research funding (cash and/or in-kind, directly or indirectly) from the Australian Research Council, Carlton Connect, Level Crossing Removal Authority, VicTrack, the cities of Melbourne, Moreland, Darebin, Yarra and Hobsons Bay, Office of the Victorian Government Architect —

and a long list of other items.

Further down in the article it discloses that not only are the University of Melbourne and RMIT involved in the publication but the Victorian state government provides funding as a strategic partner of *The Conversation*. So this is funded by state government sources.

What I am seeking that the Premier do — and it is not clear exactly where this comes from, whether it comes out of some bucket centrally in the Department of Premier and Cabinet or whether it comes out of the Level Crossing Removal Authority or some other source — is that he develop guidelines for the funding of these journals. Obviously these are meant to be academic discussions, but clearly these are in effect paid advertisements by these particular spruikers who are hard at work around the countryside, paid by government, receiving money from government.

Yes, they have declared it there — I understand that — and this is obviously declared as a Victorian state government-funded journal in part. It actually has the logo and everything there, but what I am seeking to establish from the Premier is: what guidelines are in place now, and will he put in place a set of transparent guidelines that would be available?

Mr Barber — What, for the website?

Mr DAVIS — No, for government funding of these sorts of journals, these sorts of online communications and others, so that we can all see where the money is going. The figure I have heard for funding this particular journal is \$500 000 a year. I do not have a document to prove that. The Premier can tell me if that is not correct; he can tell me if it is more. But either way it is clear government money is going into this. What are the guidelines involved, and will the Premier produce a transparent set of guidelines for this sort of paid spruiking and advertising?

Pedestrian safety

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — This is an adjournment request for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I am returning to a subject that I have been active on for some time, and that is the perverse VicRoads rules on pedestrian crossings and the requirements that are put in place before one can even begin to start lobbying for a new pedestrian crossing in one's area. Other members in this place may have some familiarity with this problem.

I know many communities that have lobbied for safer crossings and then been stonewalled by VicRoads rules, which literally require that until the death or injury toll starts to rise your request cannot qualify. I thought it

was the job of VicRoads to prevent road injuries, and in fact the government has a target now of reducing those injuries to zero. Well, if it requires a body count before a pedestrian crossing can be installed, I cannot see how we will ever make it under those strategies.

In fact let us have a position whereby a council puts together a walkability plan for its whole area, has that signed off by the state government and then does not have to meet guidelines for individual crossings. We do have councils encouraging people to use particular routes and encouraging people to walk or cycle or walk with their children who are riding, and they are frustrated when they are encouraged to travel along these routes but then have got these tiny traffic islands or are dodging vehicles in order to get safely across.

Right at the moment the City of Darebin is in fact putting its own money behind this program at the corner of High Street and Raglan Street, Preston, at the corner of Victoria Road and Clifton Street and at the corner of Miller Street and Bracken Avenue. They have a five-year safe travel strategy, which has seen some positive results. However, again they run up against these VicRoads restrictions. The council has allocated \$300 000 in its 2016–17 draft budget under a line item for these projects to enable co-contribution to these crossings. However, that investment risks not going ahead due to the VicRoads requirements — warrants, as it calls them.

I ask that the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, under this new government, finally get around to revisiting those warrants and also then to considering where the best spend is so that there can be co-contributions along with Darebin council and other councils around Victoria that have been making similar requests.

Country Fire Authority Lara brigade

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter is for the Premier, and the action I seek is for him to explain to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) Lara brigade how under the current United Firefighters Union (UFU) enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) proposal, whereby the volunteer brigade of Lara is earmarked to be an integrated station in 2018, it will not be a station of segregation rather than a station of integration.

I raise this matter with the Premier as it has been reported in the *Geelong Advertiser* and on the brigade's Facebook page and confirmed in a meeting I attended with shadow Minister for Emergency Services Brad Battin, the member for South Barwon in the Legislative

Assembly, Andrew Katos, and the Liberal candidate for the federal seat of Corio, Richard Lange, on Monday night with the brigade members, who raised a number of concerns they have with the proposed integration model. Like Ocean Grove, Belmont, Corio and Geelong City, Lara under the integrated model will have a mix of career and unpaid staff.

Under the model Lara volunteer firefighters would be banned from going through certain doors and gaining access to certain rooms within the confines of the station — a station they helped build through sausage sizzles and chook raffles. Page 388 of the EBA outlines what doors and what parts of the fire station volunteers will be allowed to enter. This will mean more segregation than integration, which is not in keeping with the UFU mantra that volunteers will continue to do what they do now. That will not be the case for Lara if the EBA is signed.

An integrated Lara fire station would be one of the current 34 integrated stations across Victoria that would require seven paid firefighters to attend incidents before a fire response. Under the proposed EBA Lara would be required to have four paid firefighters placed at the station from 1 July 2018. That is in schedule 1 on page 266 of the EBA. This number of career firefighters will be forced on the brigade whether they are needed or not. Under the proposed EBA this mix of career and volunteer firefighters will not be able to attend a fire unless a further three career-based firefighters from another brigade arrive on the fireground.

Being from a fire station that is in the gun for integration, the Lara fire brigade has courageously raised these concerns despite pressure from both CFA management and the United Firefighters Union to keep silent. Its concern, like that of many brigades, is that the power of veto will diminish the role of the chief fire officer and hand control to career-based staff regardless of seniority.

There is no doubt that the rallies in Melbourne organised by Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, which thousands of volunteers have attended, have raised concerns about the proposed EBA. I believe the Premier has a duty to explain to brigades like Lara that the EBA will not compromise volunteers' ability to do what they have always done in protecting regional communities.

Warrnambool rail services

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for

Public Transport, and it is regarding bus–train connections. Last year Public Transport Victoria engaged with stakeholders in Warrnambool, Colac and Portland as part of the *Regional Network Development Plan*. A direct outcome of the plan has been the announcement of a fourth daily return train service between Melbourne and Warrnambool. This was much welcomed by the community, and the increased frequency of train services will certainly help reduce overcrowding. I thank and congratulate the government for listening and responding to this feedback by instigating this fourth service.

Another piece of feedback in the community consultation process was the need for the bus service to be connected with the train service which ends at Warrnambool. It is my understanding at this point in time that there is no intention to have a bus connect with the fourth daily train service, which terminates at Warrnambool. This will mean that the many passengers whose train journey terminates at Warrnambool and who would normally connect by bus to Koroit, Port Fairy, Portland, Heywood and eventually over the border to Mount Gambier will be left stranded in Warrnambool following this fourth service. This is a very busy train service. I therefore urge the minister to once again be proactive and ensure that a coach does connect with the fourth daily train service to Warrnambool.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Minister for Emergency Services. It has been a somewhat concerning and perhaps even distressing experience for me in recent times as I have travelled around my electorate to speak to a number of people, many of whom have been volunteers with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) for a very long time. While my region is Western Metropolitan Region, it reaches into areas which have long been covered by the CFA — places such as Sunbury, Caroline Springs, Werribee, Point Cook and Truganina. Everywhere I have gone during the last few weeks there has been an enormous amount of concern expressed to me about the future of the CFA. Volunteers in the CFA are genuinely concerned about whether they will have a role in the CFA going forward. In particular it has been reported to me that volunteers have been bullied and intimidated by members of the United Firefighters Union. That has significantly added to the level of their concern, and I can certainly understand that.

The CFA is far more than a firefighting outfit. I live just around the corner from the Bulla station. I often hear the siren go off at various times of the night and day, and within 4 or 5 minutes the truck's siren is heard as well. CFA units attend many, many road accidents. They go to clean-ups. They go to a whole range of incidents around the place, which I think would be regarded by normal people as pretty important to our community.

This degree of concern that has been expressed to me is a real worry to a great many people. We are not just talking about the volunteers; we are talking about their families, we are talking about those who work with them and we are talking about those who are associated with them on a daily basis. We are talking about many, many tens of thousands of people.

I ask the minister, who I know has gone into battle in cabinet for the CFA as we know it, to continue her efforts to fight for respect for the CFA volunteers, and indeed I ask her to keep up her efforts to fight to keep our CFA.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am inclined to rule the matter out of order. As the member would know, the adjournment debate does not allow a member to urge a minister to continue doing something. I will give Mr Finn a chance to rephrase the final action.

Mr FINN — Thank you for that, President. I ask the minister to redouble her efforts to fight for respect for the CFA and to find new ways to impress upon the Premier the importance of her argument.

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Honourable John Eren. The Victorian visitor economy employs over 206 000 people and generates over \$21 billion for the state. Each of Victoria's major events — cultural, business, metropolitan, regional and sporting — plays a role in attracting more people to visit Victoria. These events include the International Champions Cup, which last year saw Real Madrid visit Melbourne, the Australian Formula One Grand Prix, State of Origin Rugby and the MotoGP, along with cultural and creative events such as the Melbourne fashion festival and the food and wine festival.

However, business events are increasingly playing a more important role in Melbourne's tourism and events calendar; hence the importance of the Business Events Fund which was announced in the 2016–17 Andrews

Labor budget. A major component of increasing the number of businesses and conferences in Melbourne is the expansion of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), which I note the minister recently announced. The action I seek is for the minister to clarify how the MCEC expansion will help to attract more business events and expos, create more jobs in terms of construction and ongoing jobs, and provide more economic and social opportunities for the people in Northern Metropolitan Region.

North Road, Ormond, level crossing

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the minister responsible for the removal of level crossings, the Minister for Public Transport, Minister Allan. It relates to an issue I have raised on a number of occasions in this house regarding the level crossing removal at North Road, Ormond. I have had a number of conversations with and emails from concerned traders in North Road highlighting yet more issues with this level crossing project that is being undertaken and the miscommunication, which really highlights just how badly this project is going for these traders because of the impact it is having.

What has happened in recent days is that traders have received mixed messages. They have received a number of phone calls from various stakeholders involved with the level crossing removal, including one that confirmed that John Holland, one of the companies involved in the removal of level crossings, had requested that United Energy cut the power so it could work on the level crossing. Some traders received a notice that this would be occurring tomorrow in North Road in Ormond and other traders in Bentleigh received the same notice but for next Wednesday. However, when clarification of what was happening was sought, the Level Crossing Removal Authority said, 'No, it is only going to be cut for an hour or so. Don't worry about it'. Yet the notice said from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. for those days.

To make matters worse, the traders have requested assistance time and time again with this communication to find out what is going on, because they are losing significant business. They received an email today, just 16 days out from the time the whole level crossing will be shut down, causing major disruption to that area. It was headed 'Invitation — business support services' — this to traders that have been running their businesses for many, many years. The email talks about how the 'project team is committed to working closely with local businesses to minimise any disruption and impacts from our works'. It advises traders that they

can go on to choose an experienced mentor with the background, skills and industry experience that will best assist them. It offers free photography for traders' business websites or social media and outdoor signage saying, 'Open for business'.

This is not really not going to help these businesses that have been impacted for the past six months because of miscommunication and the absolutely hopeless amount of attention paid to their concerns by this government. So the action I seek is that the minister herself visit this area, speak with the traders and understand firsthand the full impact of the removal of this level crossing so the same thing will not happen with further level crossing removals when they are undertaken.

Police numbers

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police, and the action I seek is that she provide advice about when extra police will be provided to the Melton and Caroline Springs area to respond to the chronic police shortage that currently exists in that area. I acknowledge an article written by Sumeyya Ilanbey in the *Melton & Moorabool Star Weekly* of 9 May, which contains within it some information from police members. I would like to quote into *Hansard* some of the emails that have been received and that are cited in this article. A senior constable said:

I've never seen morale so low. Members are overworked and constantly work overtime ... We complete correspondence in either our own time or on rest days or recreational leave.

...

I have never worked in an industry where we have to fight for resources in order to do our job — vehicles, computers and members!

It's only a matter of time until a member is seriously injured or killed because we're dealing with violent, drug-affected people putting other people's lives at risk without backup, or at best, backup is ... 25 minutes away.

A sergeant said:

In Melton we are so isolated. We are getting calls of hot burgs and thefts in the Toolern Vale, Diggers Rest area, but we are unable to attend.

In another email a constable said:

We are drowning; we are exhausted; we are fighting a battle that we believed you would fight for us.

As the article says:

Melton police say it's only a matter of time before an officer or member of the public is seriously injured or killed as the station grapples with an increasing and dangerous workload.

The government has announced that 300 new sworn frontline members will be recruited and trained over the coming two financial years. Whilst that is nowhere near what is required as far as the frontline policing needs of Victoria are concerned to accommodate the population growth and to make up for the underinvestment of the last 18 months of this government, those 300 sworn police will help in some way. So as I say, the action I seek is that the minister provide advice about when extra police resources will be provided to the Melton and Caroline Springs area, given these alarming revelations and current police shortages.

City Life

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The matter that I wish to raise is for the attention of the Premier, and it is in relation to a very well respected organisation called City Life, which is located in the City of Frankston. It has a longstanding reputation for providing services of integrated care and meals to Frankston's most disadvantaged community members. It provides thousands of meals every year and at negligible cost — I think the entire cost per year is about \$500 000. Much of its resources are donated and it has over 200 volunteers on its books.

I was there on Friday when the chief executive officer, Mr Mark Whitby, had to advise the clients that the service will no longer be continuing as of the third week of June. It was of course to the great disappointment of a lot of people to whom this really matters, because it might be the only meal that they actually eat on any single day.

The reason it has come to this is that over the past 14 months City Life, which was due to lose tenancy of the building it occupied, was approached by the state government and by the local member, Paul Edbrooke from the Legislative Assembly, with offers of help to try and find a new site for accommodation. After 14 months and apparently \$70 000 being spent through the process — I am not sure exactly through which department, but I understand in the letter from Mr Edbrooke to Mr Whitby there were a number of state officers mentioned, including a council officer who was subjected to some sort of confidentiality provisions to say local councillors were not advised — there has been no concrete outcome. City Life has come to the end point of its time. It was hopeful that indeed a solution was going to be facilitated, but it has nowhere to go and a lot of lost time. The clock is ticking.

I am asking the Premier to personally intervene to see what can be done to secure a location, a home, for City Life. We cannot afford to lose this service. The

community and the volunteers are all enormously upset, but those who are most upset are those who benefit from that service, and that is a lot of people each year — every day, every week — who receive care, friendship and a hot meal from City Life. I call on the Premier to intervene because clearly Mr Edbrooke over 14 months has been unable to deliver any outcomes.

Responses

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — This evening I received adjournment matters from Mr Morris directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety; from Ms Dunn directed to the Minister for Public Transport; from Mr Melhem directed to the Minister for Local Government; from Mr Davis directed to the Premier, although I do think that that matter might be better directed to the Minister for Public Transport, and I am mindful of your rulings around these issues, President; from Mr Barber directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety; from Mr Ramsay, also directed to the Premier, although I think the matter, given that it does relate to the Country Fire Authority, is better directed to the Minister for Emergency Services; from Mr Purcell directed to the Minister for Public Transport; from Mr Finn directed to the Minister for Emergency Services; from Mr Elasmarr directed to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events; from Ms Crozier directed to the Minister for Public Transport; from Mr O'Donohue directed to the Minister for Police; and from Mrs Peulich directed to the Premier. I will direct all those matters to the appropriate ministers for response.

I also note that I have received written answers to adjournment debate matters raised by Ms Crozier on 23 February; Mr Morris on 24 February; Mr Eideh on 8 March; Ms Pennicuik on 8 March; Mrs Peulich on 10 March; Mr Young on 24 March; Mr Morris on 13 April; Mr Bourman on 14 April; Mr Ramsay, Ms Crozier and Mr O'Donohue on 3 May; Dr Carling-Jenkins on 4 May; Ms Springle, Ms Patten, Mr Mulino, Mr Barber and Mr Leane on 5 May; Ms Patten on 24 May; and Mr Morris on 25 May. They will also be provided to members.

The PRESIDENT — Order! In respect of the reference to particular ministers, I take Ms Mikakos's point that members do need to direct matters to the minister responsible for matters and not simply engage the Premier on a whole-of-government basis, if you like, because they are unsure who the minister is, in which case a few inquiries to the government or the whip even would I am sure assist them in terms of who to direct it to. I also think that it is important to maintain the integrity of the process of those matters, rather than

to be raising them with the Premier in a more political context.

Tonight Mr Davis's matter was one on which he may well have taken an opportunity earlier to find out which minister was responsible for that funding of the advertising venue that he spoke about, but tonight I will let it stand. He felt that it might be coming out of the Premier's media area, which is presumably why he directed it that way.

Mr Ramsay's matter is a little bit more tenuous. Clearly he has leveraged the fact that the Premier has been heavily identified with the Country Fire Authority issues over recent weeks and has therefore taken the opportunity to gain an assurance from the Premier in that respect. I am a little torn from the point of view that I actually think Ms Mikakos's point is quite valid in that instance. Tonight I will let it stand, but I do run this line as a matter of warning or as a matter of recommendation to members, if you like, that they should try to direct their matter to the minister actually responsible.

Mrs Peulich's matter also comes into the same vein as Mr Ramsay's in some respects, because clearly the Premier is not specifically responsible for the sort of service that has been detailed and the concerns of that service at this time. I would probably prefer that to go to a minister. Could I have Mrs Peulich's comment?

Mrs Peulich — I gave that considerable thought. Unfortunately there appear to have been a number of officers involved from a range of departments, which is the reason why I raised it for the Premier. There was \$70 000, which has been expended, but it is uncertain as to where that money has come from.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I did hear that in Mrs Peulich's presentation, so on that basis I will let it stand tonight, but the point that Ms Mikakos makes is one that I accept and agree with.

On that basis the house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 10.31 p.m.